WOMEN IN THE HUNTING FIELD

BY

MRS. STUART MENZIES


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INTRODUCTION

It is only natural that, as time goes on, new styles, new customs, new methods, take the place of the old, and we must make it our business to keep pace with them. In no place are these changes so noticeable as in the hunting field, where to-day we find women in large numbers who can hold their own across country with the best of the men, asking for nothing better than to share the sport and the risks without favour.

It is so many years since any book has been written dealing with all the matters I have embraced in this volume, on which I am so constantly asked to give advice, that I decided to write chapters on all the most important points.

Having simply ridden for pleasure, and not being a professional in any way, I can only speak from my own experience. I lay down

no laws, remembering that experts differ on hunting as well as on other subjects. Whyte Melville says, "Morally and physically, there is no creature so nervous as a man out of his depth." I am hoping that these pages may be the means of preventing women from getting out of their depth.

A. C. STUART MENZIES.

CRICKET COURT
ILMINSTER.

WOMEN IN THE HUNTING FIELD

CHAPTER I

DRESS, COMPLEXION, FIGURE

HAVING heard somewhere in bygone days about "Fools rushing in where angels feared to tread,"—or is it "daughters rushing in where their mothers feared to tread"? I forget, but believe it must have been in my copybooks (my memory is getting so crowded at this end, some of the memories at the other are slipping out and being lost),—I feel a little shyness in embarking on the subject of women's attire in the hunting field; everybody thinks they know best, swearing by their own tailors and habit-makers.

My excuse must be that in my long and varied hunting experiences I have seen some strange sights and think a little advice

may not come amiss. It would be well for many of us if we could but see ourselves as others see us.

The six-day-a-week woman of the Shires knows all about the proper garments, or ought to do so. I address myself more particularly to the less experienced in the provinces. With so many good habit-makers there is not the smallest excuse for having one that is not properly made.

The habits of thirty years ago and those of to-day are so entirely different that to the uninitiated it must seem incredible they can be intended for the same purpose. The long-flowing, dangerous skirt is a thing of the past. Only an apron skirt, breeches and long coat, or the divided skirt, are now thought of.

A well-made apron skirt looks smart when the rider is in the saddle, and if properly managed is not unsightly when dismounted, while the comfort of it is enormous when compared with the old cumbersome skirt which hung in folds round your feet when off your horse, and a crumpled-up heap of cloth under the pommel-knee when in the saddle.

Your skirt should be well off the ground

when standing and have no hem. Some of these apron skirts are made with seams to fit the knee, but they do not look so well when out of the saddle as those that are made without and quite plain. When in the saddle

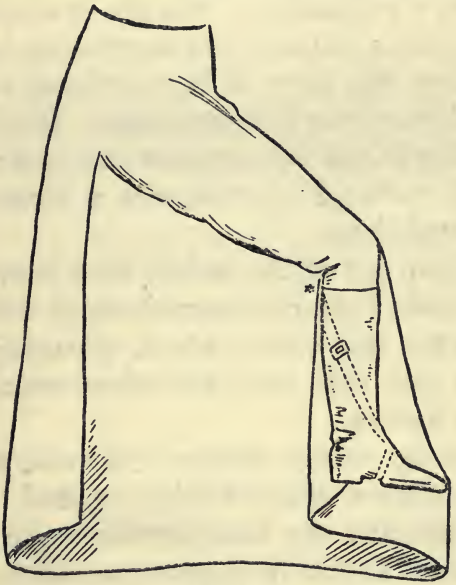


FIG. 1.

most of the apron skirts hang as shown in Figure 1. There is an elastic band where you see a small star. It is fixed on the inside of the skirt and has a loop which must be passed over the toe of the right boot. It

ought not to show from this side of the sketch as it is really on the other side of the leg and must be passed between the leg and the saddle and then over toe of right boot, but it is visible in the illustration to demonstrate my meaning. Possibly it may sound complex as you read the instructions, but the moment the skirt is in your hand you will clearly see how it is arranged. It all looks so simple and yet very few can make them really well. The man was a genius who invented them.

When out of the saddle they look quite neat when properly fastened; there is usually a button and a loop which, when adjusted, folds one side over the other, making all quite correct.

Riding astride saddles and bridles come into another chapter later on, but I must here mention the habit necessary for riding astride. There is a great prejudice about this style of skirt, but it is really much the neater of the two, and it is quite hard to tell, when standing, which is the divided skirt and which is not, except for the extra neatness of the former. There is nothing in any way immodest about them, nor do I see any-

thing amiss in the long coat and breeches. The coat comes down below the tops of the boots. Some people do not like their coats very long. Under these circumstances I strongly advise those who are not very slim to wear gaiters and not top boots; women's legs never look well below the knee in top boots, so if there is to be an expanse of leg visible I pray you wear gaiters instead of Wellingtons.

It is the fashion, at the time of writing, to make the coats single-breasted, with the collar reveres coming down very low, only three buttons, the first a little above the waist, the other two, with about

FIG. 2.

an inch between each, ending rather below the waist line (see Figure 2). All the smartest coats are semi-fitting and are not double breasted. Have the skirt part of the coat where it rests on the horse lined with leather; the sweat of the horse can then easily be sponged off.

The astride coats are usually made of what the tailors call whip-cord, and it is really a cloth with a little rib in it, running on the cross through the material.

For side-saddle riding Melton cloth is still worn. The coats for these habits are also semi-fitting and not double breasted. They are much more becoming than the more bunchy cross-over pattern. When well cut and with nice straight fronts the stoutest figure looks well in them, while Pharaoh's lean kine are beautifully disguised.

I have a little pocket like those made in Ulsters for railway tickets, put either on the cuff of my left sleeve or the left breast of my coat, into which I can slip a few small coins, which no one should go without, for they will most surely be wanted. This pocket should have a little flap to button down so as to keep the money safe.

Smart little waistcoats are being worn again. Ask your tailor to send you patterns and designs for style. They vary so much and change so often it is no use advising anything definitely.

Be sure you have your breeches made of material the same colour as your habit. You may say to yourself, Of course I should never dream of having my nether garments made of any other colour. Quite so, but then I have seen some very odd things indeed in that way among those who ought to know better. Not long ago I saw quite a well-known follower of a South country pack get off her horse to lead it over an awkward place, and behold! an expanse of large black-and-white check breeches, not in their first youth, and when I explain the individual was not of slender proportions I feel the picture is complete. Another woman I have seen out with a pack not a hundred miles from York had a nasty fall one day just in front of me, and—well, how shall I put it?—she had not the latest thing in breeches!

Breeches of the present day are a thing of beauty and a joy for ever, compared with what we used to ride in, but be sure you

have them made long enough from the waist to the knee so that they may not catch you anywhere and pull out of place.

Get into the saddle provided for the purpose in the fitting-room, and make sure they are quite comfortable. In neat breeches there is no occasion to be coy about being seen in the saddle (or out of it for that matter) without your skirt or apron; the day has gone for that sort of thing with the times when women screamed and fainted on hearing a gun fired. If you wriggle and blush you only make the unfortunate fitter uncomfortable and think you a fool.

Breeches made of doeskin are delightful to wear, but are expensive, being seven and sometimes eight guineas a pair. Buckskin, cloth, or Bedford cord, are three guineas, whipcord two pounds fifteen shillings and sixpence. If you decide on any kind of cloth ones have them lined with chamois leather, it will cost you another pound, but is worth it.

When hunting in hot climates I thought of a good plan by way of making my breeches more comfortable at the knee, less hot and bunchy, and have stuck to it ever since. I now recommend it to you. Have the few

inches below the calf of the leg where the boot comes over, made of strong satin, the same colour as the rest of the garment, made to lace at the side instead of button. The satin should be neatly stitched across and then across again the reverse way so as to make all flat and also to strengthen it. This you will find much cooler and more comfortable than the thick stuff usually found. Many people have thanked me for giving them the idea, telling me how much more comfortable they have been since adopting it.

You can order your breeches from your habit-maker, or go to specialists in that particular article. Thin doeskin breeches are very soft and stretchy, fitting like a glove. For wearing inside your breeches, I recommend very thin spun silk combinations. Never wear anything that can possibly ruck up, or make crinkles, or on your return home you will require much ointment, lint and plaster. For this reason have your shirt made short in the body, so as to avoid having much of it to stow away.

Your stock or cravat should have a celluloid stiffener inside to keep it up firmly round the neck (they take out for the wash).

If you do not have one of these supports or stiffeners, in a short time your stock or cravat will be in wrinkles round your neck, looking as if you had worn it for a week, giving you a tousled appearance. Do not be persuaded to have your stock too high in the neck; it is then a misery, and will leave an ugly red line round your throat.

Now we come to the great question of boots. Those usually worn are called Wellingtons. Have them made full large, you will be less likely to suffer from cold feet, bearing in mind also there are times when you may have to walk, perhaps a long way, over ploughed fields and muddy lanes, when easy boots will be a blessing. I have the upper parts of my Wellingtons made of Morocco leather with a little stiffening down the back seam to hold them nicely in place. The great advantage of this is the softness.

After the foot part has been cleaned in the usual way, the rest only requires a little salad oil or cream rubbed in and then polished with a soft rag; an old silk handkerchief answers admirably. Ordinary Wellingtons are cleaned, of course, with blacking in the usual way.

As to the proper thickness of these boots, it is a debated point. I have had many arguments on the subject. Personally I like them with the soles not too thick, so that the stirrups are easily felt, but many people like them thick, and I must allow they look more workmanlike than when they are thin. So this is a question you must consider well before deciding. Never, never wear patent leather boots or buttoned ones. Patent leather are vulgar and unpardonable, while buttoned are highly dangerous, murderous things. They may catch and prevent you getting your foot out of the stirrup quickly, besides which they are out of keeping and not correct. Again, if there still exists such a thing as elastic-sided boots (I believe I saw a pair on an old lady not long ago), burn them!

Warm stockings should be worn when riding, whether it be summer or winter.

The unwritten laws and etiquette of the hunting field are rigid. Women have not the same licence in the matter of clothes allowed on other occasions. I would just as soon think of going out hunting with a wreath of roses in my hair instead of a hat

as I would think of going out in any but proper boots.

Many people give fancy prices for their Wellingtons, but £3 3*s.* 0*d.* is quite enough to pay. Once I was tempted into trying a new bootmaker for the articles under discussion. I ordered what I wanted, they arrived and were very smart but too tight, and the bill was £10 10*s.* 0*d.* Needless to say, I did not order any more from him.

I have observed with pain many people seem to think you must be a fool the moment you make them acquainted with the fact you "Go a-hunting." It seems rather hard, but I have been thinking the matter out in all seriousness, and have come to the conclusion I see their point!

By the way, if you are prevented at any time from getting home and obliged to stay the night at an inn, your boot-trees, naturally, will not be there, in which case when you take off your boots, fill them to the top with oats from the stable; it will answer quite as well as the proper article. Failing this, cram them full of paper torn up into moderate-sized pieces and pressed in very tight.

Much the same advice holds good for

gloves. Have them large ; they look more workmanlike, and your hands will not be so cold ; also you can slip in and out of them quickly when you wish to. In very cold weather, use white woollen gloves, both for warmth and because, if it is snowing or raining, your reins will not slip through your fingers in the same way they are apt to do with leather. Even on fine days it is well to have a woollen pair stowed away between the girths and saddle under the off-side saddle flap—they are useful during a cold homeward ride. For ordinary occasions I like to see the hedging gloves with the seams and stitching on the outside ; they look like business. They are made of undressed leather, or perhaps I should say, more or less undressed leather.

These also can be filled with oats when away from home, to preserve their shape. Pin them together and then they will hang over any nail, peg, chair-back or bedstead, anything that comes handy. You will find them quite fresh and shapely again by the morning. If they are buttoned gloves, pass the button of one glove into the button-hole of the other, and they also will hang up anywhere quite easily.

The hat must be our next consideration. The shapes in vogue now are most becoming. They must fit quite down on the head, like a man's, so firmly they hardly require an elastic. At the same time a piece of black velvet sewn round the forehead of your hat makes it cling comfortably to the head. In addition to this have a wide, strong elastic, three-quarters of an inch wide, sewn in, an end attached to each side of the hat just above the ears. When on the head this elastic loop must be passed behind your bun of hair at the back of your head.

When going to choose a hunting hat, remember to dress your hair as you do when hunting; if you forget to do this, your hat will probably not fit you and refuse to stay on at some crucial moment. You cannot dress your hair too plainly. No puffs, no curls or artistic arrangement of any kind is admissible.

After trying many ways, the following is what I find answers best to enable me to have a tidy head after a long, hard day, and I feel I cannot do better than describe it to you. Gather all your hair together at the back of your head, well up out of your neck,

tie it firmly with a soft ribbon the colour of your hair. Having done this, with a hand each side of your face pull your hair a little forward towards your forehead, so as to make a little soft frou-frou around your face to take off the appearance of putting your ears back or as if you were about to have your morning tub, which comes from straining the hair too tightly back. Then plait or twist the hair, and arrange it as flat as possible around the back of your head in a neat bun. With much hair it is difficult to prevent it sticking out like the handle of a jug, but it can be done with a little management. Here experience has taught me another useful tip. Use as few hairpins as possible, not one more than is necessary, while as you put each one in, bend the point back, forming a little hook. If you do this, not a pin will move during the fastest run, the longest day, or worst fall. If troubled by many small, rebellious locks and curls, wear a fringe net the same colour as your hair. They can be bought at any hairdresser's and many drapers keep them. The usual price is threepence each. Being exceedingly fragile they do not last long, so it is better to buy them by the half-dozen.

Nothing looks worse than to see a woman, after a sharp burst with hounds, with loose wisps of hair hanging over her face, Skye-terrier fashion, loops of hair hanging half-way down her back, surmounted by a hat over the left eye at right angles. If you have no respect for your own feelings, think of your men-kind, what must they feel?

FIG. 3.

The two hats mostly worn are the hard felt with straight brim or slightly down-turned, and very big in the head. The brim should be three inches wide. The other is the low, square-shaped, wide-brimmed, tall, silk hat, or what the maids call a "top hat." I don't know why, but I always feel I am

being irreverent when speaking of this dignified head-dress as a "top hat," perhaps because it is associated in my mind with great occasions when men have to wear them. The tall hat, if wide enough and large enough in the head, is becoming to most people, and when your hair is properly

FIG. 4.

dressed, after a satisfied survey in the glass, you feel secure and prepared for all emergencies.

It does not matter one little bit how old your clothes are, so long as everything is correct, nothing untidy, nothing *outré*. You may then feel at peace with the world at

large, besides which everybody will be too much taken up with their own turn-out to spare a thought for yours, unless you have made some gross mistake, thereby attracting attention.

Wear no jewellery of any kind ; it is quite out of place. A plain gold safety-pin, or a very small tie-pin are admissible, nothing else, no brooches, watch chains, earrings, or bangles.

The hunting crop is worth consideration. Do not have a light feminine thing, it is no sort of use. You must have something strong enough to push back and hold a gate when your turn comes. If you have a flimsy thing it will double up or do something foolish. A strong one is also useful in guiding and pressing your horse up to a fence. If judiciously used it almost answers to another leg by pressing it gently and firmly to the horse's side.

When the hounds come round you drop the lash of your whip and trail it on the ground in front of you, they will then keep away from your horse's feet.

Thanks to apron skirts, safety bars, straight-seated saddles, etc., it is not such certain grief for a woman as it used to be

when they have a fall, but the two sexes cannot be placed on the same footing when things go wrong. A man then has far the best of it, he generally gets clear if he knows how to fall. A woman, if riding in a side-saddle, is hampered with those pommels always ready to complicate an otherwise good-natured fall.

If you find you require a spur use a Sewarrow attached to the boot by a strap. Unless you are an experienced horsewoman you are better without one of any kind. It is so easy, if thrown a little out of your seat, to dig it into your horse without even noticing you are doing it. This is not pleasing to your mount, who resents it, preventing you regaining your balance, the result being a fall. There again when you are both down, if you touch your horse with it, it is a case of confusion worse confounded. When riding astride if you wish to wear spurs, a small pair of those worn by men under the title of hunting spurs are the best, and they should have the rowels blunted; but once more I say that none but experienced horsewomen should wear a spur of any kind.

Price of a Sewarrow is 4*s.* 6*d.* with leather; small men's with blunted rowels about 4*s.* 6*d.* the pair.

Before leaving the matter of dress I think I had better give a list of prices usually paid for the things I have mentioned when bought from first-rate London tradespeople.

	£	*s.*	*d.*		£	*s.*	*d.*
Coat and Apron Skirt for side saddle	8	18	6	to	13	13	0
Astride Coat and Divided Skirt	8	8	0	to	13	13	0
Astride Coat only	3	3	0	to	6	6	0
Waistcoats	1	15	0	to	2	2	0
Breeches—Doeskin	7	7	0	to	8	8	0
Breeches—Buckskin or Bedford cord	2	15	6	to	3	3	0
Chamois lining	1	1	0				
Leggings or gaiters in cloth	1	5	0				
Shirts	0	10	6				
Spun silk combinations	2	2	0				
Silk hat	1	7	6				
Felt Bowler	0	15	6				
Hat Guard	0	1	0				
Cravat	0	3	6				
Gloves	0	7	6				
Hunting Crop	1	1	0				
Spur	0	4	6	to	0	10	6
Mackintosh	1	15	0	to	5	10	0
Wellington Boots	3	3	0	to	10	10	0

While on the subject of garments and appearance, I must give a few suggestions about the care of the complexion. I have always maintained it is part of our duty

towards our neighbour to make ourselves as little repulsive as possible. If you lose an eye it is no doubt very fine and heroic to go without. You feel a person of strong character. What is an eye more or less to you? but from your friends' point of view two eyes look nicer. You get a fall and your front teeth get knocked out, then it is your duty to your neighbour to buy some new teeth, and so on. Complexions, no doubt, can be bought as well as other matters of personal adornment but, if only women would not ill-treat their skins the way so many do, there would not be the necessity perhaps to cover up blemishes. Many women spoil that great gift—a nice skin—from want of thought and a little care. When we consider what charm there is in a healthy, clear skin, surely it is worth preserving. What is more unsightly and pitiable than to see an otherwise comely young woman come in after a day's hunting in the wind and rain, sitting opposite to you at dinner, with a rough skin, brown or red and mottled, eyes with pink rims, lips cracked, red nose looking double its proper size, and an ugly high-water mark where her stock

has rubbed her neck and wind and rain left their mark?

I think I hear somebody saying those who are out in all weathers cannot help it. Believe me it can be helped to a great extent if a little trouble is taken.

Have you ever noticed how veils get moist from your breath and flap against the face? How the wind and rain beat it against you and how stiff and uncomfortable it makes your skin feel? Here is a simple remedy, and yet not one woman in a hundred knows it. Do not wear a veil at all, unless the short hairs on your forehead oblige it, but if you must wear one, wash it in warm water with a little of the best toilet soap, rinse it well in one or two clean warm waters, hang it up until nearly dry, then have it ironed between two old soft towels or silk handkerchiefs. You will not have a stiff, hot, uncomfortable face any more, even if your veil does become moist. It is the dressing put in during the manufacture of the article that is so injurious.

For those inclined to have weak or sore eyes with burning eyelids, I advise bathing them frequently in cold tea (tell your maid to keep what is left in the teapots and strain off

the leaves), it is a good astringent and will strengthen the eyes. In addition to this smear the lids at night with golden ointment. You can get it from any good chemist for a few pence.

Another thing to remember is, before going out, smear with your finger the smallest possible amount of the best unscented vaseline or homocea round your nose, then a little cherry lip salve on your lips, wiping both off gently with a soft silk handkerchief till none shows, but you will find enough is left in the pores of the skin to prevent your lips cracking and your nose from becoming red.

In addition to this, if when resting before dinner, or while dressing, a little vaseline is smeared all over the face and neck, being washed off last thing with warm water, not hot, before leaving your room, and dabbed dry, not rubbed, you will find, unless you have a most contrary skin, you will be able to keep it soft and fresh looking. If you use powder of any kind repeat the vaseline process at bed time while undressing, and wash off in warm water last thing.

In case you wish to use a powder, I

recommend a very fine preparation of Fuller's Earth or Veloutine Rachel. The Fuller's Earth is wholesome and does not hurt the most tender complexion, besides being the colour of our skin, which is more than can be said for some of the clown-like preparations I see so often used. Do not be persuaded to use glycerine or cold cream instead of vaseline, for many skins will not stand it.

When you come in very stiff and tired, put a dessert spoonful of raw mustard into your warm bath and mix it well up in the water, or a dessert spoonful of ammonia; both are very refreshing and help to take away stiffness.

Having given a few hints on the care of the complexion, I will give a few on the care of the figure, so that there may be no ill-feeling between the two.

No woman looks well on horseback in tight corsets. The stouter the woman the less tight must she lace. There is no getting away from the fact, the stoutness is there be it shoved up or shoved down. The best and only wise plan is to have properly made corsets, or stays as they were called in my youth, cut to your figure with room enough

to move and breathe freely, giving long sloping lines and a pleasant firm support round hips and body. Women should wear some sort of support, their muscles not being so strong as those bestowed on men. Then with a coat cut in straight lines, not fitting to the figure though still showing its outlines, quite stout people will look well.

So much can be done to keep a figure in order if only steps are taken in time. No doubt, heredity has a good deal to say in the matter—all the more reason to be on your guard. The moment you find your weight going beyond its proper proportions, take up the matter firmly, buy one of the small, useful weighing machines of which there are so many to be found "on the market" (this is, I believe, the correct term). Weigh regularly every morning, taking care to be always in the same garments or state of nature, otherwise the record will be unfair and confusing, making you believe you have put on or lost several pounds in a day. Have a sheet of paper and a pencil hung up by your machine, and write down every day your weight, and the date against it. If you are becoming too heavy, avoid sugar,

milk, bread, rice, potatoes, all roots and starchy food; eating instead lean meat, vegetables grown in the air and light, cauliflower, French beans, asparagus, spinach, toast thin and dry, and so on. For a sweetening agent use saccharine tabloids, one to a cup of tea or coffee, instead of sugar. First thing in the morning and last thing at night sip a cup of water as hot as you can manage it, not tepid, for that will only make you feel sick.

By following these simple directions you will feel light and comfortable, also keep your health better, remembering what the lady's maid said, "Good 'ealth, next to personal appearance, is the greatest blessing." I am sure she must have been French.

CHAPTER II

RIDING ASTRIDE—SADDLES—BRIDLES

Why people turn up their eyes and cluck on seeing women and girls riding astride, I cannot imagine! Of one thing, however, they may be certain, the method has come to stay as surely as has motoring and flying.

All the children of the present day are learning to ride astride, which points to a future generation of astriders.

I hold no briefs for the cross saddle, but cannot fail to see its advantages, which I will point out later in this chapter, but first let me explain there is nothing "new fangled" about the idea or the practice.

The side-saddle is the later innovation of the two, not having been used in the country until Richard II.'s reign, when, in 1382, his wife, Anne of Bohemia, introduced it. Before that time all the ancient Norman and Plantagenet dames rode astride when not

bumping about on pillions behind their lords.

In 1560 Queen Elizabeth went "a hunting" on a cross-saddle, wearing breeches and boots. Oh fie! just think of it, not even the long coat of 1913! She evidently did not care for the "new-fangled" side saddle.

It would appear from the ancient manuscripts bearing on riding and the chase, all ladies of those times rode astride in whatever clothes they happened to be in when the desire of the chase seized them, whether satin dresses, crinolines, or what-nots.

For the sake of present-day modesty, I will draw a veil over these frivolous times and come to Charles II.'s reign, when it occurred to the women that a specially licensed dress suitable to the occasion might be more becoming and decorous.

The full, dangerous habit skirt then became the fashion. The early manuscripts do not state what garment was worn underneath this new skirt, at least, I have not been able to find any mention of it, but then the long s's in these documents, and the pungent spelling always ruffle me and drive me away

with a headache, so perhaps I have not studied them sufficiently deeply. At any rate I have proved that history is only repeating itself.

When I hear people criticising astride with "so indelicate," "such bad form," "what *would* our great-grandmothers have said," I always long to tell them what I think they would have said, but remembering discretion is the greater part of valour I refrain. Perhaps they do not know as much about the histories of some of their great-grandmothers as they might do.

Having made up your mind that you are going to ride astride, do not think all you have to do is to jump into a man's saddle and gallop away. In the first place, it is not so easy to ride astride as it looks. Unless a woman wishes to make an exhibition of herself, she had better practise in a cross-saddle over jumps, either in the seclusion of her own home paddocks, or in a riding school. To go out hunting before having learned experience in this form of equestrienneism is courting falls, and merriment of the field at your expense.

Those who have ridden in a cross-saddle

from childhood find no difficulties naturally, added to which they ride in proper saddles made for the purpose.

Some of the leading saddle makers are selling cross-saddles with pads in front of thigh and knee, for beginners. I strongly advise those of the sex feminine who are wishing to leave the side-saddle for the cross method of riding, to cast their dignity to the winds and begin in one of these.

The idea is, when beginning to ride cross ways the rider will not know how much she must ride by balance, exactly where the grip should be, and so on, therefore when the horse kicks or stumbles she promptly falls over its head; also if very fresh the horse may reach and pull at the bit until she is pulled on to its neck. The pads in the cross-saddle may avoid this, helping her to remain in the saddle.

The two methods of riding are so entirely different, it means commencing from the very beginning all over again.

I had better start by explaining about the saddles. The rule for a woman's ordinary side-saddle is, that 1½ lb. must be allowed for every stone of her weight. Thus, a

12-stone woman would require an 18-lb. saddle, which with stirrup leather, girths, etc., added, will bring it up to about 24 lbs. By riding a cross-saddle she will be able to reduce this weight by half. Her saddle will weigh 9 lbs., making it up to 12 lbs., with all its appurtenances. This in itself is a great consideration, as weight tells in a long day's hunting.

Then, again, consider the economy both in money and horses. A good side-saddle costs from £10 10*s.* up to £16 16*s.*, a cross-saddle of first-rate make can be purchased for from £3 3*s.* to £6 6*s.*, unless you go to a very swagger shop that has a big rent to pay, where they allow you to pay £9 9*s.* if you feel so inclined.

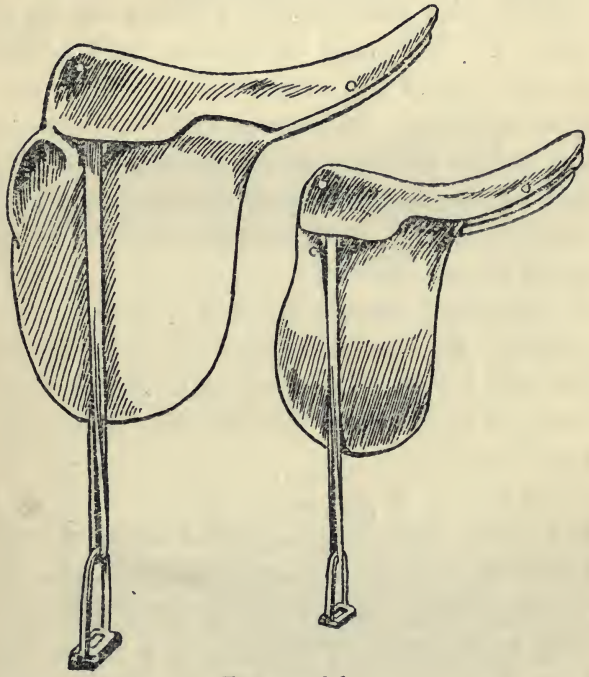
Most of the leading saddlers keep in stock astride saddles for women, but I strongly advise you to have yours made for you. There are plenty of makers to choose from. Go to the shop you decide on, in your habit, and try different saddles on the block horse kept for the purpose. Take a little trouble, it will be well worth your while. Do not grudge an hour or more if necessary, so much of your pleasure depends on having a saddle that

exactly suits you. After finding the sort you like, be carefully measured, so that your saddle may be long enough from back to front. There are few things more uncomfortable than riding in a saddle too short for you. See that the grip is in the right place, and as narrow as possible, that precisely the right measurements are taken from thigh to knee where the pad is to be made so that it comes in exactly the right place.

You will see by Figures 5 and 6 what a saddle is like with the pads and without. It is a simple matter to have these pads removed after you have grown accustomed to the saddle and able to do without them.

To look graceful when riding astride, women should be very careful to have their stirrups just the right length. If they are too short it is very ugly, giving the tucked-up appearance of the purple monkeys climbing up the yellow sticks we see on the penny stalls at village fairs. If too long they are worse than useless. An excellent guide to the right length for a stirrup is for the individual to measure from the extreme point of the middle finger to the armhole of her habit, pressing the measure well home under

the arm. The stirrup and leather should measure exactly the same length as from the point of the finger to armhole, on the same arm of course.



FIGS. 5 and 6.

Avoid swinging your legs like pendulums. They should be motionless from knee to foot, the foot parallel with the horse's sides, the ball of the foot resting in the stirrup.

Having considered the economy from the saddle point of view, we will now consider it from the horse's. A woman will find if she is 12 stone, and her side-saddle weighs 24 lbs., she will require a horse up to 14 stone to look and carry her well. This means weight carriers, and they are expensive luxuries. By riding astride, reducing the saddle weight for her mount by half, it will be much easier and cheaper to find a suitable horse, light weight hunters being much more plentiful.

There are many advantages in the cross-saddle. It is much cooler as well as lighter for the horse. It is without doubt safer than the side-saddle, minimising the dangers in falling.

As falling is part of a rider's education, I had better here explain what many women fail to understand, namely, the way of falling on their feet. When riding astride, should your horse make a mistake at a fence, you have the same chance of slipping off and falling clear that a man has, but if you slip off or jump down with straight legs, that is to say, without bending your knees, you will feel the concussion from your heels to your

brain, which is most unpleasant; so remember, in jumping or slipping off, to bend the knees well, they then act as springs.

When riding in a side-saddle a woman is severely handicapped when anything goes wrong. For instance, when a horse rears what chance has she? The very fact of trying to disengage her knee from the pommel would be enough to act as the last straw and bring the horse over with her prematurely, while astride she might, and probably would, slip off sideways on to her feet. Falling from or with a side-saddle you have no choice. You have to fall in a heap and probably under your horse, though you may be able to roll out of the way.

When a horse refuses it is so much easier to press him up to the obstacle with a leg on each side. You can also get your hands in a better position, as I have described in another chapter. The lower the hands are the more kindly will the horse go, or perhaps I should say the better you will be able to manage him.

A good horseman or woman guides the horse a good deal by the pressure of the leg. For instance, to turn a horse to the right,

press with the left leg behind the girths, and *vice versâ*. Anybody who has ridden at all knows how to make a horse answer to the reins on the neck.

The grip of the astride rider is more from the calf of the leg and knee than from the thigh, but I must here mention one of the evils of this particular mode of riding, namely, riders' cramp in the muscles of the inside of the thighs. This is very liable to occur after having to sit tight all day on a very fresh mount, the strain on the muscles causing temporary paralysis.

While quite appreciating the many great advantages the cross-saddle has over the side-saddle, and though I see nothing indelicate in a woman sitting across a saddle instead of on the side, I do not think it is wise for women to always ride astride, and often great harm arises from it.

The saddles are, I know, made very narrow in the grip for feminine use, but all horses are not made narrow. A woman that hunts much cannot always ride the same horse or horses, she must take her chance, and may do herself irretrievable harm if constantly riding horses too wide for her.

I would also hesitate very much before allowing girls to always ride astride, though it is well they should be able to do both.

The Devon and Somerset Stag Hounds see more ride-astride women in their field than any other pack I know. Not long ago a well-known woman in the West country came out in a man's white breeches and a short coat. This sort of thing would not be tolerated in the Shires, where riding astride is not taken seriously.

I mentioned in a previous chapter the proper dress for astride riding, namely breeches and a long coat, or divided skirt and coat.

If you don't like your coat cut long wear gaiters sold for the purpose instead of boots. Women's legs do not lend themselves to the poetry of the top boot, they always look more or less untidy and bulgy below the knee, as I pointed out in my chapter on dress.

Turning to the question of side-saddle riding, there is no doubt pommels give the rider a firmer seat, and the position is less likely to be injurious; there do not seem many points in favour of the side-saddle, but they are important.

Horses require more tightly girthing with a side-saddle, which is a disadvantage from the horse's point of view. These saddles require putting on to a horse's back properly. Grooms are very often neglectful in this matter, putting them much too forward over the withers, leaving a hard crinkled up numnah or saddle cloth underneath it. I do not care for these saddle cloths at any time, but they undoubtedly keep the saddle clean. If you decide to use one have it made of supple leather, and keep it nicely oiled when not in use so as to prevent it getting hard and giving the horse a sore back.

Side-saddles are so enormously improved now, quite a different thing from the elephantine howdah-like things we used to ride in.

They should be straight seated, no dip or drop of any kind from front to cantle, the tree of the saddle fitting close to the horse's sides behind the shoulder blades. The gullet plate, which is what holds the saddle off the horse's withers, should be well arched, leaving room enough for the rider to place her hand between it and the withers. The pommel should be as low as possible

compatible with usefulness; it must only be high enough for the rider to catch firm hold of it with her knee, otherwise it looks very ugly sticking up in the air draped with habit.

The leaping head, which is the proper name for the other little pommel which you press against with the left leg, must be made to move. Have two or three holes into which it can be screwed. It is a great relief to be able to alter its position occasionally, especially jogging home when both horse and rider are tired. It is a wise plan to have the screw of this leaping head made to turn from left to right instead of the usual way. By this means the more your knee presses against it the firmer it holds, instead of what often happens, working loose.

I think a balancing strap is an advantage, the saddle is less likely to slip round.

Most people use patent safety stirrups and bars. The newest of these bars is called the Weston. I do not care for any of them, and would rather ride with an ordinary man's racing stirrup, but as most people use them and they are considered safe, let me give one word of warning. You may often wish to

remount when alone, and your horse refusing to stand still, then be very careful of these safety bars when fitted to a side-saddle, for if, in your scramble to mount, you knock up the leather flap, which protects the bar, the stirrup leather will be set free and down you will come again. Horses are not always tactful in the matter of standing in the easiest position for you to mount, but learn to manage it for yourself so as not to be dependent on anybody. If riding in a side-saddle, pick up the reins and crop in your right hand, shortening the near rein so as to keep the horse's head towards you. By doing this if he moves it will be in your direction, helping to throw you into the saddle instead of wriggling away from you and having to begin again. So do not forget to shorten the near reins before you start to mount.

With the *right* hand holding the whip and reins, catch hold of the pommel; with the *left* hand, steady the stirrup to get your left foot in, then spring on the right foot, catch hold of the horse's mane with left and you will, with luck, be in the saddle. Quickly slip your right knee over the pommel and

press your left knee against the leaping head. You can then take your time arranging your skirt, etc., to your pleasure. Be quick in passing your knee over the pommel, for horses often go off with a kick and a bound out of fun, the moment you touch the saddle, when if not within touch of the pommel you will probably fall on your face, which will be hurtful to your face and feelings, and an exceedingly bad precedent to establish for your horse, who will try the same game next time.

Try to keep your left foot while mounting away from the horse's side; if you prod or tickle him he will probably kick. I have ridden horses possessing quite artistic methods of kicking, not the clumsy dash-out behind to hit who it can, but a subtle, sideway sweeping movement that catches you nicely if not very careful.

It is much easier to mount into an astride saddle. Stand a little in front of the horse's shoulder-blades, take hold of reins and crop in *left* hand, catching hold of a piece of the horse's mane, which twist round a finger; with the right hand steady the stirrup for a moment till you get your toe of left foot in,

then catching hold of the back, or correctly the cantle, of your saddle, swing the right leg over on to the far side and slip into the other stirrup. If you have your horse's mane hogged, insist on a wisp of hair being left to catch hold of when mounting. It does not show much when left near the saddle.

When mounting, try and get your horse wedged in between you and a wall or hedge, while you are standing on rising ground.

When trotting in a side-saddle rise from the thigh of the right leg. It looks so much better than rising from the stirrup which gives an ugly sideways look, and is conducive to a sore back for the horse. It is a mystery to me how women can keep up that laborious up-and-down rise from the stirrup. It must be most exhausting as well as being an absolutely wrong method.

Girths are of many kinds, being made of plaited hide, horsehair, cord and webbing. I prefer the latter all wool, called the Fitz-William. While on the subject of girths, I ought to mention that by means of having a flap made in each side of your side-saddle you can alter them (the girths) without dismounting and without having to ask

anybody to help you, which is a great advantage. Most modern side-saddles allow the rider to pull up the girths on the off-side without dismounting.

We must now consider the most suitable bits and bridles, a subject on which riders are, many of them, woefully ignorant, and without meaning it are sometimes very cruel.

I have ridden all sorts and kinds of horses requiring widely different bits, and the conclusion I have come to is: that four bits are all you require; if you cannot find one of these to suit the horses in your stable, I suggest, with all due deference to the rider, the fault lies with her and not the horses or the bits.

The first of these four bits is the ordinary double bridle, commonly used in the hunting field, which is a general favourite, one reason being that there is always one bit to fall back on in case of the other breaking at the joint. I had better, perhaps, explain for those who are not well versed in these matters, that the double bit loses none of the advantages of an ordinary snaffle, while it gains in usefulness by the powerful leverage of the curb.

For good hands, I mean by that skilful hands, it is a most useful bit. While riding on the snaffle or bridoon rein a horse can stretch out his neck to his heart's desire without losing touch with the moral support he looks for from his rider's hands when not afraid of the bit.

On taking up the curb the horse will bend his neck, bringing his hind legs up under his body and the rider's weight; which is the position most suitable for making his greatest efforts. Have the mouthpiece made thick; it is an instrument of torture when thin, chafing and worrying a horse's mouth.

The next bit in our selection is the jointed Pelham, a favourite of mine, for you can make it as light as any horse may require by riding it on the snaffle rein and equally severe by shortening the hold on the curb reins, then with a running martingale on the snaffle reins (not a standing one) to enable you to hold his head in the right place, you will be able to hold any ordinary-mouthed horse.

However, always remember in using a running martingale to have leather stops put on the reins to prevent the rings of the martingale from catching in the bit or in the

buckles, if buckled reins are used, which might lead to serious complications, and take care that the leather stops are made big enough to prevent any possibility of the rings of the martingale getting over them.

The common snaffle is the most useful bit ever invented for a beginner to use, also for the use of grooms and stable men, as they cannot easily spoil a horse's mouth with it. I never allow my servants to exercise on any other kind. The action of this bridle is perfect. When a horse carries his head more or less perpendicularly, he is restrained by the pressure on the bars of his mouth, while it bears on the corners when the head is lifted or lowered.

Be careful in all the bits you use to see they are wide enough to go across the horse's mouth in comfort without cockling up the corners of his lips.

Do not mix up in your mind the common snaffle I am recommending with the ring snaffle. The latter has a nose band attached to the inner rings, kept in place by pieces of leather sewn round them and brought under the ends of the cheeks.

The fourth bit is the twisted snaffle, which,

with a running martingale made safe by stops in the reins, I have found successful with the most determined runaway I have ever ridden. It is a comfortable bit in a horse's mouth as long as he is in sympathy with the rider, but is very powerful when necessary to use its utmost restraining powers, assisted by the martingale. The smartest bits and stirrups are of plain steel, which is kept bright by cleaning with wet sand, and polishing with dry rags, but if desired to avoid trouble, the plated variety should be adopted as they save an infinite amount of trouble, but are not so smart.

It also looks much smarter to have the reins sewn on to the bit rings, instead of buckles, but, of course, it is then impossible to slip the rings of the running martingale (when it is required) on from the bit end of the reins, they must be slipped in from the end near the hands, where there must be a buckle.

It is difficult to teach young horses, or indeed old ones either for that matter, that when we pull at them they must not pull at us, and no book that has ever been written can teach that give and take, sympathy,

delicacy of touch, call it what you will, that brings about the happy result of horse and rider being of one mind, entirely in concord, and depending on each other for their pleasure. Horses are docile, kindly creatures, most anxious to do all that is required of them if they only know how. They are like musical instruments : a gentle, skilled, light touch and we produce harmony ; a clumsy, bullying touch and we have discord.

Many people do not consider their saddle-room complete without a "gag" bit hanging up, but I shall not enter into this particular one here, because I think no woman ought to ride a horse requiring one. I dislike the bit, though I allow for buck jumpers they are useful.

Nobody can be taught to have good hands and be in sympathy with their mount. It is born with them; some people have the "whisper" which makes birds and beasts love and trust them—many have not. Just as some are wise and some are otherwise.

Satisfy yourself before mounting that the bit is suitable to the horse you are riding, and properly put on ; see that the curb chain

is exactly right; for if too long to bring pressure when drawing up the curb rein, it is useless; if too tight it is cruel. You can prove and test this for yourself by slipping your hand between the horse and the curb chain; drawing up the curb reins, your hand should have the palm side up against the horse and knuckles against the curb. If, when you draw the curb rein back slightly there is unpleasant pressure on the knuckles it will be too tight; at once let out a ring or two.

Let nervous riders remember a horse is governed by his mouth. If she pulls at him with an unsuitable bit she may have trouble, whereas with a suitable one her want of nerve may be counterbalanced by the use of a comfortable bit, so that any eccentricities on her part cannot be turned into torture for her horse. It would be very easy to write a whole volume on bits and bridles, but the four I have mentioned will answer any everyday purpose.

CHAPTER III

THE ART OF FALLING

NOTHING gives you confidence like a good-natured fall—a crash and a roll on soft ground, when both you and your horse get up a little sadder and wiser perhaps, but firmer friends through having been in trouble together, understanding each other the better. Only those who have ridden all sorts of horses and had every kind of fall, know how to accomplish it with as little inconvenience as the circumstances allow.

By a good-natured fall I mean one when neither you nor your mount are much the worse; you have not broken your horse's back, and he has not trodden on your face, or any little pleasantry of that kind.

I must confess to being like the Frenchman who said he "did not search for his emotions by breaking his neck"; therefore, having had to ride at different times every

sort of animal, from a thoroughbred hunter of perfect manners, to a half-broken three-year-old, not to mention an old bus horse who found it difficult to amble along without the support of the bus, I have made a study how to fall, and perhaps the following rules may help others during some awkward moments, and prevent some long, weary days in bed and on the sofa "getting better."

No woman should go into the hunting field unless mounted on a well-trained hunter, and without understanding a few of the most elementary rules of the game, but under these circumstances many would have to stay at home, so we must consider how best to avoid unnecessary falls, how to treat those we are bound to meet with sooner or later, and how to make ourselves as little objectionable as possible through ignorance of hunting laws.

Some of the worst falls come from riding tired horses. Women, I regret to say, are the worst offenders in this respect, chiefly from want of knowledge, not knowing when a horse has had enough.

Charging at a fence on a tired horse is asking for a fall, and generally a bad one,

for the poor beast is too blown and tired even to try and save himself, still less to get up when he has fallen on you.

If you are in sympathy with your hunter it is easy to tell when he is weary by the way he changes his feet and chances his fences; then take him home, it is the least you can do. Remember you owe him a debt of honour. Also, from your own point of view, it is better to be a live dog than a dead lion.

I have noticed both the experienced and the inexperienced often ride much too fast at their fences, not having the courage to go slow. As they feel their own nerve failing them they seek to inspire themselves and their mount by getting up steam, dealing a rib roaster or two, and administering a touch of the spur on their already only too willing horse, which throws him out of his stride and makes him take off too soon, and will probably be followed by landing with his hind legs in the ditch. To make matters worse, the rider holds hard on to his head, pulling him back on top of her; the whole disaster being caused by riding too fast at the fence and bad horsemanship.

I am not an advocate for riding too fast at anything, even water, unless you both know the place well or it is a very formidable one. At one time in my life I used to race at everything and negotiate some surprising jumps, but I also had some surprising falls, and when I came to years of discretion and rode with more judgment, had many less falls and was in at the finish more often. I think undue haste must prevent a horse from measuring his stride. Moreover, a horse cannot last in a fast run unless he is kept collected; a sprawler soon comes to the end of his tether, while a horse kept well in hand and nicely steadied a few paces before reaching the jump, whatever it may be, can see what is before him and decide in his own mind how to deal with it.

When you remember that a loose riderless horse will gallop, with the reins flapping on his neck, over all sorts of jumps, and never make a mistake, unless he gets his legs through the reins, it tends to prove how often it is the rider who brings him to grief.

When coming to a trappy blind obstacle ride very slowly, do not disturb your horse's attention from his work, and always choose a

small place in preference to a large one, when the matter rests with you. It is undeniable that a horse will jump a place more cleanly and surely if he has time to see what is before him, and I have been surprised at the jumps horses can and will take even when standing.

Most horses have a strong objection to jumping water and many will not have it at any price, in which case it is only waste of time and temper trying to get them over, and will end in your both going in. My experience tells me the best water-jumpers are blood horses. A really good water-jumper will skim along, never faltering, and clear 18 to 20 feet, while some Irish horses have been known to clear 25 feet easily.

And yet a 6-foot brook brimming over with glistening water will stop a good part of the field.

You will notice when the water is visible some time before reaching it there is always more disaster; this is probably due to both riders and horses funking it.

If you are mounted on a horse that dislikes water you will be able to tell in a moment. He will put on a spurt, saying to

himself he means to do or die; he then looks first one side and then the other, with a glance to see where it is safest to make for to avoid the trouble. He then shortens his stride, and when on the brink stretches out his neck, digs his toes in, and, unless you are prepared, will shoot you over his head.

Another favourite mode of proceeding when they dislike water is to race at it and then swerve violently to one side. This form of devilment is exceedingly hard to sit if on a side-saddle, it is so trying to your balance. If the bank is rotten you will both fall in side-ways, a disagreeable experience at the best of times. Even if you do not go in, you run the risk of being charged into by some other sportswoman or sportsman who is not expecting you to swerve across, and you are all mixed up in a heap before you know quite what has happened.

Should the day arrive when you both go in, if you still remain in the saddle, catch hold of the mane and let your horse have all the reins; do not interfere with his head, he will paddle, swim or scramble across or out somehow. If you have parted company hold on to the stirrup if you can, and he will pull you

out. Keep as close up as possible, it is so much easier, but be careful to avoid interfering with his head or he will go under taking you with him. Scrambling up the bank at the other side is often attended with difficulties; where the bank is steep and broken you will require help to be able to get up at all.

Bear in mind that whatever the fall, horses invariably throw up their heads in their endeavours to recover themselves, and if your head is in the immediate vicinity you may get a nasty blow in the face; this is particularly likely to happen while riding astride. Therefore, if trying to scramble together up a bank you would be leaning forward to help him, and your head would be very near his, have a care then so that you may not receive a blow that will make you see stars for some minutes, and it is, I know, a very painful experience.

In jumping timber you must, of course, have enough pace on to get you over, but too much pace is fatal; steady your mount a few paces from the jump, and, if he is a good timber jumper, he will twist himself over with a flick of his quarters, beautiful to

behold and still more beautiful to experience when on his back, but bear in mind a fall over timber is a mighty crash, not leaving you much time to arrange in your mind how you propose to fall, so avoid timber and locked gates unless sure of your mount, and I beg you to use discretion. I do not like to see women thrusters, for memories come back to me, through the years that have gone, of some whose pluck and ambition overcame their discretion, and who are now looking back over years of pain, viewed through a mist of tears.

In life we cannot afford to burn too much powder in sham fights, or, if we can help it, to turn the extreme medicines of existence into our daily bread in return for the amusement of one brief hour.

Here is another fruitful source of falls. Beware of rough riders, not out to hunt, but to break in their young horses, to try and cure a puller by severe bits, or to see what can be done with a runaway. They will come charging into you when least expected, bringing you to premature grief.

Keep an eye also on the young element home for the holidays, who come out on

anything they can find with four legs, and charge about wildly. I love to see them out, full of the joy of life, enjoying every moment, but give them plenty of room. I remember seeing a woman have a shocking fall through a big schoolboy, not able to hold his mount, careering wildly over a fence on to her as she sat quietly watching the end of the covert in hopes of seeing the fox steal away. The youth on his mount caught the silent, watching figure broadside on, turning her and her surprised mount completely upside-down, while he and his heavy cob fell on top of her; such a mixture of arms, legs and hoofs flying round together. To make matters look more ghastly, the woman's horse got up covered in gore, and as it was a grey looked really most alarming. We all went to the rescue, to help if we could. Fortunately nothing very serious had happened, but the boy had been riding in spurs and, while all were mixed up on the ground kicking about, he had made a map of England on the body of the grey, hence the royal colouring!

There are so many different kinds of falls arising out of so many different circumstances,

all requiring special treatment; but there is one rule I apply to all, that is *stick to your reins*, for there is nothing the least amusing or exhilarating in seeing your horse disappearing in the distance while you spend the rest of the day pursuing him on foot.

There are two schools of thought on the subject of when to leave the saddle.

One says, when your horse is floundering to a fall, you should get off or roll off the saddle, thereby allowing your horse to recover itself, free from the burden of your weight.

The other school thinks differently, saying, do not part company till you are obliged, for your horse will often recover himself at the last moment, and there is no object in manufacturing a fall by throwing yourself off.

If you watch those about you in the hunting field, you will often see both these principles being deliberately put into practice.

One strong point in favour of the "fall quick" school is that its votaries are less likely to be rolled on than their "sit tight" brethren.

Personally, I think it is a mistake to part company a moment before obliged to do so, though of course, if it is a really nasty fall, and you come down an unmistakable cropper together, by all means roll merrily out of the way, and as far as possible, but keep your reins, giving your horse as much freedom from constraint as is compatible with still retaining them in your hands. I maintain you are less likely to be kicked, as I have not yet found the horse who can have both his head and his tail in the same direction at once.

Doubtless the day will come, it does sooner or later to most of us, when you will be relieved of the necessity of making up your mind as to how you mean to fall, the responsibility then resting with your friends and neighbours of finding a gate or door with obliging hinges on which to carry you home.

This, of course, applies to the hard-riding contingent. Those who do not take hunting seriously, and only go out for a ride and to see the fun, may escape a fall of any kind.

Horses dislike falling quite as much as you do ; they never tread on you if they can

help it, having an inherited instinct which makes them dislike treading on anything alive.

Should you be fortunate enough to be riding a made hunter, it is a good plan to leave a certain amount to his own judgment, not interfering with his own way of negotiating his fences; he knows best what he can do and how to do it.

If the rider's heart is in the right place, the horse will seldom fail her. That great horseman, Assheton Smith, used to say, "Throw your heart over, and your horse is sure to follow."

There is so much difference between pluck and nerve. It is pluck that gets you into the trouble, and nerve gets you out of it.

When a horse comes to grief at a fence, you will find he nearly always falls to the right. It therefore behoves you to hold him together for his jump with the left hand, so when he comes down you will be pulled to the left, away from the falling horse, which enables you to get clear away. This is the principle which accounts for the fact that so many riders do fall clear of their horses.

Be very careful in fording deep water;

wait and see some man go across in front of you; it is so much easier for him to get free and swim than it is for a woman. A friend of mine hunting from Scarborough, a few years ago, while trying to ford a river swollen by melting snow, narrowly escaped with her life, owing to her horse being swept off his feet, but she knew the golden rule of leaving his head alone and clinging on to her stirrups, and her horse swam across with her and both arrived in safety, though suffering from the shock of the icy-cold water.

Another friend of mine, in the 10th Hussars (the late Major Spottiswoode), had his life saved by his horse swimming with him in the way I have just described, only, in his case, he told me he hung on to his horse's tail. It happened during the Afghan War, and, sad to relate, many of his brother officers and the men were drowned.

When I made the acquaintance of the horse, he was being used as a charger at Lucknow, and was very bad-tempered, possibly the result of such a strain on his nervous system. It was said to be the result of that terrible experience, as he had been a sweet-tempered beast till it had

happened. Under ordinary circumstances a horse will not drown if left alone and his head not interfered with.

One of the most frightful falls that can happen to a woman, but which fortunately is of rare occurrence, is when a horse falls back on her in a ditch and is unable to extricate itself, pinning her down underneath him. This accident occurred not long ago in a certain county, and it looked as if the unfortunate woman must be crushed to death; but she behaved with marvellous pluck, and gave directions as to the best way to help her. It was then I saw that excellent plan of Mr. Thomas Bond's, F.R.C.S., put into practice for the first time, and gave a helping hand.* I will try and describe what happened.

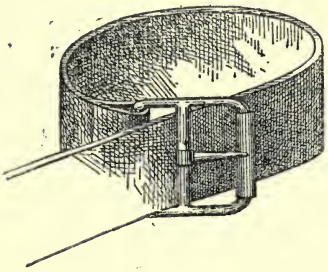
When I arrived on the scene I found the woman in the bottom of a deep ditch, her horse on its back across her, with its legs in the air, and those awful pommels close to her face. A veterinary surgeon and three other men were standing near, having taken off their coats, their horses being held a little distance off. The vet. gave us all instructions

* This method is most ably described in "Baily's Hunting Directory."

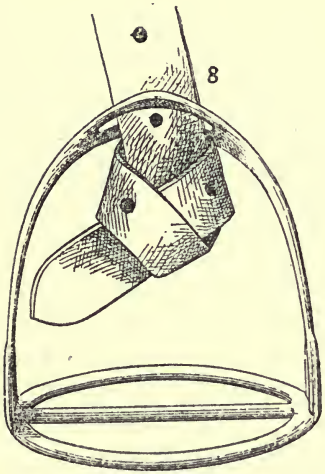
what we each had to do. First he, the vet., took the saddle off one of the nearest horses and put it so as to shield the woman's face and upper part of her body, which might be hurt by the horse's movement if he struggled. Next he borrowed four stirrup leathers, took off the stirrups, and formed the straps into loops by slipping the free end of the strap through the buckle, and drawing it up in a loop like Fig. 7. Then he took a couple of stirrups and passed the free ends of the straps through the slit on the stirrups where the leather goes through, tying a knot at the end of each leather, so that it could not possibly slip through the slit in the stirrups. It then looked like Fig. 8. Then, passing another leather through both stirrups, pulled them together with a loop like Fig. 7.

To the free end of this third leather a fourth was attached, with a stirrup at the end to pull with, having a knot to make it secure, as I have already described in Fig. 8.

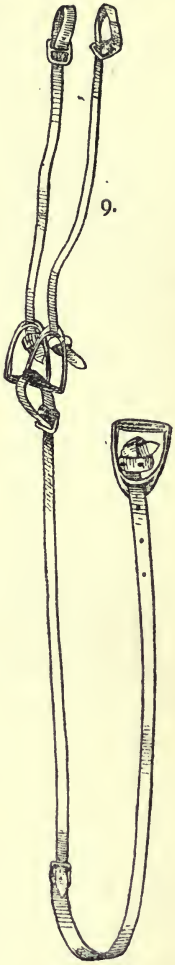
When completed, it looked like Fig. 9. It takes a long time to describe, but was very quickly done, the two loops slipped



7.



8



9.

FIGS. 7, 8, 9.

over the horse's fore legs, the long strap passed between his legs, leaving the stirrup free to act as a handle to pull with.

Three or four men now pulled on this strap, standing well behind, lifting the horse on to his haunches, and the unhappy but plucky woman quickly removed from under him.

I have been told it sometimes happens it is better to fasten the leathers on the hind legs ; it depends on how he has fallen. There is a great risk, though, under these circumstances, of breaking the poor beast's neck, but must, of course, be risked if there is no other way of saving the rider's life.

My own experience of horses when they are in difficulties, or have had a nasty fall, is that they are most amenable if gently treated. The rhines found in some parts of Somerset and elsewhere are nasty things to get into. They are often no bigger than a man can jump when on his own feet, but horses have a great objection to them; perhaps they know what evil-smelling stuff lies within. Some parts boast a great number of these ditches or rhines, particularly over the Sedgmoor part of Somerset. If you

are unlucky enough to have a dip in one your clothes are ruined, for you can never get rid of the smell.

A little observation will at times prevent falls. Unfortunately, some people possess none of this faculty, and have to suffer in consequence.

I have known both men and women who looked upon a fence as a fence, nothing more, no distinction, all to be treated in the same way, while many who have hunted for years could not tell you which side a ditch may be expected when nearing a fence leaning towards you. It is fairly safe to conclude that when a fence leans towards you the ditch will be on the far side, therefore do not go too quickly. Let your hunter have time to see what he has to do. If rushed at it, he will probably not jump big enough, not knowing how much to allow for the other side, and will drop his hind legs in. It is this sort of thing that has broken many horses' backs.

When a fence leans away from you, the ditch should be on the taking-off side. Again I repeat, not too fast.

When horses refuse I have heard riders

say it is all wickedness and vice, and the horse a stupid fool. Perhaps it is carrying the bigger fool of the two, and thinking for both.

There are many reasons why a horse may refuse, and a little study of some of the reasons may repay you. A perfect hunter may, and probably will, refuse a simple fence he could take in his stride, if ridden at it with a loose rein and arms and elbows flapping; his dignity is hurt, the result being the only one who jumps is the rider.

Another may refuse, knowing there is a drop on the landing side and the ground very hard, which his legs will not stand, so he refuses out of politeness.

Some horses refuse through fear. You can tell this easily, apart from other reasons, for he will gallop up to the fence cheerily with every intention of doing his best, when at the last moment he will throw his head forward, some will even shiver, and begin backing, or try and turn round; if the cause of this is nervousness and fright, not wickedness, he will break out in a sweat round his ears and neck. Be very gentle with him, let him have a good look while you speak

soothingly to him, then take him back and try again. If you meet with no better result try another place further up or further down, but do not beat him. If you still cannot get him over, get off and lead him if it is possible.

Whatever happens do not stop the whole field at the only negotiable place for getting over. Draw quietly away or follow behind with some one else giving you a lead; horses are very imitative creatures, and possibly if they see others doing what is required of them they follow suit.

Some day you may find yourself on a refuser who does it from cussedness. You can easily tell him from the others, for he shakes his head, lays his ears back, tries to get hold of the bit between his teeth, no amount of whip, language or spur will make any difference, while it is distressing to see both horse and rider lose their temper; it can do no good. Take him home and, if you find he is impossible to teach with you on his back or with a lunging rein, get rid of the animal, for you can have no pleasure out of it.

The writer was once riding a very clever fencer who obstinately refused a rather broad

thick fence, nothing like as formidable as some he had negotiated earlier in the day, so got down to try and lead him over or through, only to find a gravel pit the other side—even horses have method in their madness sometimes.

When riding at a bullfinch, one of those tall, straggly hedges, usually on top of a small bank, which are so well known by followers of the Cottesmore, you must go fairly fast to get through. Your horse's head makes a way for you, but put your right arm up across your face to prevent having it torn with thorns, brambles and so on.

When riding at an on-and-off, that is to say, anything you climb or jump on to the top of and then kick off again, go slowly or he may land on top in the middle of his body instead of his legs, which is disconcerting.

It ought not to be necessary to remind women to be gracious to men when they are kind enough to give up their place in a run, or perhaps lose the day altogether, in order to help them when in difficulties, but I am sorry to say, and say it with shame, women are at times ungrateful, taking it all as a matter of course. If I were a man and had received

the treatment I have seen meted out to them by those they have helped, I would never help one of them again. I will mention one instance which comes to my memory as I write. A young woman, who perhaps considered her good looks made up for her bad manners, was chasing her horse, which had thrown her, when a nice boy, well known to us all, full of good heart and chivalry, saw the trouble she was in and went in pursuit, captured the animal, brought it back and endeavoured to remount her.

Whether it was because her horse would not stand still or he made a bungle of it, I do not know, but it ended in her sprawling sideways with a scramble on to her horse, giving the youth a kick in the face in her frantic exertions and struggles to regain her saddle, besides which, during her flounderings she covered him with mud from her skirt which had evidently embraced mother earth. Not content with this, without apology for having accidentally kicked him, without staying to help him by holding his horse or waiting until he was up and then thanking him in her best Sunday-go-to-Meeting manner, off she galloped, flinging a little more mud in his

direction from her horse's heels, leaving him with his horse so excited at hers galloping away that it would only run round and round him, preventing him remounting, thereby losing still more of his day's sport. A labourer at last came to the rescue.

When I explain the lad was not well off and could only afford an occasional day on a hireling, his feelings can more easily be imagined than described.

The memory even now makes me feel almost as ashamed as if I had been the culprit.

Women should not go into the hunting field unless able to take care of themselves to a reasonable extent, dismount and remount by themselves, pull up their horse's girths, adjust their stirrups, without expecting any one to stop and help them, thereby making general nuisances of themselves.

CHAPTER IV

CARE OF THE HUNTER IN THE FIELD

THIS is a big subject, carrying many others in its train ; so many things may befall a horse, where prompt action may make all the difference between having to put a hunter out of his pain or being able to use him again shortly.

There are many, both men and women, who seem to look upon horses as machines wound up for the day's amusement, requiring neither thought nor care. How I wish I could make these people realise what sensitive, highly strung animals they are!—the noblest of God's creatures except MAN *as he ought to be!*

Let it be our object, that when, in the autumn of our days, we have to hunt by the moonlight of our memories, it may not be rendered sad by visions of dumb creatures with frightened eyes, who have trusted us as their best friends and found us wanting.

The principle is sound that, if you look after your horses' well-being, they will look after yours. Therefore see everything is comfortable about your hunter before you go out on him—the saddle just in the right position, girths not too tight; run your finger round inside them between the horse and the webbing, you ought to be able to do this easily; if you find any flesh crinkled up, smooth it out straight and comfortable. Some horses are very artful; the moment the girths are pulled up they blow themselves out, to avoid having to go all day tightly laced. So we must be artful too, and leave the saddle on, girthed up to this blown-out body; return after a short time and take the horse outside and walk him round, he will then have forgotten all about it, and allow you to finish girthing him properly.

One saddle will naturally not fit every horse, and yet, so wanting in common sense are many hunting people and ignorant of the veriest ABC appertaining to hunting requirements and rules, that they will with complacency expect the same saddle to fit a wide 16-hand horse as a narrow 14.2.

I often ask my friends what their saddle

weighs. The usual answer is, "I have not the faintest idea!" Do they know what it ought to weigh? Again they "have not the faintest idea." I hope they will consult my chapter on saddles, bridles, etc., and collect a few faint ideas.

It is so important, if you wish to hunt economically and live through long runs, that every single point conducive to the horse's health and comfort should be considered.

Having seen your saddle is put on properly, not too far forward over the withers, and not too far back; the girths the right tightness; the bit suitable and comfortable, wide enough in the mouthpiece, the curb chain nicely adjusted; your sandwich and flask are in their cases on the side of the saddle, also the extra shoe, if you carry one, as many people do—and it may save you a long, weary wait while a village blacksmith makes and fits one. All being in order, mount quietly and jog along the side of the road which is soft, unless, of course, you are sending the horses on, and driving to the meet, in which case you will look over everything before mounting in just the same way,

quietly, at some appointed place arranged with you and your servants before they start.

It is a good plan not to mount at the "meet," there is so much to excite and upset a horse—hounds, horses coming and horses going, carriages, motors, and all the rest of the usual attendants on these occasions.

When riding to the meet, do not hurry your horse, or excite him; let him jog along at that peculiar pace which seems to suit them so well and is so fatiguing to oneself; it always gives me a stitch in my side, but I stick to it valiantly for the sake of the horse. This pace is not nearly so trying when astride; you must not, indeed you cannot, rise in your stirrups, you just jiggle. Do not lark, or take unnecessary jumps—a thing bad second horsemen are constantly doing, when out of the owner's sight. I have seen even experienced horsewomen do it as well, who ought to know better. It only takes it out of your horse, whose strength you wish to husband to carry you through the day.

After a fast or long run, when you find your horse is pumped and blown, get off at once, turn his head to the wind, loosen his

girths, move the saddle a fraction—back for choice—it is a great relief to the horses. Then in a minute or two pull his ears through your hands, it helps to revive tired horses. If there is any water about, throw some over his legs, it acts like magic, and is a great pick-me-up. After a good gallop, if a horse clears his nostrils directly, he is all right; if he pauses, he has had about enough; while, if he pokes out his nose with protruding muzzle, he has had more than enough.

The more tired a horse is, the sooner you should try and get him home; do not stop to gossip and discuss the points of the run, but go to the nearest available spot where you can make a little warm gruel, and give it to the horse to drink; after this, see if he can take you home; however, if he wobbles and falters in his walk and will not try to trot, after some exceptionally hard day, there is nothing for it but to put him up for the night wherever you may happen to be, as it will be quite useless trying to go any further. Accept the hospitality of the nearest cow-house, shed, anywhere, so long as you can keep him warm, for his vitality will be at a

very low ebb. Borrow any rugs, sacks, or blankets, and cover him up. Try him with a little more warm gruel with some whisky in, about a wine-glass to half a pail of gruel will not be too much, under the circumstances; then pull his ears gently through your hands; presently you will find the poor head, with closed eyes, drooping lower and lower, till it reaches your knees, this shows he is enjoying it and feeling soothed. Dry under his throat with a wisp of hay, very gently, and try to keep up the circulation.

You may have to stay all night near him. What matter? He is worth it; but for your pleasure he would not be in this plight; he did not fail to respond to your wishes, and was willing to gallop till he died, to please you.

Some of the nastiest accidents are caused by that curse of the hunting field, barbed wire. It is such poisonous stuff, you have to be most careful of even the smallest prick, as blood poisoning often supervenes. If your horse gets hurt with it, take the first opportunity, at a farm or village, of washing it with boracic powder mixed in hot water. I find most farmers keep this powder. I do

not quite know what they use it for, whether to assist the cream, to clean the pigs, or in case of accident; be that as it may, boracic powder can be found in most farmhouses and village shops.

Carbolic oil is another excellent thing to apply and use freely, if you can get any; if not able to at the time, use it as soon as you can when you reach home, it is a good antiseptic. You cannot take too much care with wounds caused by barbed wire, it may be the means of avoiding that, always to be dreaded in accidents of this kind, lock-jaw, or, in medical phraseology, tetanus. Failing any other antiseptic, use weak whisky or brandy and water, it is better than nothing.

In some countries a system of marking wire prevails as a warning to the unwary. When a farmer must have wire, he puts up a board painted red, or a post with a small white flag on it, sometimes at his own expense, sometimes at the expense of the hunt. The white flags are the easiest to see, I always think.

In cases of wire in the open, I have seen bold horsemen get off and put their coats on it, then mount and jump their horses over,

but it is not a custom I recommend. The reason horses fall over wire is because they cannot see the strands, so if a coat is hung over it, and a horse refuses, he swerves sideways, and rushes into it with not only the possibility, but probability, of cutting both himself and you.

While speaking of swerving, it may be well here to point out a horse nearly always *swerves* to the left and falls to the right. Impress this on your mind, it makes you do the best thing at critical moments that the circumstances allow.

Wire nippers are often carried either in little cases on the saddle or embodied in hunting knives, but must only be used in extreme cases, for wire is a valuable property to the farmer, and nobody must dream of doing any damage to it if it can possibly be avoided. It is very aggravating to hunting people to be stopped by wire, but the farmer, by whose courtesy we hunt, must be considered.

By the way, while on the subject of wire nippers, they must be carefully used, as they are made of highly tempered steel, and will not stand being twisted and worked up and

down when in use, so in your haste you may very easily spoil them, for they will splinter at the cutting edge. The proper method is to give a cut through, holding the nippers straight, and giving a steady pressure. Unless you are hung up by wire, and therefore obliged to free yourself, it is better to leave any wire cutting there is to be done to the master or hunt servants.

Another common misfortune in the hunting field apt to overtake us all at times is the staking of our horses. Now this is a very elastic term, meaning anything from a stab in the foot from a sharp stump in a hedge to the large body-wound of a serious character. Happily, I have never had a bad accident of this kind to deal with, but have seen some very clever things done by other people. In bad cases a veterinary surgeon must be sought at once, meanwhile dip your handkerchief in the blood, making a hard ball of it, and press firmly ; you may be able to keep the bleeding in abeyance till help comes.

I am afraid this chapter sounds very disquieting, as if all these dreadful things happen whenever you go hunting, instead

of being the exception that proves the rule, for it is quite possible to hunt a whole season with no more disaster than a loose shoe, so much depends on luck and how you ride and what you ride. My motive in writing this is to be a help to people *should* any misfortune occur, not because it *will*, having met plenty of women full of courage, nerve and unselfishness, ready to do anything either to help themselves, their horses, or anybody else, if only they knew *how*.

When I am in difficulties, I pin my faith on farmers, they are such a good sporting lot, generally speaking, ready to give up their own sport and ride off for doctor, veterinary, or anything that may be required, while you may rely on there being a farm of some sort somewhere not very far away; it is a way they have in the country.

I feel here as if I should like to write an article on the marked difference there is in the natures and characters of those whose work keeps them under the all-embracing church of the blue sky and nature, compared with the city dwellers; but I must not digress any more, it was remembrance of many kindly farmers made me do it.

On one occasion, when my horse and I had landed on our heads in a ploughed field, and my face was so covered with mud I could hardly see, I was busy wiping as much as I could off my horse's face with tufts and handfuls of grass from the bank, when a good-natured farmer came along, took out a big red pocket-handkerchief, and helped to mop the dirt off mine.

On another occasion, when hunting in a country I did not know well, the mare I was riding hurt her back through dropping her hind legs in a ditch, and could not get on to her feet again. After trying every method I knew, or had ever heard of, without avail, I looked round for man or woman to help, but I was hopelessly left behind, not a soul was in sight, all had galloped merrily on, not knowing anybody was in trouble. So I left the mare, and made for the nearest farm-house; here again not a soul to be seen. I shouted, but received no answer, so opened a door and walked in, finding an old lady plucking chickens. She called them "vouls"; I never do know the difference between "vouls" and chickens.

I explained what had happened, begging

her to get some one to ride off as fast as possible to fetch a vet. The dear soul was horribly deaf, so I had to bawl at her; the moment she understood, however, she took off her apron, put on her bonnet, went into an outhouse, bringing forth a rag of a pony, which she herself harnessed into a low cart, something between a dog-cart and a governess car, and was gone in an astonishingly short space of time; though I saw her cast one regretful look in the direction of the "vouls," she made no murmur. I had to write a message to the vet. on a piece of paper the woman had been using to burn feathers off the chickens with!

Once only do I remember coming across a disagreeable farmer, and we parted the best of friends in the end. I tell the story to show how much better it is to soothe a ruffled brother we may encounter, instead of making an enemy to hounds and hunting. This is how it happened.

Several of us were innocently riding through a farmer's stackyard, making a short cut, when from behind a haystack rushed the infuriated owner, seized hold of my bridle, and told us all to go back, he

would never allow another something, something man or woman on his land; he would be struck dead before he would let any of us pass, we were to return at once to where we came from, or any *warmer* place we liked. By this time, everybody was talking at once, while one boy I knew well aimed a blow at the restraining hand on my bridle, which, happily, I intercepted, and at last persuaded them all to go back and leave me with the poor angry creature.

As soon as everybody had gone, he seemed to feel a little better, and I succeeded in finding out the trouble. I gathered he had been making a "Tennis larn" (lawn) for his wife, who was "terble fond of t' game," and what did the something, something hunters do but ride right over, just "for the purpose." "Yes, the 'larn' was in the field, certainly, but there was t' net up for all t' world to see; they did it for the purpose, they did, nobody must enjoy themselves but the fox-hunters," but he had done with them for ever—for EVER!

I expressed the deepest sympathy, said he had done quite right to stop us; I was glad he did, it would teach the galloping

tailors a lesson, they would in future know what a tennis net meant, and so on.

How grieved the whole hunt would be that such a sportsman should have suffered at their hands! We would all turn up in the morning with big rollers, and make it so beautiful, he would not be able to find a mark, and then perhaps he would let us stop and have a game of tennis with his wife.

After this we got the conversation on to "fat beasts." I saw my chance, fat beasts were the one thing worth living for, not everybody could fat them the way he did. How was it he was so successful? Wouldn't he tell me the great secret in confidence? We were now fast friends, and shook hands warmly; he was going to send me some of his cider to taste, and I promised to send him something for Christmas to "warm the cockles of his heart, and drink to the health of the fox hunter." As I rode away, the dear soul had a hand on each knee, doubled up with mirth, his face wreathed in smiles. The last I heard was something about somebody being the right sort.

Never make an enemy if you can help it,

either in the hunting field or out of it, for you never know when you may want a friend.

I seem to have drifted a long way from the care of hunters, and must return to them at once, for there are so many things still that I want to explain, and, if possible, prevent my readers having to learn by that expensive and often painful ordeal—experience.

Never strike a horse if it stumbles, or jag its mouth, it only makes him prance about if the same little mishap occurs again, through nervousness. Horses do not stumble to amuse themselves or you.

Every one should know what to do in the event of a horse putting his foot on a rolling stone when galloping downhill, he may not be much the worse, but at the same time it occasionally means that terrible thing, a split pastern, giving horrible pain. This you can easily diagnose, for he will be able to go no further, and will stand on three legs, the injured limb only just touching the ground. If the poor beast can hobble as far as the nearest farmhouse or cottage, beg, borrow or buy a sheet, tear it up, and make a bandage

five yards long and three inches wide. Get some starch, a couple of handfuls will do—not less—mix it with cold water till smooth, then boil it over the fire till very thick, and soak the bandage in it. When cool enough, wrap it firmly round the injured part, from coronet to halfway between fetlock and knee. Then wait as patiently as you can till a veterinary comes with slings and ambulance. He will have to rest a very long time.

A racing pony of my husband's split a pastern once on a racecourse in India; we followed the treatment I have just described very successfully; we slung her up out of the way at the side of the course, and had a shed knocked up over her. If I remember rightly she was there nearly six months.

Whenever you get a chance, get off your horse's back to rest him; if you have time, move the saddle a trifle, as I said before. A woman in a side-saddle thinks twice about getting off, because of the bother of getting up again, but in a cross-saddle it is so easy, and resting to the rider as well.

Over-reaching is quite a common occurrence, especially early in the season when

horses are fresh and gay. This is caused by hitting the back foot against the tendons of the front legs, or the heel of the coronet. If severely hurt a cold water bandage applied firmly, with a dry one on top of it, is the best that can be done for the moment; do not for this accident wash the wound, but leave it until a veterinary can attend to it.

The same treatment is good in case of strains: apply a cold water bandage; any cottage or farm will spare you some rags or an old sheet, for a consideration.

Never ride straight over grass ridge and furrow; it is exceedingly tiring for both you and your horse. Always ride across them, that is to say, obliquely.

If obliged to ride through plough, go slowly, and follow a furrow; if you gallop through with a loose rein your horse will be cooked and played out. Do not enter a turnip field after rain, if you can avoid it; the roots loosen the soil, and your horse may go in up to his hocks.

It is not only over fences we must use our discretion and think for our horses. Riding to hounds is a science; every acre of ground

that lies between you and them requires properly negotiating. There is a right and a wrong way even on grass land.

Avoid jumping a big fence if a smaller is handy and answers your purpose just as well. Nurse your hunter, and when others are tired yours will see the end.

If you get left behind, remember you must not ask your horse to attempt the same jump he would freely face in the excitement of jumping in company with other horses, and hounds in sight. I do not think horses are really fond of jumping—so much more to their credit that they accept the necessity, and are so good-natured and obliging—do not ask too much of them in cold blood.

The hard road, though a place one religiously avoids when all is going well with us, may be a friend at times, enabling us to make up for lost time when we have been suffering discomfort and vexation; being sound firm going, your horse recovers himself and gets his wind.

Speaking of hard high-roads reminds me of my astonishment when first I saw the followers of some of the Welsh packs habitually galloping "Hell for leather" along the

roads, without apparently doing their horses' legs any harm.

I remember well a bank manager who used to come out on a horse that was, I should fancy, long past mark of mouth before its owner was out of petticoats. However, be that as it may, I do not remember ever seeing them anywhere but on the road with coat-tails flying, and going as hard as ever they could go.

In many of the hill countries the followers have to stick to the roads, as the country is unridable—it nevertheless comes as a shock to those who have been accustomed to flying countries; it makes you feel as if your hair is standing straight up on your head, and turning grey "while you wait," as they say in the umbrella-mending shops.

The strange part of it is these horses seem to last quite as long at this work as their brethren in the riding countries.

I do not want to finish this chapter without giving one word of advice as to the kindest thing to do if ever that most distressing thing should happen to you, either in the hunting field or anywhere else, when you have to give the order for your faithful

friend to be destroyed after having had the opinion of a qualified veterinary surgeon.

Do not allow your favourite to be shot. There is a merciful little instrument made on purpose for these miserable moments. It is like a needle; it opens a vein a little, air is blown in and death is instantaneous. All veterinary surgeons have them. You can then before you leave cover up his eyes, it is only decent humanity to do so, and you can move away feeling you have done everything in your power for him, saying to yourself as you give the last caress, "The wound is yours, but the pain is mine."

CHAPTER V

HUNTING FROM TOWN

WHY more people do not hunt from Town has for long been a mystery to me; it must be because its facilities are too little understood. Should your home happen to be in or near one of those famous hunting centres —Rugby, Market Harboro', or Melton— nothing can, of course, be better, for there is no truer way of enjoying the sport than by hunting from home, where you know everybody and everybody knows you, while you experience that wholesome and delightful feeling of being at home amongst friends and familiar with all the lanes and short-cuts in the country.

It is another matter to take your horses down there for the season, staying at a hotel or taking a hunting box. Think of the dull days when there is no meet, or for some reason you are unable to go out—possibly, not a horse fit to take out, or, worse still,

not fit to go out yourself; nothing to do all day, nothing to look forward to except an evening paper which is generally unobtainable, after which a bad dinner, followed by a restless night, varied by dreams in which you see a string of hunters being exercised, all of them hopping lame! your bad nights being caused by ennui and want of fresh air.

Now turn to the other side of the picture —an off day in Town—your comfy club, bright fires, well-trained servants, armchairs, papers to the right of you, papers and magazines to the left of you, friends and acquaintances when you feel inclined; touch a button, and a taxi awaits you at the door to take you to find distraction at the house of a friend, a theatre, a concert, or, when all other helpers fail, your dressmaker! Surely this is a happier picture.

Having decided you will hunt from Town, the next point to settle is, will you send your horses down to where you mean to make your headquarters and leave them there with your groom, or will you keep them in Town, and hunt just where your fancy takes you—a day here, a day there, taking your horses with you?

This is a matter to be decided after careful thought. I will only state the advantages and disadvantages of each. When speaking from experience, that stern taskmaster but efficient teacher, it is difficult not to sound egotistical, but I will endeavour to drape the ego as modestly as I can.

Most of those I know who hunt from Town are the kind who hunt to ride, not ride to hunt. There is a vast difference between the two : hunting from Town means money, but all hunting has a tendency that way; it also means hard work, up early, struggling with hairpins and stock with cold, numb fingers, in the dark or early dawn, long railway journeys in cold blood and emptiness, returning wet and weary. For the very young it does not much matter perhaps, but "make hay while the sun shines," for after your first youth has gone it will be found too great a strain on the nerves, and you will find yourself unable to reap the enjoyment your strenuousness deserves.

Not many women seem to know how many packs there are which the Londoner can hunt with. Among the Foxhounds packs within easy reach are :

The Essex, meeting on Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday; best centres: Leaden Roding, Bishop's Stortford, Saffron Walden, according to the day of the week, different parts of the country being hunted on different days.

The Surrey Union, meeting on Tuesdays and Saturdays before Christmas, Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday after Christmas; Dorking and Leatherhead best centres.

The West Kent, with rather too much woodland; meet Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday; centres: Farningham, Sevenoaks, Tonbridge, and Wrotham.

Old Berkeley, Monday and Thursday, and occasional bye days; best centres: Watford and Rickmansworth.

Hertfordshire, Monday, Wednesday, Friday, Saturday; centres: Luton and St. Albans.

The Garth, Monday (North), Wednesday (Centre), Friday (Hants), Saturday (Surrey), at 11 o'clock; centres: Bracknell, Wokingham, Reading. This

country lies in three counties, Berks, Hants, Surrey.

Crawley and Horsham, Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Saturday; centres: Horsham, Steyning.

Puckeridge, Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday, Friday and Saturday; centres: Bishop's Stortford, Buntingford, according to place of meeting. Strangers are expected to subscribe liberally.

You will find plenty of old friends with each.

Every field has its characteristics; one feels a something not easy to describe—in the shires, so much friendliness and distinction; some other fields, where big crowds come out, where the hard-riding casuals have hardened and embittered hearts, less friendliness and less distinction; and so on to the fields where perhaps only about twenty farmers come out, but where you have had the proud distinction of being alone with the pack on some great and memorable occasion.

In later years, when the sun has gone out of your life, all the memories come back of the "have been" days, standing between

you and the clouds which have no silver lining—between you and the scorching sun of the East—the cheery voice of the huntsman, the music of the hounds, reminding you of the different days with various packs. Ah, well!

* * * * *

It is an exceedingly annoying thing to have dressed in the dark, had a long railway journey, and then to have a blank day, splashing in the rain from covert to covert, hunting that uncertain "varmint," the fox. So, if riding is your enjoyment, you may be satisfied with that imitation of hunting the paddock-fed deer provides. Here you are more certain of a gallop.

Then, again, the staghounds are in easy reach, and meet at the convenient hour of 11.30—I am speaking of Lord Rothschild's.

There is a "Hunt Special" leaves Euston in the morning at 9 a.m., which takes you down in plenty of time to hunt with them. By this train you reach Winslow at 10.33 a.m. You have to change at Bletchley, or, by leaving Euston at 9.30 a.m., you can reach Bletchley at 10.42 a.m., or Tring by 10.17 a.m.; but for this latter notice must be

given to the stationmaster at Euston or the guard of the train, or it will not stop. There are always crowds of the stag-hunting people, as well as occasional fox-hunters, in this L.N.W.R. Hunting Special which leaves Euston at 9 a.m. for Winslow, Bletchley, and near meets.

It is one of the nicest trains to travel by —everybody going hunting and in good spirits, and you soon become friends with all the regular travellers by it, while the guard seems to be used to the strange habits of hunting people, and wishes you "Good sport," with as much heartiness as though he himself were a hunting man.

Horse-boxes are not conveyed by these trains, but they can go by the 8.55 to Leighton, due there at 10.15.

For Aylesbury horses leave Euston at 6.10 a.m., arriving there at 7.52; or they can leave at 11.5 a.m., arriving there at 12.55.

The charges for boxing and man are as follows:—

	s.	*d.*		*s.*	*d.*
Box to Leighton .	10	6	Man's ticket	3	4
„ Tring . .	8	0	„ „	2	7½
„ Aylesbury	11	0	„ „	2	11
„ Winslow .	12	3	„ „	4	1

Of course, trains are subject to alterations, and so are the days sometimes with different packs, also the hour of meeting. I am now stating what you will find at the time I am writing, so it is well to ask occasionally if there has been any alteration. However, I have been able to show that even the laziest can go out with these packs without any violent self-sacrifice.

If very energetic, and not obliged to study expense, there is nothing to prevent your hunting in the classic shires themselves.

By leaving King's Cross at 7.15, passengers are due at Grantham by 9.23 a.m. There is a train at 7.45, arriving at Melton Mowbray 11.30, changing at Peterborough; but the former is much the best train.

Horse-box will cost 26*s.* 6*d.*, man's fare, 8*s.* 8*d.*

Or you can reach Rugby at 9.34 by leaving Euston at 7.30; Market Harboro' at 10.44 by leaving St. Pancras at 8.10.

So there is really endless choice of packs; it only rests with you to ask if these trains are still running, and then decide which, when, how; and if you take your horses with you, which train they must go by to be

in time, not many of the fast passenger trains taking horse-boxes.

I advise you to take a note-book and spend a happy afternoon making out a programme for the season, which may have to be altered as time goes on, but will give you an idea of what you will be able to manage, depending, of course, on whether you are hunting taking your horses with you daily, or keeping them in the country. Keeping them in London gives them the advantage of the mistress' eye; you are able to see they are properly fed, groomed, and looked after. But against this, while you have to be up and away at dawn, your horses have to be up and away some time before, to enable them to be taken quietly to the station. This makes a very long day for them, added to the risk of a lazy groom not being up in time to properly attend to the grooming and feeding, causing the poor beasts to have an "aching void and longing sorrow," as the song says, long before they see any more food.

Some horses do not take kindly to railway journeys, and fret in their boxes, coming out in a sweat and lather, temper upset, and

nerves in a tangle; it is hopeless trying to hunt a horse of this description. Most horses come out from the confined space of a box rather stiff and cramped, but a steady old hunter who knows all there is to know, makes nothing of it, and is none the worse; in any case, it wears off after a stretch in the fresh air.

All horses cannot be treated alike; they have their temperament and character just as we have; therefore, those who wish to get the most enjoyment at the least expense must study the character and temperament of each of their hunters. Have plenty of warm clothing for them, when returning hot and tired, after a long day, bearing in mind an old horse will want a warmer rug than a younger one.

The exercising of horses in Town is rather a problem. The best chance are the parks in the morning, but be sure it is done; grooms are not always trustworthy, and it is wise to appear unexpectedly on the scenes at intervals; you will meet with many painful surprises at the hands of your trusted servants, but not half so painful as those the helpless hunters meet with, while unable to protest.

A very favourite game with grooms if you are not watching them, is to box a horse straight away by the first possible train after your return from hunting, without dry-rubbing his legs and feet, and without bandages, while, although *they* have been refreshing themselves at intervals all day, it does not occur to them the possibility of a tired hunter requiring a little refreshment, if only a pail of gruel with a little beer in it.

Another grave fault: to save themselves trouble, they will mix the oatmeal for the horse's gruel with cold water, and then dash some warm in on top, which is quite wrong; so, unless you are absolutely assured in your own mind of your groom's trustworthiness, wait and see it mixed yourself. *Boiling water* must be poured on the oatmeal, mixing it up, and stirring until it is like cream, then pour on cold water till it is tepid, a wine-glass of whisky or a quart of beer mixed with it, if the horse is at all done up he will drink it, poured in after he has begun to drink; pour under his chin, when he will not see or smell it.

You may have to press an ostler or a railway porter into your service at times, for

it is not always possible to return to the point you started from, where your own servants await you.

When once you hand your horse to a railway porter, it is his responsibility or, rather, that of the railway company he is representing, so, whatever you want doing, he must do it; if you or your servant tends the horse, the company will not be responsible.

Nothing will ever make me leave my hunters, even if I am wet to the skin, until I have seen them made comfortable and fed; it seems so little to do in return for their willing services all day; I like to reward them with all the care and comfort I can command.

You *may*, of course, have a pearl of great price among your grooms, but then, who *can* you trust to be perfect?—"Not even the sun, or one's last baby!"

To those who would not be able to hunt at all unless very managing and careful, I do not advise hunting from Town; the constant railway journeys are so expensive when taking your horses with you. You can, of course, go down the night before, and stay where your horses are, if you have left them in the country

either under care of your own servant, or at livery; this latter is also expensive. When you leave your horses at livery, you pay so much a week per head, which covers everything; you are more or less at the mercy of the stable-keeper and ostlers; this cannot be helped, they have many horses to attend to; yours must take their chance with the rest, your horses reaping the minimum benefit while you pay the maximum price, allowing for the exceptions that prove the rule.

The usual charge at livery for a horse per week is 30*s.*; for this sum the horses will be taken any reasonable distance to meet you, but any out-of-pocket expenses, such as rail fares, man's food, and so on, are extras. You will naturally ask what food your horse will have for 30*s.* a week, and you will be told there is no restriction, they have everything they "require"; then, what they require must be settled between you and the proprietor of the stables. Possibly your views on the subject and his may not be the same; however, you cannot stand in the stable and see the agreement faithfully carried out. The only thing you can do is to be always on the look-out; and therein lies the worry of it.

If very observant, you may be able to nip in the bud many faults of neglect and carelessness, which would otherwise end in a serious row. Once I used to feel strange and shy when marching about strange stables, and among still stranger men, but I am now quite case-hardened. A person's own good breeding is the best security against other people's ill manners. I must, however, pay a small tribute to the many kind and willing helpers I have met with, both in this country and abroad.

Diplomatists tell you, "Never to give your reasons for anything you do, for your conclusions may be right, and your reasons quite wrong." In many cases this golden rule applies admirably, but with stable-helpers I have found it better to explain what you want doing, and the reason you want it done, in the plainest and most simple language; your orders *may* then be carried out intelligently.

It is too much to expect a hurried, harassed stable-helper to work out problems for himself; his mind travels slowly; for example, you wish a poultice put on the off fore leg of your hunter to try and get out a thorn and reduce

the swelling around it; call the man up to the horse with the swollen leg, point out the exact place you wish poulticed, ask him how he means to fasten it on; if his reply is unsatisfactory, show him how it is done with a bandage, after which make him show you how you did it! Explain the right heat for the poultice by telling him to try it against his face, which will probably bring a smile amongst the wrinkles, but is an excellent guide to the right heat; as soon as he can bear it against his face, it is right for the horse's leg: after which, ask him which is his own off fore leg. This will be an awful moment; he will look down in wonderment, and when you point out that it is the one with the buttons off his gaiters and the bootlace broken, his face is wreathed in smiles, and he will never forget until the lace breaks in the other boot. You can then leave him; he understands what you want done, and it will probably be done. Always be very quiet in manner, and dignified. Never, in the most trying moments, use anything but the most studiously polite language.

The air in livery stables gets so loaded with "damns" and swear words which Dr.

Johnson, in his dictionary, describes as "terms of endearment among sailors," that an order from you delivered without any such endearment marks an epoch in the day not easily forgotten.

I remember on one occasion being very highly tried. We were staying (spouse and I) at a miserable inn, in a cathedral town (I have never liked cathedral towns since). We had been told it was the best place to stay at, as the stables were so good. My lord and master had gone to spend the night to hunt with a neighbouring pack in the morning. Not being quite happy about a mare I had been riding that day, I thought I would have a look at her last thing at night, to satisfy myself all was well with her; when I had left her at five o'clock she was comfortable in her loose box, but refused her food. At 10.30, I wandered off with my hand electric-light to the stables; they were locked, so I went back to the hotel (so it called itself), and asked for the keys. Many excuses were made, the man who had the keys had gone home, and so on. I began to feel uneasy, so stood my ground, saying how sorry I was to give so much trouble, but I

wished to go and see the mare I had been riding, who refused her food. At last a sleepy, sulky-looking man appeared with the keys, saying he had been to see her, and she was all right. I thanked him, saying I would like to have a look at her myself, and went, the man following in my wake.

On the door being opened, I found the mare had been taken out of her loose box and tied up in a stall with another horse I did not know, neither of them being, of course, able to lie down and rest. Tableau ! I untied her and walked her out of the stables on the spot, and took her down to the house of a sporting parson I knew in the village, who very kindly allowed her to stay there until I found other quarters, when I at once removed them all.

Needless to say, I took every opportunity of telling my friends why we had moved our horses.

In these jealous and quarrelsome days, I am not sure it is not the best and happiest plan not to hunt with any particular pack. It saves an infinity of trouble, and you do not then run the risk of being mixed up in feuds and cliques. It always seems to me

such a pity when people spend endless money and trouble over seeking their pleasure, they should so often end in quarrelling over it with everybody's pleasure and tempers spoilt.

You may like all the parties concerned each in their several ways, but when people, on whichever side, pour their troubles into your ears, make it your business to let it slip out of one ear as it comes in at the other and forget all about it, always feign complete ignorance of any disagreeables in the air.

Hirelings are not to be despised. For the modest sum of £2 2*s.* a day, they are to be found in most hunting centres, as well as London ; this mode of hunting relieves you of all anxiety and worry, and you can hunt where you like. All you have to do is to give the order to the stable you have made the arrangement with, to have your horse at the meet or station, as you may desire ; you find it there ; when possible bring it back to the same place to its groom ; circumstances occasionally oblige you terminating your day in some other part of the country, then all you have to do is see the horse made comfortable and fed, then telephone or wire to the groom to come at once ; do not leave

yourself until he comes and the hireling is in his care; your responsibility will then be at an end.

It is consoling to think these horses are as a rule well cared for, otherwise they would not last; they are well fed and well groomed —it is the owner's business and profit to keep them fit. They are a long-suffering class.

It is not the same joy as riding your own horses, certainly; one day you will find you are mounted on a fiery chestnut who rushes at his fences, and hurls himself over, which is alarming; another day you may find yourself on a dear, safe, sticky old thing that does not understand the word "hurry." I have not hired very often, but have nothing to complain of with those I have tried.

Hiring two days a week for the season, you would find horses you liked would be reserved for your use, but if you sign a contract for that, and a six weeks' frost sets in, it is very anguishing; you have to pay just the same, unless you have a "Frost" clause in your agreement, while the horses are eating their heads off. If you only hire for odd days, you have to take your chance

of what is provided for you to ride; however, if you are a light weight and have that born gift, "good hands," you will find most mounts possible.

When riding hirelings, my own pleasure is always a little spoilt by the feeling they have a hard life, and I ought to spare them, for they are so patient and long-suffering with their many ignorant and clumsy riders.

Write to the secretary a day or two before you go out with a new pack, if you do not know their rules, and send your subscription or cap money, and when you go out, take the receipt with you, it makes it much pleasanter for everybody.

Some masters do not like motors brought on to the scenes, in which case you will, of course, comply with the rule.

Always carry some small coin with you, and some provisions, which reminds me what strange things some people take with them. One woman I know takes chocolate, and eats slabs of it. How thirsty she must get! though she won't own to it. Another takes meat lozenges and ginger nuts—still thirsty things! Nothing is nicer, I think, than a nicely-cut sandwich, made with beef slightly

smeared with chutney—whisky and water in the flask. Carry a couple of forage biscuits for your horse, and give them to him when you eat your own luncheon; it is surprising how that and a *small* drink of water, just enough to wash their mouths out, refreshes them. Do not give them much to drink, only what would answer to a whisky and soda for the biped!

When riding your own horses, carry an extra shoe and nails with you for your hunter; it should be in a tidy leather case, made the shape of a shoe, and fastened to your saddle with a small strap. This little precaution may save you tedious waits at village blacksmiths, in the event of your horse casting a shoe.

There is always a little danger when hunting from Town of getting out of condition and soft in off days. In the country, you would go out with your gun, or some such exercise, but in London it seems to come naturally to do nothing. Try and keep fit, or all the pleasure in your life will be gone.

A friend of mine long past her first youth tells me on off days she goes into the country

by train, and runs with Beagles to work off her stiffness!

If unable to take any other form of exercise, a little Sandow every morning is grand—makes you feel frisky and full of health.

CHAPTER VI

RIDING TO HOUNDS—FOXHOUNDS

For the woman who mounts a horse and says, "I will hunt," there are three great branches of the sport offered to her by three widely different animals—the fox, the stag, and the hare.

Turn your attention to any one of these wonderful beasts, and it will lead you through many adventures, and introduce you to many cheery companions, before the time comes when the hunting-crops have to be laid aside and lace caps donned.

If you can afford it you will hunt the fox; if you cannot, you will have fun enough with the hare, and if you are wise you will hunt once, at least, in that most beautiful of all countries—Exmoor, where grows the proud, wild stag.

Different methods of riding are required for all these sports. For instance, you ride

to foxhounds and to harriers, while it is correct to speak of riding at staghounds.

But I will speak of fox-hunting first. It is a characteristic of good breeding to be physically calm in proportion to our mental excitement. The hunting field, especially fox-hunting, offers plenty of opportunities for displaying this fortitude. All forms of hunting are exciting, none perhaps more so than fox-hunting, where it is not always easy to keep our sense of proportion evenly balanced.

Courage and pluck are, no doubt, essentials, for without them the best horse and the best hands will not help you, but it is these two qualities that get us into trouble. After all, courage is greatly a question of health, and the state of our livers, while nerve, which gets us out of our dilemmas, is more a moral self-respecting quality, often arrived at by judging ourselves as we think others could judge us, by living up to an ideal, but here we must pull up or we shall find ourselves confronted with how we came by our ideals, what part environment plays in our lives, and so on, not altogether appertaining to riding to hounds, or, at any rate,

not the side of it I am at present discussing.

In the excitement of the chase we are all rather carried away, tempted to ride as if we had never seen a run before and never could see one again, even when we are old enough to know better and to ride with more judgment, for it is this commodity that may enable us to be there, even if not mounted on the best horse in the field. Our courage must be tempered and balanced by judgment. We are not out to court falls, though when they are unavoidable our nerve must come to the rescue and make the best of them.

I believe that in most of life's phases the first blow is half the battle, whether physically, diplomatically, or in the chase, so make a point of getting away well, so as to be on good terms with the pack. With luck this can be managed without riding over hounds or making a nuisance of ourselves.

But to accomplish this your head must be screwed on the right way and you must keep your eyes open. Time is often lost at the meet; while chattering you have not noticed the hounds have moved off. You will then feel dismayed, but will very likely be told

by some learned friend they are going to draw Barrington Covert, they won't find and there is no hurry. This may be so, and it may not, but my advice is : do not run any risks, keep an eye on the hounds, and the moment you see them move off from the meeting-place move off with them, just keeping the second whip between you and them, riding, of course, to one side.

If, by following closely, you have to flounder about through some deep, and what appears to you unnecessary, ground, never mind. It will not take half so much out of your horse as galloping full steam ahead, making up for lost time when you have been left.

The whole joy of hunting is in watching the work of the hounds, while if you know them individually it is an intoxication. Remember, however, the best of hounds will at times deceive you, especially when first getting away with their fox. They will lead you to believe there is a burning scent, which may not always be the case, so ride cautiously ; it is not often hounds run many fields without a hover or a check, and if not careful you may easily over-ride them.

Foxes, by nature, travel down wind.

They are wise enough to know running against the wind would not be in their favour, so it is a fairly safe rule to keep leeward of the hounds. If by any chance they turn up wind, they will simply race. This is reason enough for not letting them out of your sight if able to avoid it. However, take comfort in the knowledge that when the fox does take it into his head to run with the wind against him he does not mean going very far.

You may ask, if it is a calm day and no breeze to speak of, where should you ride, to the right or to the left? But here I cannot advise you; your instinct, experience, and watching every movement of the hounds and hunt officials may help you, but my impression is, that something we call instinct which guides the migrating birds across the sea will have to help you here. If you take an intelligent interest in hunting, certain knowledge comes naturally and instinctively; not, of course, if you go out simply to ride jealous, show off your horses, and incidentally yourselves. If you are not born with this gift we call instinct, we must see what we can do with common sense.

In choosing your line be guided rather by firm foothold and sound going than by the smallness of the fences, and if it is a hilly country ride rather above than below hounds, always, of course, well to one side; then if by chance they turn away from you you have the pleasure of riding down after them instead of up. Ride easily down the hill, not full gallop; by this means you will be resting your horse and be ready to do a spurt up the other side.

The mystery of scent is much argued; some will tell you it is from the foot or pad of the fox, others will tell you it is from the body. I should not like to commit myself by stating what I think, in fact, nobody really knows unless it is the fox himself; he might also give us information on several other debated points.

The fox certainly seems to have some "method in his madness," and to regulate his movements by his knowledge of scent and its consequences. He always seems to have clearly made up his mind as to what to do in all emergences, for though I have seen them look angry and annoyed, tired and draggled, I have never yet seen one look

scared or worried. Perhaps it is because they know that for a short distance at any rate they are faster than the fastest hound ever born. A hunted fox seems to thoroughly understand the fact that to keep out of view shows a mark of ability; he knows perfectly what to avoid and what does not matter. For instance, labourers working in a field do not trouble him the least, and he takes no notice of farm dogs. Perhaps another reason why they take being hunted so philosophically is because they have so many suburban villas they are accustomed to occupy, and know every drain and ditch; which are full of water and which are dry; also that they can climb a wall or even a tree, though they are not wise in doing so.

Certainly the chances are all in a fox's favour, the wonder is that he ever gets caught at all. I am, of course, presuming he is the proper wild animal, not a tame one turned out of a flower pot, figuratively speaking.

What is to happen if he runs to ground in some snug corner he knows which has escaped the eye of the earth stopper? Many, perhaps the majority, will say, "Dig him

out," "The hounds deserve him"; if the point had to be decided by my word, if I had to give the casting vote, I would say, "Leave him, he deserves it." I have no objection to the legitimate eviction from a drain or some such haven of refuge, but to dig out a fox in cold blood and have an unseemly one-sided scrambling at the end does not strike me as fair or English.

It is a many-sided question; there are more to be considered than the fox, the hounds and the field. The farmer, for example, may have feelings in the matter; he is the sufferer on all sides. The fox eats his ducks and chickens, the hounds and followers break down his fences, frighten his cattle and plough up his seeds. In spite of all this, I think many, if asked their opinion, would say, "Let him bide," for in hunting countries the farmer meets with sympathy for any damage done, in the shape of compensation, and because most of them are a sporting, fair-play-loving lot.

The question of digging, however, rests absolutely with the master, whose word is law, and he is not likely to ask peoples' opinions.

Fox cubs brought up with their mother learn from her to be wise and cunning. Should any misfortune happen to the mother the cubs are useless from a sporting point of view; they have not learned the tricks of their trade; they will not run, they do not know the country, having had no long night journeys and excursions searching for provisions under their mother's directions.

There is no more devoted mother than the vixen up to the time the babies are able to look after themselves, when cub-hunting begins. Then one of Nature's tragedies is witnessed, for the father fox and the mother vixen will not hesitate to direct attention from themselves by ousting the hitherto treasured children into the jaws of death, while they themselves stay in safety behind till all is still and silent, when without shame they will again show their masks to the light of day. It does not seem nice, but they are spared the greater tragedy of the human mother who so blindly, and without count, lavishes the wealth of her great love upon her children until the time comes for the inevitable parting of the ways, when from her harbour she sends forth her little ships

with their white sails set, out on to the sea —watching—and watching, till there is nothing left between her and them but the mist and the rain.

Hounds have very sensitive ears. When running riot or even heelways on a fox, a screech or a discord blown on the horn will sometimes stop them more quickly than rating, the noise seems to horrify them.

When the huntsman blows discords, if no whip is near to go to him, some member of the field should go and see if he can be of assistance; it may mean the hounds are eating forbidden things, and must be turned off, or he may wish to keep them off a litter of cubs.

The life of a hound is very brief and not very happy. Watch a pack come up to the meet or out exercising. You cannot fail to notice their aspect of absorbed depression and melancholy, neither looking to the right nor the left, moving along as if because they must, not because the joy of life made them. They never dream of moving out of the way or taking care of themselves, the result, no doubt, of the severe discipline they go

through from the moment they come in from walk. If they could speak, I expect they would tell us that, like soldiers, when wishing to explain any situation, if they say, "I thought so-and-so," they are told they have no business to think. They must leave that to their superiors (?). If they say, "I did not think," they are greeted with, "Why the —— didn't you think? What are you here for?" The only time hounds lose that air of depression is when they are thrown into covert, one of the happy moments of their lives, when all else is forgotten—injustice, hunger, everything.

This peculiar melancholy appearance is more noticeable in foxhounds and harriers than in beagles; some of the latter are happy, cheery, forgiving little fellows, and yet they have much the same life to endure.

Now, the wire-haired hunt fox-terrier is quite different; but he has more freedom, for they often get more liberty on non-hunting days. They seem to enjoy every moment of their lives, even when being nearly strangled by their leads when straining to get ahead—even when being swung over a fence by the strap and collar round

their necks, as I saw being done once when out with a pack of otter hounds. Poor little beasts! How I wished the master could have seen the way his plucky little terriers were being treated! I think he would have had something to say.

At the end of your day you may be able to congratulate yourself on your luck and the way you were carried, and live it all over again as you sip your tea and eat buttered toast by the fire. Another day, when all has not gone so well, you are wishing you could have the day over again. You see now where you made the mistake; you would ride it so differently if only you could have it all again. You had forgotten how much "wind" has to be taken into consideration, and that when a horse is blown a mountain or a mole-hill are all the same to him. The toast does not taste so nice to-day, and the fire smokes; everything seems to have gone wrong. I know the feeling very well. Is there no kind soul about to bring a cigarette and a match, put it down, and go away again without speaking?

History is repeating itself. In 1595 we

read of Lady Master of Foxhounds, and it seems to be coming into fashion again now, though it is mostly harriers that find Lady Masters, this form of hunting being better adapted to their strength, the fields also being more easily managed.

CHAPTER VII

STAG-HUNTING

RIDING at staghounds, as it is termed, has existed from time immemorial, but much of its later-day popularity is, I think, due to the beautiful air and scenery on the Exmoor and Quantocks—the vast expanse of the purple heather moors, the thickly-wooded coombes, all breathing poetry. It is a soul-inspiring land of far distances.

Stag-hunting proper has its home on Exmoor. Only those who have ridden after the great upstanding wild deer of the forest can realise the extraordinary fascination of hunting with the Devon and Somerset Hounds. The cream of the hunting is with this pack which is kennelled at Exford, though there are many deer on the Quantock Hills near Taunton, where the hounds hunt them once or twice a year.

On the Dulverton side of the country,

Sir John Amory's staghounds can be hunted with. Their runs take place across much unridable enclosed country, necessitating a good deal of road-riding. To see stag-hunting in the height of its glory, you should go to Minehead or Porlock in August; you will enjoy sport very different from anything you have ever experienced before. There will be crowds out, equal to, if not exceeding, those out with the Quorn and Pytchley. But woe betide the person who dares to compare the two sports in favour of fox-hunting; it is an unpardonable offence.

It requires a physically strong woman, on a short-legged, well-bred horse, to enjoy this sport, the perpetual riding up and down steep coombes being exceedingly tiring, both to woman and her steed. You cannot do better than mount yourself on a local hireling, of which there are many most excellent ones to be found. They understand the country and work required of them; it is better than riding your own, unless they are accustomed to the country and its peculiarities, one of which is, you will never have to jump a fence, and will find yourself on a treeless moor, where you will be told you

are, in reality, deep in a "forest," for an Exmoor forest has no trees.

There is an indescribable air of bigness about stag-hunting which oppresses the beginner.

Everything is on so big a scale. You watch the hounds, through field-glasses, drawing a covert as big as a parish; you will see them break away after a quarry as large as a Jersey cow, and you will gallop across what seems like a succession of mountain ranges, till a check occurs, during which the huntsman makes a cast like a Territorial route march, after which you will gallop on till you get a sunstroke, for August and September stag-hunting is no child's play.

Take up your abode in an hotel in Minehead for a fortnight's hunting in August or September; it will be a revelation to you.

Minehead itself is surprising during this month; the whole place hums with hunting and rumours of hunting. Hotels, lodgings, villas are all crammed with hunting-folk; the streets are full of led horses; hotel waiters hurry about armed to the teeth with flasks and sandwich-cases.

Along the sea front are the world's sports-

men and sportswomen, talking stag-hunting and smoking cigarettes. French masters of boarhounds, with thrilling moustaches, square-jawed, angular Americans, Colonials, London business-men, all are here, year after year, for the opening meet. You will see crowds of people you know, and many faces that seem familiar to you, and yet you cannot place them or remember their names, till it suddenly dawns on you it is some well-known actor or actress, or some mighty advocate.

Then there are a whole crowd of hunting-women; they, too, are wonderful. I asked, just for information, one day, who some of them were; my landlady told me they were —er—the sisters and cousins of some of the actors and advocates, come down for their health; of course, I was charmed that they should come and benefit by the beautiful air, but could not help wishing they would not wear buttoned boots, and their hair in a pig-tail down their backs, but of course, I should not class them with the regular hunting woman; then, again, the confirmed health hunters, combining business with pleasure by hunting three days a week, and doing early morning constitutionals along the sea-front

with sandals on their feet, a nut sandwich in one hand, and straws in their hair.

Everybody is hunting; it was not long ago that the meets were announced from the pulpit in Porlock Church every Sunday during the season; the intoxication of it all gets into the blood, for there is the full glory of summer weather with a boundless ocean of girth-deep heather to ride over. There are glimpses of a china-blue Bristol Channel to rejoice at, and above all, there is the dear Devonshire dialect on all sides to soothe your ears.

For those who have not yet had the pleasure of a day with these hounds, I will give a slight sketch of the way a stag hunt is conducted in untechnical language.

A man called a Harbourer, goes out the day before the appointed meet, and searches for the footprints around any covert he thinks likely to hold a warrantable or huntable stag; this is called "slotting" or tracking the footprints; a great knowledge of woodcraft is necessary for this work; not only must the stag be traced into covert, but it must be ascertained he has not gone out again on the other side.

To an ordinary mortal, the difference between the slot of a stag and that of a hind would hardly be noticeable, but if you look carefully you will see a hind's toe is pointed, and she has narrow heels, while a stag has wider heels, blunter toes, often of uneven length.

For those well versed in the ways of the stag, there is one infallible way of telling whether a stag or a hind has been feeding in the vicinity, for a stag cannot resist nibbling the ash shoots, he loves them dearly, whereas a hind or young deer will not eat them.

The morning of the meet, the harbourer is up and away in the small hours of the morning to look for any fresh slots pointing towards the covert or out of it.

Rousing the deer is called tufting; four or five of the strongest hounds are taken out for this purpose.

We will suppose the deer has been well harboured and ready to break away without any tedious delay, the huntsman's horn will be the signal for the rest of the pack to be let loose; they have, for the time, been kennelled up in some stable or outhouse near,

but will now be laid on, and the hunt begin in earnest.

Never dream of riding a line of your own; it is utterly impossible; your only course is to keep with the six or seven hundred horsemen and women forming the field at this time of year. Do not take your hunters from an ordinary hunting country to Exmoor, for they will be utterly at sea among the vast coombes and perilous sheep tracks; they would probably break their legs and your neck.

A bigger "hireling" business is done for the Devon and Somerset's than any other pack I know, and I have always had really good mounts from the various hireling establishments near the best centres. Save and nurse your horses all you can, for if the deer gives a good run, you may have a gallop of twenty miles or more over the treeless forest, when your whole pleasure will depend on how you have saved and nursed your horse.

An example of what can be accomplished in this way was demonstrated freely by that celebrated sportsman, the Vicar of Black Torrington, the Rev. Jack Russell, who would often hunt all day on one horse, and at the

end of it jog another twenty miles home on the same animal; doubtless his intimate knowledge of the country helped him, but, in addition to that, he knew when to get off and lead, when to sit still and wait, instead of galloping down to the bottom of a coombe, only to gallop up again a little further on almost directly.

It does not matter how bold a rider you may be, you will be thoroughly scared by your first gallop over Exmoor. Your horse will career along in dense heather reaching to your stirrups, so that neither you nor he can see where he puts his feet, the monotony being varied by suddenly coming into deep, narrow channels cut by water, at each of which you will conclude your horse must inevitably break his leg, but local horses get over them in the most extraordinary way, after which you may find yourself riding along razor-like sheep tracks on dizzy coombe sides, so steep that you can contemplate the boot-soles of the riders above you, and the hat-tops of those below; you will descend steep slopes with your horse tobogganing on its tail, and ascend precipices with the saddle slipping over his hindquarters.

It is exigencies such as these which have caused one-third or more of the Exmoor women to ride astride, so as to be able to get off and scramble up a coombe side with their horses; when left to their own initiative, horses do not often put a wrong foot.

One of the things you will notice, when first you go out with these stag-hounds, is the way the hounds tail on the moor. This is to be accounted for by the great pace, the fastest hounds getting in front and staying there, while it is easier going for the rest through the high, strong heather, if they run one behind the other.

They are such great fine hounds, not less than from twenty-five to twenty-seven inches in height, less than this they would be no use in the heather, as they would be invisible.

The head and slots of the stag are the master's trophies; the skin and inside the huntsman's; they are also allowed the hinds' heads. The body is divided between the farmers on whose land the deer was found, and is much appreciated by them. Personally, I would sooner eat the grass in the field than

venison, I dislike it so much; it always reminds me of high mutton or goat I once had on board ship, going out to Egypt.

The proper thing to have your habit made of during August, for riding in a side-saddle, is grey or khaki-coloured drill, the coat made loose and straight; if in a cross-saddle, which is much the safest, your coat can be made of the same material; your breeches, of course, in either case must match; if you prefer it, you can wear ordinary laced boots and gaiters, instead of Wellingtons.

The best thing to wear on your head is a pith helmet, to protect you from the sun; these are very light and fit well on to the head. I would not recommend them so confidently for the men, after seeing the way one behaved once in India; it was on the head of a high and mighty official on the vice-regal staff, who was never known to smile, it did not suit his style of beauty. I must confess his air of stiffness tempered with sadness was very effective; his idea was, I think, to make us all feel worms, but our day came, for one evening, as we were all coming home from rehearsing theatricals, and were riding, a merry crowd, along the

Mall or general rendezvous of fashion, our dignitary hoved in sight, sitting very stiff and straight (he was a big man); as he neared us, he took off his helmet with his usual lordly sweep, when to his horror, and our great amusement, he found the helmet in his hand, but all its vitals in the shape of a deep cork lining was still sitting proudly, like a crown, around his bald head; what a tableau! Poor soul, I saw flitting through his mind all the different alternatives of the best thing to do; a person in his position accustomed to dealing with international crises, was not going to be vanquished by a crown of cork! Should he drop the helmet and wrench off the crown? No! Should he drop the reins, and, with that hand, remove the crown and cast it from him? No! Should he try and make a good shot and clap the hat on to its insides again? Yes! It was achieved.

Ever since this episode I have considered pith helmets treacherous headwear for men; we do not have to take off our hats, so for us it does not matter.

I always thought that men in agony forget to pose, but my friend of the helmet did not

forget for one moment. After this I tried to avoid meeting him, for his solemn face always reminded me of how ridiculous he looked with his sad eyes looking like an owl, under his crown of cork, and though I tried my hardest, I never could repress a smile spreading over my face ready to disgrace me at any moment.

But I must return to Minehead, and continue my directions about garments. Though I have advised drill for coat or habit, I must confess I do not wear it myself, as I dislike the harshness of the material, and prefer a stout Holland ; it is so much softer, but gets out of shape more quickly.

One word to those who have tender skins. The scorching sun will, unless you are very careful, blister your face and neck; this may be avoided if, before you go out, you follow my advice in my chapter on dress, complexion and figure, where I recommend smearing the face and neck with vaseline, and then gently wiping it off so that though a little remains, it does not show; a dusting of Fuller's Earth will take off the shiny appearance.

On returning from hunting wash your face with warm water in which oatmeal has been

standing all day, strain it through muslin, add a little hot water to make it a pleasant warmth, and gently bathe the face, letting the water trickle down over it, then dab dry. If the face still smarts, dab it with a silk handkerchief dipped in Goulard water and Rose water, equal parts.

Not content with hunting all day, these followers of the chase dance in the evenings, and very lively some of the dances are, but as they say no mother looks in the oven unless she has been there herself, I shall not look in the oven, but at the hound puppies who stroll about as if the whole place belonged to them, some curling themselves up to sleep on the dowager's satin dresses, but we don't have many dowagers at Minehead.

How surprised some of the August followers would be if they could see the hind-hunting in the winter, perhaps fifteen or twenty people out shivering in the sleet and wind; rather a different picture!

Deer will run in the teeth of the strongest wind, unlike foxes, who have a great objection to it. It is interesting to note the noiseless tread of all hunted beasts. Even

a stag, galloping down a hard road, is hardly heard except by his breathing. Watch a fox skim across the dried leaves in a covert, making no more noise than a gentle breeze moving them.

A hunted stag will nearly always die in water; during the day he will refresh himself whenever an opportunity occurs of lying down in the water, which is called "soiling," after which he seems much refreshed and able to begin again. Occasionally they swim out to sea.

CHAPTER VIII

WITH HARRIERS

HERE women are able to display their powers as masters, and very ably many of them do it. Harriers are more handy than foxhounds, and it is well to leave hounds to work out the puzzle of the hare by themselves, the less interference the better, also the less noise and holloaing the better.

When the local wit calls harriers "red currant jelly dogs" for the fiftieth time, be sure you laugh politely, for it is the only joke he knows, and he will expect this little mark of appreciation from you; but do not let him make you think lightly of hare-hunting, for there is nothing to turn up one's nose at about it, except the way some of the fox-hunters, who are wanting in knowledge and manners, will override the hounds and then grumble at the sport.

Hunting with harriers may be good sport,

or no sport at all, so much depends on not employing hounds too big for the work. By having 22-inch foxhounds a hare can be raced to death, if that is considered pleasure and sport, and if the number of hares killed is the chief source of joy ; but it can hardly be termed hunting, unless, of course, the hunted country is very wild, as it is in some parts of Wales, where the mountain hares are small but very strong. Even then dwarf foxhounds will often flash over the line ; what they may gain in speed they lose in their tendency to overrun the line.

In my opinion eighteen or nineteen inches is quite big enough for harriers, and about twenty couple of them to hunt two days a week with occasional by-days thrown in ; from twelve to fifteen couple are enough to take out at a time, more than that only get in each other's way ; but you must have more than twelve or fifteen couple in kennel to allow for accidents, illness, and such-like conditions.

Harriers are particularly quarrelsome in kennels ; if one begins a row, the rest join in and fierce fights will take place, which unless

stopped may quite likely end in one or more being killed or badly hurt.

Above all things this is the poor man's or woman's sport; moreover, it is the best possible field in which to commence a hunting career. As stag-hunting impresses you with its bigness, so will hare-hunting give you confidence by its homeliness.

A harrier field is not composed of haughty dames and dazzling beaux, whose very presence makes the inexperienced feel a microbe before them. These birds of Paradise are absent, and cheery farmers take their place, who will greet you heartily and do you great honour, as becomes all chivalrous men, with the result that you feel you can, come what may, enjoy yourself with the best of them.

Overriding hounds does more harm here, and happens more often than with any other hounds, because they do not run away from the field like foxhounds owing to the crooked running of the game. A hare does not often run straight for long, and it has the faintest scent of all huntable animals, with the result that people are always on the sterns of the hounds.

There is one way in which you can win the undying esteem of the regular followers, and that is by helping to find hares when the pack is drawing ground where they are scarce. Drawing for a hare takes place in the open, the pack very slowly moves to and fro and round and round over a stubble, fallow, or rootfield. When a rootfield is being drawn keep out of it, as you will do damage by riding about in it; in a fallow or stubble field you should not ride along chattering with other people, but alone, walking your horse very slowly across the stubble drills or ploughed lines.

By looking carefully along the drills on either side of you, you may presently espy a curious little brownish-fawn dome which will spring into life and take the shape of a hare at the crack of your whip.

Seeing a hare on its form is an art to be learned by long practice alone. You need not look far ahead, ten or fifteen yards is enough, the hare is just as likely to be crouching under your stirrup leather; you will not see it at all if more than a few yards away.

Generally speaking, a hunted hare will

describe an irregular circle, coming back once or twice during the run to where she was found, so there is no occasion to perform prodigies of horsemanship unless you wish to do so. It is for this reason that in harrier hunting you find it easy to husband your horse.

If you happen to meet a hunted hare running along a road, always make a point of heading it off into the grass again, as this road-running habit is the most difficult tactic the hounds have to face, the hard road carrying little or no scent, and the hare is quite capable of running along it for a mile or more.

Do not be afraid of heading it on such an occasion as this, unless the pack happen to be running her in view; it would not then be wise to head her or she might get chopped, so under these circumstances stand quietly on one side; she will run by without seeing you in all probability, being so pre-occupied with the pursuing hounds.

In harrier hunting the hunted and the hunters are constantly getting mixed up with each other, while in fox hunting the fox is away like a flash, and unless the pack run

into him you will see him no more in all probability.

The best hare-hunting months, that is to say, when you see the best sport, are February and March, more especially in March, when a hare will often upset all your notions about their running in circles, by making a six or seven mile point, just like a really good fox. This is generally due to having lost her bearings, and she runs straight on because she has no particular point in her mind to make for.

Another great point maker is the Jack hare in March, who has come many miles to express his admiration for the famed ladies of some favoured pastures. When hunting one of these fellows, he will immediately make for home, and a straight run is the result.

The joys of hare-hunting are greatest for those who love to watch the patient working of hounds; those who like to gallop and jump can, in a cramped country, find plenty of opportunities to break their necks, while those who like to stay on the roads will not be disappointed, for five days out of six they will see nearly as much of the sport as those

who have religiously followed the hounds from field to field.

Farmers suffer more from harriers hunting over their land than from foxhounds; the former may cross and recross the same field half a dozen times in one day, and yet the majority of this sport-loving class will bid you welcome, and come out in crowds themselves. They can better spare the time for an hour or two with harriers that will not take them far away; many cannot afford the time to go after fox even if their horses were in hard-enough condition.

Harriers hate being crowded by horses, and if met by them will sometimes, to all appearances, check on purpose and try back, or in any direction except the one they were running in. The huntsman will then clear the coast and cast them beyond the scene of opposition.

Very mysterious are the ways of a hare and the workings of her mind; she seems to understand that as long as she squats she is invisible and scentless, and, indeed, this appears to be so, for hounds will walk over her, and even step on her without taking any notice until she springs up.

Many women hunt packs now, and take great interest in the kennels. Lady Gifford is a noticeable example; she hunts for about nine miles round Chichester. For three seasons she hunted them in Northumberland, and then in 1898 brought them South; having begun by hunting beagles which it was impossible to keep up with, she changed to harriers, and now has a beautiful pack of pure-bred hounds.

Then there is Mrs. Cheape, known as "the Squire," a great Peterborough winner. She bought her pack from Captain Spicer, of Spye Park, which she hunted with great success for many years; but I am told she has now given up hunting. Her daughter, however, is very keen, and will, I hope, follow in her mother's footsteps.

In South Wales, Mrs. Pryse-Rice hunts the little black-backed mountain hare; they have a great turn of speed, and often go straight, giving a five or six mile point.

The Duchess of Newcastle at one time hunted either harriers or beagles in the country round Clumber, but she tells me that she now has given them up.

There are many more who show good

sport, but if I allow myself to enlarge on the subject I could fill a small volume.

There are regrettable times when harriers take the law into their own hands, and before they can be stopped have hunted a fox and accounted for him, but where harriers are small they can generally be stopped before much harm is done; these little misdemeanours, however, are apt to cause annoyance to the local M.F.H., also covert owners.

Although I know a hunted hare runs more chance of getting away than being caught when harriers and not foxhounds are hunting, still I always have a sickening feeling of pity when I see the poor hunted hare, stiff with fright and tiredness, running her last; it is altogether so different to the cunning, wily fox, but it is a mistake to analyse the feelings of any hunted animal, or any animal at all, for that matter.

After all, we, as well as animals, have to pay the penalty of living, and some very pitiful times we have too; we all have to take our turn, and the imaginative man or woman suffers more than the unimaginative animal. Happily, animals suffer less than we do, because they have the gift of not

seeing the roads before they are made, but make them before they are seen, which sounds rather obscure, but you will understand what I mean—they do not suffer the horrors of anticipation.

CHAPTER IX

MANNERS IN THE HUNTING FIELD

In all our complicated social system there is no place where the unwritten amenities are so jealously guarded, so often broken and so imperfectly understood as in the hunting field.

I am sure that when a hunting morning dawns everybody pulls on their boots with the full intention of behaving very nicely all day, and the good intention is still strong within us when we arrive at the meet. In fact, the space immediately around the pack is like the other we have heard of, paved with good intentions.

Yet the sad and much-to-be-regretted fact remains that while out to enjoy this sport of queens you will hear more swearing and ill-natured gossip than in any other place I know, except, perhaps, the barrack-room of an Indian station in the hot weather.

Being a student of humanity without a system, I love to watch a crowd, all so full of human interest, and so prone to lie at the mercy of their moods. There are emotions deeply rooted in the pleasure of exercise when all the body is in moving and working concert, with the delirium of the chase, the mystery of rhythm and energy all mingled in one bond of sympathy, and we must then beware, for now our most tyrannous impulses will rise on top, making us selfish and unsympathetic, we must take a pull and have a care.

I think more selfishness rides undraped in the hunting field than in any other form of exercise and pleasure in life. Frail human nature! Our good intentions melt like snow under the summer sun, during the excitement of a run, the fierce in-born passion of pursuit overrules our better instincts and judgment, but we can at least repress our unruly members.

Great changes have come over the hunting field of late years. Women no longer jump on men when they are down, being frequently in front themselves. Not many cross-grained old fossils are left to tell each

other that "Those women are the curse of the hunting field, sir; I tell you they will never learn not to ride over hounds." All this is a thing of the past, though it died a hard death owing to its having been repeated so often until it had grown to be an accepted fact.

Now I am strongly of the opinion that women as a class do not err so greatly as do the men. They conform to the hundred-and-one laws of the chase quite as rigorously, if not more so, than their moustached and whiskered contemporaries, with this much to the good, that when they err it is from ignorance and not because they think they are such fine fellows they can do as they please.

Of course both sexes may be seen breaking the rules any day in the week, and this will always be so.

Men often break rules by riding unmanageable horses, this makes them over-ride hounds, and rush at fences in front of other people. They are also given to holloaing and making "chicken calls" at the hounds on their own account, to the infinite annoyance and scorn of the master and hunt officials. This is very noticeable with some

of the provincial packs, where the young bloods have never been much further than the neighbouring market town, know nothing of the ways and manners of their more travelled and enlightened brethren who hunt in many countries and with many packs, where they have learned the wholesome lesson of their own public value.

One grave fault I have often noticed in women is, they ride too close on people's heels at a fence. Girls and women young in experience do not realise the danger. I do not envy the feelings of a woman descending on her fallen pilot, as likely as not killing him. The next ahead, be it man, woman, or child, should be seen to land successfully over a fence before your horse is allowed to get into its final stride for taking off. This is a fault, however, not peculiar to women alone, men are quite as great offenders.

The breaking of even the smallest law in the hunting field awakens inordinate resentment, but we must remember these laws, like all others, have been evolved by mankind for their own safety and convenience, so by infringing any of them you are acting

prejudicially to the safety and comfort of other people and possibly, eventually, to your own.

Here are a few rules to remember. When passing through a swinging gate, with a crowd, or being followed by others: take your turn at pushing it as it swings, your followers will do the same, so that no one has the trouble of re-opening it through having been allowed to slam. The last through is always expected to see it is shut securely; this is one of the hardest laws to keep, but a valuable rule.

When out with harriers it is particularly necessary, though with foxhounds it is well to use your common sense and judgment in the matter, for being the last through and waiting to shut the gate may mean the end of the day as far as the gate-shutter is concerned, so consider whether you are riding out of a field of roots into one of fallow, both being unoccupied, for this is a case when you may, with a clear conscience, leave the gate open and ride on. But, of course, a gate must never be left open under any circumstances whatever when cattle, sheep, or colts are in the fields, for they would inevitably

get out on to the high-road, or into a field of seeds, or some place where they were least wanted.

When passing through narrow rides, should you come upon a broken drain, rabbit-hole, or any such pitfall, always call out, "Ware holes!" This cry will be handed on from one to another till all who are following will have been warned, and not approach unawares.

When anybody dismounts to open an obstinate gate or throw down a cross-pole, to allow either you individually or the crowd collectively to pass through, it is absolutely essential that not only you, but the crowd who have passed through, should wait until the gate-opener remounts. To say, "Oh, thanks awfully," and then gallop away will not do, for the praiseworthy friend who opened the gate, or whatever the obstacle was, will be unable to remount because of the eagerness of his horse to follow yours, being excited by the galloping. It is safest to allow about fifteen to twenty yards between you and the rider ahead, and do not ride directly in his wake.

Go gently when hounds are not running. Galloping wildly, splashing everybody, and

squelching mud and water over them, and I doubt if even your sex will prevent you overhearing something about yourself in the past, present, and future tense.

If the field is confronted by some unjumpable fence, with only one possible scrambling place, be ready and quick when your turn comes to do your share of the scrambling, so as not to delay those whose turn comes after you. If your horse refuses more than once, get out of the way, and let others go in front of you before you are greeted by a chorus of, "Go on!" and "Let me come!"

The rider who deliberately decides to endanger the lives and limbs of any mortal or beast within reach by riding a kicker, generally ties a red tape or ribbon on his tail, to let prospective victims know what awaits them. This little mark of attention is much appreciated by your companions, as it enables them to avoid injury till the inevitable moment comes, when all are crowded together in a lane or cramming through a gate, when there is no chance of avoiding the kicker's heels. On these occasions I advise keeping so close up the kick cannot get much play. Riders of kickers do

not endear themselves to the hearts of their fellow-sportsmen at any time; but they can at least keep away to one side, and not squeeze in among other horses. Do they think they will win the heart of the master and hunt officials by riding up to the pack with horse's ears laid back, while it makes playful little slashes with its heels, till some unwary hounds come by and are either kicked into eternity or badly smashed? Think of the poor master's feelings when he sees his hounds, the children of his heart, killed or mangled at his feet, over which he may have spent the best years of his life, and more money than he can afford in bringing to their present state of perfection.

If women or men have nothing better to ride than kickers, I strongly advise their staying at home.

Learn to keep your head. It is just as important in the hunting field as in daily life. And try always to keep your temper; to lose it only makes your nose red, and is unbecoming. Those who lose heads and tempers always come off second best; men look silly enough on these occasions, so be content to leave such weaknesses to them.

So far, I have chiefly dwelt on the amenities as between members of the field; but there is the equally important, if not more important, code of laws in force regulating the relations between followers and the pack with its hunt officials when in the field.

If the master hunts the pack himself, he will cope with the unruly element of his field by one of two methods. By one he will endeavour to keep the field within bounds, hunt his hounds, and swear at his followers simultaneously; or he will appoint the Hon. Secretary or some other member of the hunt to act as Field Master for him.

I have observed field masters have a way of being singularly useless institutions; but you should remember they represent authority, and should therefore give the same deference to their requests as though made by the master himself.

If a professional huntsman is employed, the master is left free to enjoy himself as best he may while grappling with the thankless task of preventing people spoiling their own sport by over-riding the hounds, a thing so frequently done by people when out with

harriers, not knowing the difference between riding to harriers and riding to foxhounds.

When hounds are drawing, the proper place for the field is to be grouped compactly together at one spot and not wandering aimlessly about, for this means heading foxes back into covert.

I have never seen this law more rigidly enforced than in that most sporting of countries the Cattistock, which is hunted so admirably by the Rev. E. A. Milne. I have often been amused and interested while listening to his little sermons on the duties of followers at the covert side which his Reverence delivers to his field when they are not behaving quite nicely. By this means he gets his wishes carried out, enabling women to hunt throughout an entire season over his Dorsetshire grass without hearing one unpleasant word used. Surely a great blessing and a fine example of what firmness and tact can accomplish without bluster.

When hounds are running slowly enough to give the follower any choice in the matter of how near they shall ride, you must leave a good half-field between yourself and the

pack as you land over each fence, and remember to ride a little to one side. Keep away from hounds at a check and down wind of them, as the steam from hot horses makes it still more difficult for hounds to recover a lost line. Be sure to pull up at once and sit quite still or you may press the hounds over the line, for so long as they hear thundering hoofs behind them they will press on.

For a woman who views a fox it is enough to put up her arm holding the crop to attract attention without attempting a holloa, unless she is the possessor of a good one, which is not given to many. One of the finest "View Holloa's" I ever heard was unintentionally given by the wife of a certain hunt secretary one day when her horse bit her finger while taking a lump of sugar from her hand. Her cry was of so blood-curdling a character that even hounds came flying out of covert, and the whips could be heard crying, "Hark to Holloa" from the far side.

It is thoughtless to chatter to a master or huntsman when he is at work, no matter how well you know him. He cannot attend

to you at these times, while should you have any information to give him it should be condensed into the shortest and most concise form.

For instance, you may be alone and meet a yokel who has viewed the hunted fox. He will be sure to tell you a long story about what he was doing when he first saw it, and so on; what the huntsman wants to know is where the fox was seen *last*, for it is there he will lay on the pack. So collect all the information you can, making sure it really was the hunted fox he saw, and then give the information concisely or in *précis* to the huntsman, telling him where it was seen last, leaving out what the fox thought and did, what the yokel thought and did and said, everything except where the fox was seen last.

Always stop a loose horse if you can, you never know when your turn may come; having captured the horse, if its owner is not visible, throw the reins over a post or gate, where it will be safe till claimed; the owner may be some time in turning up, breeches and boots are not easy things to run in.

All must make way for the huntsman and hunt servants, for while it is your pleasure to be with the hounds it is their duty.

The master's word is law, there must be no argument; he is supreme in the field; do not indulge in grumbling and grousing if your views are not in accordance with his. The life of a master of hounds is not a happy one, there is more worry and annoyance for him on a hunting day than the greater part of the field have any idea of. He is responsible for showing sport, for the manners of his followers, for any damage done, while every subscriber of a couple of guineas considers himself entitled to air his views on every conceivable subject, though the hunt subscriptions amount to £2,000, and the expenses to £4,000, the deficit coming ungrudgingly out of the master's pocket.

After years of hunting and close connection with different packs, it makes me sorry to see the very short term of some masterships, growing yearly shorter and shorter, while some packs have a difficulty in finding a master at all. Is it because of the thanklessness of the task, I wonder? Certainly,

I should never advise a man to take a pack of hounds in any country where he did not own a good deal of the land and many coverts, as that is the only thing that will prevent people making his life a burden to him, being obliged for their own sakes to keep their grumbles away from the master's ears, though without doubt they will tear him to pieces behind his back.

It is wisdom to make use of a gap, but not to make one.

Do not gallop through sheep, cattle, and colts, but go round them, or you may do much harm by making them stampede, break through fences and get away.

Neither must you ride over seeds and new grass, because rain collects in the horse's footprints, rotting the seeds. Bruising roots also means that when a frost comes they will become rotten. When this is remembered it is more easily understood what a master's feelings are like when he sees some ignorant person showing the way across fields containing either one or the other, more especially as the example is sure to be followed by more sheep-like sportsmen and women. Ignorance is their excuse, and

is perhaps all-satisfying to them, but it does not help the master out.

Bank holiday is a trying day for the hunt itself, and often for the field, owing to the crowds of foot people who come out, full of animal spirits, for their holiday, knowing nothing about the rules of the game, thereby not only spoiling their own chance of seeing any sport, but that of everybody else as well.

The master cannot, of course, pander to their amusement, he has his duties to attend to, but there are many followers who know all about the game who could well spare part of one day's sport out of the season in helping the crowd to enjoy themselves. I love to see the city dwellers come out on a Bank Holiday, and instead of cursing them, as I have too often heard done, why not stop behind and explain to them how best to see the fun, and where to go for the purpose? They are all good-tempered folk out for amusement, why not encourage them in so healthful a pleasure as a day on foot with hounds? The last thing they wish to do is to spoil the sport for themselves or anybody else, and will follow your instructions with

childlike faith and obedience, if you explain kindly your wish is to add to their pleasure, they will stand round you open-mouthed with pleasure and wonder. Tell them what the different notes on the horn mean, and that it is not called "Blasts on the trumpet," that the hounds are not called "the dogs." Point out any celebrities in the field, and repeat any kind stories about them you happen to know, how the man with one arm on the powerful grey lost his arm tiger shooting, that the fat man on the chestnut is called the Master, and the little boy on the Shetland pony is his only son and the joy of his life. The lady driving in the road in the governess car with the restive pony is known all round the countryside for her kindness to the poor, how she went out to South Africa to nurse the wounded, taking out comforts of every kind, and so on.

The Bank Holiday when they went and had a day on foot with the hounds will be a red-letter day in their lives, and provide food for thought and conversation for many a day. Their grandchildren will talk of when father's father went hunting.

As you jog home you may meet a few of

the tired souls still chattering to each other of what they had been told and seen, and overhear "Jack, you . . . fool, I tell y'r 'tain't a trumpet, it's a 'orn." Shouts of happy laughter, and so you jog on with a "good-night" to them all.

You will yourself have a strangely happy feeling. It sounds very poetic and romantic, but is nevertheless true; it does make you happy when you are able to lift the grey clouds a tiny bit and let in streaks of sunshine on such colourless lives whose enjoyment has been so simply found in watching other people having a good time.

The Master's wife may play a very important part in the hunting field, not by pushing herself forward in any way, but what the schoolboys call "taking a back seat." If there is one calling more than another when a wife can be a help to her husband, it is in the many-sided undertaking we name Hunting a country. I do not mean she should take any apparently active part in the field management or decide who is to wear the buttons, but rather by avoiding any sort of cliquishness, being pleasant to all, and showing she can take an interest in other

pursuits and sports as well as hunting; by never saying an unkind word or listening to one if it can be avoided; it is not so much that really unkind things are said, as being funny at one's friends' expense, which is so easy, things that if we overheard being said of ourselves would wound and hurt us. This is where a nice woman can use her influence, and it is astonishing how quickly the atmosphere changes if only one or two set their faces against this form of "littleness."

By forming, or appearing to have formed, a high ideal of a person's character you may often be the means of their trying to live up to it, though it may be done unconsciously.

The Master's wife must be the one to smooth over difficulties, make friends with the farmers and their wives, have a little to spare in her pocket with which, without establishing any precedent which might hamper the hunt, she can oil the wheels, do little kindnesses and smooth ruffled feathers, especially where land and beasts have suffered for our pleasure.

While on the subject of manners I cannot close the chapter without saying how infinitely

shocked I have been, not once, but many times, at the manners of educated, cultured people at Breakfast Meets, or when kind, considerate folk have dispensed hospitality.

I have seen men, calling themselves gentlemen, and whose breeding you know, and naturally think would be security against bad manners, ride up to a table where the hostess was helping everybody and doing her best so that none should be overlooked, ask for what he wanted without getting off his horse or taking off his hat. One such case I distinctly remember, I am sorry to say, came from the North, the birthplace and home of fox hunters and, I had thought, manners.

Women are not so ungracious, but I would like to see some of them a little more thoughtful. It would not be much trouble when passing the house on the way home to stop a minute to say what sport you had had, and how refreshing their hospitality had been, tell them of any little incident that may interest them.

Your friends will understand you cannot stay long, and only called out of politeness, but they will appreciate your good manners,

and it is by such little every-day thoughtfulnesses you keep bitterness and disappointment from turning people into cannibals of their own hearts.

Do not talk hunting to people unless you know it is a subject that interests them, for they will be bored to tears. I remember when dining, long ago, at Government House in Simla, when Lord William Beresford, or "Brasford Saib," as the natives called him, was Military Secretary. He was seated between myself and a bride lately imported from home by an impecunious subaltern. This lady, not knowing Lord William, who knew more about horses and hunting than all the rest of us put together, began enlarging about her hunting experiences, instructing her listener in the art. As far as I could gather, her experiences had been gathered while cub hunting. I looked round the table and found everybody, like myself, in a state of suppressed mirth and wonderment; we knew it would not be long before some great moment arrived, for Lord William's sense of humour and the ridiculous was proverbial. It came—there was a lull in the conversation.

Fat Bride: "Have you ever hunted, Lord William?"

(Pause. Everybody held their breath.)

Lord William: "No, but I have seen a hound, once—*in a picture.*"

Great clatter of knives and forks, hurried and general conversation for fear we should all disgrace ourselves by laughing outright.

This story really has no business here, but talking of people being bored to tears reminded me of it, but, after all, the chapter is on manners, and there never lived anybody with more charming manners than the Military Secretary, and I have seen him severely tried at times, but never anything but courteous and polite, one of Nature's great men, kind and generous to a fault.

CHAPTER X

HUNTERS AND THEIR SHOEING

CHOOSING your hunters—what a great moment! Even writing about it fills me with enthusiasm.

It depends where you mean to hunt, what horses you will require.

If for the shires, by which I mean the country hunted by the Belvoir, Cottesmore, Quorn and Pytchley, a well-bred horse at least three parts pure blood will be wanted. Any but thoroughbreds, with steeplechase speed and the activity of a cat, get pumped and break their hearts in Leicestershire, where the run may be fast and furious for miles on ground holding the wet, with a downward stretch of perhaps a couple of miles, in front a rise of a couple more, all grass, with long lines of stiff fences. A run of twenty-seven minutes, a kill in the open, with not a check from start to finish, can

only be lived through by blood-horses. It is not the jumping or the heavy going that kills—it is the pace.

For more cramped countries, like Gloucestershire, Dorsetshire and others, the more plebeian brethren are best, being more handy and temperate in trappy, cramped places, also more patient and longsuffering.

The ideal size for a woman's hunter is 15.2, unless she is very big, when she will require a weight-carrier. My own experience is that a 15.2 will carry you over the biggest country, and that more clever fencers are to be found among the 15.2's than above that size.

When money is no object, perfect hunters are to be bought, as they come into the market if you wait for them; but where is the skill and pleasure of this? Perhaps it is a case of sour grapes, as few of us can afford it; we have to buy how we can, when we can, and take our chance.

Those happy people who are light weights and have good hands can always mount themselves cheaply, for they are able to ride horses not up to much weight, and possibly parted with because they are awkward or pull too hard, both of which may be the

result of bad hands. A horse that makes a noise, but not enough to stop him, may be bought cheaply sometimes, and with a little careful riding do a lot of work.

Always buy a horse above your weight if possible; it is so much pleasanter to feel plenty of reserve power under you; besides, a woman looks so much better on a big horse above her weight, than a small one not up to it.

I am often asked what I think the best colour for a horse. "No good horse can be a bad colour," is an old saying and a wise one, but I do think more temper and irritability are met with in light chestnuts than in other colours; their skin is usually thin, and their coats fine, making the least little thing worry them which would pass unnoticed on others; a leaf falling on their backs will make them start and play the fool, that another horse of different colour and thicker skin would never notice. They are also more liable to sore backs. Roans, both the grey and the red, are wonderfully hard workers, and most enduring, though not many are met with in the hunting field. I love a grey, but chiefly from associations, and they make

riding-habits in a mess with their grey hairs. Colour is really a question of taste, for good horses are to be found in every colour.

While I think of it, let me advise my readers never to sell horses to a friend; likewise never to buy from them; it is as dangerous as lending money to relations—sure to end in hatred, malice and all uncharitableness. By all means keep an eye on any likely hunter belonging to your friends, so that at the end of the season, if it goes up for sale, you can send some one to bid for you; that is another matter; you will not then feel aggrieved with its late owner if anything goes wrong, and think you have been done.

The same advice holds good when selling your own—send them to a sale or a dealer, people can buy them there quite as well, and avoid any unpleasantness. You can put a reserve price on, if you wish.

You may believe a horse to be perfectly sound and in every way charming, but they are "kittle cattle," you never can tell what they may develop, while what you may consider a charming mount may not be your friends' views, so be on the safe side.

The majority of people will tell you they like to ride thoroughbreds. This sounds all right, but many I have known are quite happy, and believe they have the bluest, truest blood under them, if only the horse has a long tail. After all, what odds, so long as you are happy?

A hunter is supposed to be in his prime at six years old. All horses bought from dealers are said to be this desirable age. There must be a number in their prime! I have ridden many horses older than this, and have been very pleased with them, but hardly know which to advise for beginners, the young horse which is vigorous and jumps with plenty to spare, and not so well trained in his duties, or the older horse which knows every trick of his trade, apt to cut his calculations rather fine and chance his fences, besides being in no hurry to get up after a fall; so perhaps we had better look for the betwixt and between among the dealers' six-year-olds, for one of those delightful animals we are told can jump a house (they don't say he will), cannot put a wrong foot, and butter won't melt in his mouth!

Horses that have been raced are not by

any means the pleasantest mounts in the hunting field, being inclined to lean on the bit, and dislike being interfered with, while they seem to think, come what may, they must go for all they are worth, until they cannot go any longer, which is not always quite what you want.

If you live in the country, and have grass land, buy your horses at the end of the hunting season, and let it be those you know something about if possible; they may be stale and knocked about, but you can buy more cheaply at the end of the season than you can at the beginning, while you have the summer to rest them and work up their condition. A horse going sound at the end of the season will, bar accidents, go sound at the beginning of the next.

The points to look for in a woman's hunter are these :—

Firstly, what the groom calls a "good doer," which, being translated from common or garden English into the superfine, means a good constitution—a horse that comes in after a hard day and will eat up every grain of his corn, drink up every drop of gruel, and be none the worse for his day's work.

Secondly, a small, clean, intelligent head, with prominent eyes, and a small muzzle; muscular neck, but not heavy; long, sloping shoulders; strong back, not too long behind the saddle; big jumping quarters, and wide hips; a good length from hip to hock; these latter should turn in slightly, but must not be too far back, or they will not have enough propelling power; plenty of girth, with long ribs in front and short behind, to keep the saddle in its place. The forelegs are important; they must not be too near, with feet turned in, neither must they be too wide apart; they should be straight and short from the canon-bone down to fetlock. Buy nothing that stands over, by this I mean a horse that stands with his front or fore feet too much under him, with knees bending over, for they should be flat, broad and straight; a horse that stands over, or brushes one ankle or fetlock against the other, or that hits one shoe against the leg of the other (called cutting), is not a desirable hunter for a woman, they are liable to come down a crash at any moment.

Thirdly, look out for that most important adjunct, good feet. I am almost afraid of

advising about the feet and hoofs of a horse, there are so many conflicting opinions, and I have had so many fierce arguments over them, but when I am buying a horse I look for flexible and sloping pasterns, fairly high, broad hoofs, with firm, well-shaped heels. Some people swear by broad or oyster-shaped feet and straighter pasterns, but with the straighter pasterns you get much less spring and elasticity in the horse's movements. Look for a horse with high withers, they are so much more comfortable to ride, you feel as if you have something in front of you, and not slipping over the edge!

You can generally tell a thoroughbred without seeing his pedigree by his head and muzzle, his haunches, and the way his tail is set on. A well-bred horse has more three-cornered looking hips and quarters, and his tail is set on high up, and carried more proudly, while a less well-bred horse will have rounder, more drooping quarters, with tail set on low down, and carried in a drooping fashion. A peculiarity of thoroughbreds is they are always bigger than they look. The better bred a horse is, the sooner he picks up after a hard day.

Before buying a horse, make sure he has a pleasant mouth, by either trying it yourself or getting some one to do so for you whose opinion you value. A hard-mouthed, pulling horse is no pleasure to ride, and is also dangerous, though I would rather ride one that takes hold a little than one who will not allow you to feel his mouth. It is not pleasant to be mounted on a quick horse who will not allow you to touch his mouth even to steady him at his fences.

I do not believe it hurts hunters to use them in harness. A relation of mine who hunted the South Shropshire for some years, and who had a large stud of horses, told me they all had to take their turn—in the hunting field, in the coach, in the plough, or the carts leading coal—they certainly looked none the worse. At the same time, I think when hunters have carried you well through the season they are better with, and certainly deserve, a rest when hunting is finished. I can never understand people after a hard season caring to ask more of their hunters by putting them into point to point races.

When buying horses you know nothing

about from dealers, it is rather like buying in the dark, you have only one man's word to depend upon. It is quite likely the dealer will know very little more than you do about the horse, which he may have bought at a fair, or because he was going very cheap at some sale and looked a likely speculation.

I do not wish to say a word against dealers; without doubt, the old adage is true, there are dealers and dealers, by which, I presume, it is meant you should understand that while some are straightforward men, others are not. It, however, stands to reason, if a dealer gets hold of a bad doer, that is, a delicate feeder requiring much care and coddling, he is anxious at the first moment possible to pass him on, but for the sake of his name he will not let anybody who is a good and regular customer have the horse, it would spoil his trade, so it has to go to a chance customer, who may possibly be you. The moral of this is, stick to one dealer if you can, whom you know, and who knows you. Tell him exactly what you want, if he does not happen to have it at the time, he will look out and let you know when he hears of anything suitable.

I know a farmer dealer, from whom I have bought horses for some years. I tell him exactly what I want, and the price I wish to pay, and he has never sold me a wrong one yet. I have also sent many others to him, and they are equally pleased, and do not, any more than I do, even think of having the horses vetted.

I do not believe in paying long prices for hunters, though I have been foolish enough to give sums I would not now dream of giving. The risk is too great, and takes away half the pleasure, for if you have paid £150 and £200, you are always afraid of knocking him up, while, if you buy cheaper horses, you have not the same anxiety, and can afford many more, out of which you are fairly certain to pick up one or two good ones.

I have bought good, hard-working horses for £50, and occasionally for £30, and had more satisfaction out of them than when I was foolish and paid fancy prices.

Once I bought a 12-hand pony out of a hawker's cart, because he was being ill-treated; he turned out the most wonderful fast trotter I ever sat behind. I paid £6 for

him. Our mode of travelling was rather exciting; we had simply to fly into our places in a low miniature dog-cart, for nobody could hold him when once the reins were touched, so off we flew, a rein twisted round each hand, feet planted firmly against a foot rest, while the pony (we called him Toothpick) pulled us and the cart entirely by the reins, with traces hanging loose, the whole fifteen miles we used to drive every day to bathe in the sea; he never turned a hair, and was ready to jump out of his skin at the end of his journey; he was an ugly little beast, with the heart of a lion.

If you know the points of a horse, and their everyday ailments, such as splints, spavin, side-bone, contracted feet, and so on, there is no reason why you should not buy your own horses. You can try them for their wind and eye-sight; for this latter test, bring a horse out of a dark stable, and hold a strong light in front of his eyes; you will soon see if anything is wrong. There will be no occasion to have a veterinary surgeon's opinion; you can afford to risk a little when you buy them cheap.

Some of the truest and best sportsmen

and women I have ever had the pleasure of meeting have been one-horse people, from necessity, with an occasional hireling for a day thrown in; but, of course, they have to take great care of their quadruped, and it must go much against the grain when, after the first run, they have to turn their heads homewards, in hopes of being able, by their self-denial, to have another day later in the week.

After all the palaver there is about kit, and the proper way to turn out yourself and horse, it makes you feel rather foolish when you go over to Ireland to hunt, and see in front of you, skimming away over everything, a youngster, a mere baby of a three-year-old, mounted by another mere baby of seventy summers, on an old weather-beaten saddle, held by one girth and some string, the bridle with one rein broken, and tied in a knot on to the bit, where the buckle had disappeared, and curb chain hanging loose.

The old man of seventy off the horse, looking like a youngster of fifty when on it, in an old coat, which on off days is used to scare crows—and yet they are having the best of it, while you are thinking what

nonsense it is spending so much time, thought, and money when such great pleasure is to be had without any of it. Good luck to the grand old sportsman in the scare-crow coat, with such courage in his Irish eyes.

Perhaps it is hardly fair to compare the two kits, for in certain parts of Ireland there is quite another atmosphere, such as the Meath and Kildare, which are quite smart countries.

Irish horses so often have one-sided mouths, at least several that I have ridden have had that little weakness, but against that a horse accustomed to the yawning chasms and straight up and down banks and deep ditches of Meath and Kildare, will not fail you in any country you may wish to hunt in.

Should they not be fast enough they will get you there all the same, for they may be relied on at all times to take you by the shortest route. They can jump most frightful places out of a trot; one of the things you will notice most when first you hunt in Ireland is how slowly the horses go up to and take their fences.

Irish horses always seem to be on the

look-out for deceit of sorts at the other side of the fences, and are not easily taken by surprise, though, if they should be, have a fifth leg ready. They inspire one with confidence, there is a look about their heads, as they prick their ears and go at a fence, that seems to say, " Let me alone, I knew all about it before you were born."

You may think you have bought a marvel and be very pleased with some youngster you have brought over from the Emerald Isle, but wait till you have had him a season feeding on the best, well-groomed and looked after, he will then be up to another stone in weight, filled out and twice the horse he was when you bought him.

Irishmen love their horses and understand their characters, but they are not good stablemen, for they loathe work and are lazy, dirty and untidy, allowing for the usual exceptions that prove the rule.

The way an Irish horse will change his feet and kick back on top of a bank or wall which looks as if there is hardly room for four feet to rest is a dream.

Shoeing.

So important is the shoeing of horses that to make sure it was properly done I have at times sent mine long distances to a good farrier rather than trust them to conceited duffers.

Hunters' shoes have a groove in them, and are made much lighter than those required for harness horses.

The most common form of ignorance among blacksmiths is the love they have for cutting down and paring the frog of horses' feet so as to keep it off the ground, which is exactly what they ought not to do. The frog of a healthy foot should never be interfered with, it *ought* to touch the ground, nature has so ordained it.

Blacksmiths will try to make the foot fit the shoe, instead of the shoe fit the foot.

I strongly advise every woman who cares about her horses and wishes to have them with sound feet, to make a study of their anatomy, and go with her horses when they require shoeing until she is certain they will be properly done.

The smith will treat your views indulgently

before your face, as fads, but in his heart will be exceedingly proud when he has mastered the art of shoeing hunters properly, while you may hear that when you are not there he boasts of his superior way of shoeing.

When the frog is left in its natural shape, not ruined by pruning and paring with a knife, it keeps the hoofs in proper shape, as well as giving them firmer foothold and greater elasticity.

In studying the anatomy of a horse's foot, you will find the frog is surrounded by lateral cartilages—they are of pearly-white substance like elastic ; in fact, a kind of gristle provided for the purpose of saving and preserving the foot from injury.

Cutting into the frog simply invites disease. Thrush is a very common result, often caused by inflammation of the frog. Some horses have very soft frogs, easily irritated by standing on wet litter, disease resulting, showing a secretion exuding through the cleft in the frog, which if not attended to may end in canker.

When you have succeeded in giving your horses thrush by injuring their frogs, the next thing to consider is a curative treatment.

I have found chloride of zinc lotion most useful, applied two or three times a day.

Perhaps I should explain, in case any of my readers do not know, that the frog is the name given to the soft, horny substance in the middle of the horse's foot, forking towards the heel. Lift up the foot of any horse and you will see in a moment it cannot be mistaken; you will then readily understand why it should not be interfered with.

When a horse is suffering from thrush, if you are taking him out, remember to put knee-caps on, for if he knocks or hurts the frog he will come down and as likely as not cut his knees badly.

All the different parts of the foot have their duties to perform, it is unwise to interfere with any of them.

Do not allow heavy shoes put on to your hunters, and under no circumstances allow a duffer to put on calkins; they are only suitable for cart and waggon horses who work on greasy paving stones, when they have to back heavy weights. Calkins are pointed pieces of iron put on shoes to prevent horses slipping.

Grooms will stand quietly and look on

while the farrier rasps and files the outer wall of the foot to make it fit the shoe or to make it what he considers neat in appearance. This is a cruel practice. Of course, it often happens that there is more growth of horn at the toe than is necessary and must be trimmed, but not the outside wall. A hoof should be even on the ground from toe to heel, the sides being of equal depth.

Corns are often caused by faulty shoeing. When the sole is pared away and exposed close to the ground, a harsh substance grows, quite contrary to the soft yielding qualities which are natural. The outer part of the foot rests on the web of the shoe, the coffin bone descends and not meeting with any elastic substance to play upon, the flesh gets pressed between the upper surface of the shoe and the bone: result, Corns! These are, therefore, the result of pressure, causing rupture of the blood-vessels, resulting in a morbid secretion which if not attended to may become chronic.

Shoes left on too long will bring corns also. Horses' shoes are supposed to last a month, they will go on longer, but should be removed every month so that the feet may

be attended to and a watch kept for the appearance of corns or any other evil.

For treatment of corns try and remove the pressure and encourage a healthy growth of horn. Oil of turpentine and spirits of wine in equal parts of each, applied after the corns have been removed by a qualified veterinary surgeon, will be found useful. After a few days of this treatment, the horse may be shod with a thick leather sole, the space inside between the foot and the sole should be packed with tow soaked in the mixture of oil of turpentine and spirits of wine. Moderate work can be continued.

Sand-cracks, which are fibres of the hoof cracking and separating for want of sufficient gelatinous secretion, should have the edges of the cracks carefully cut and poulticed for a couple of days. Poultices are better made of crushed linseed or oatmeal than bread. When the poultices have done their work make a mixture of goose grease and oil of turpentine, use this as an ointment with half the quantity of turpentine in it. This acts as a stimulant. The shoes must be taken off and the horse stood in fresh tan from the tan yard, about 12 inches deep. I ought

here to say tan fresh from the yard is the only proper material to stand horses in when suffering from any disease of the feet.

The navicular disease we hear so much about and so rightly dreaded by horse owners can often be traced to the cutting away of the horse's frogs. When living within reach of a good blacksmith I make it a rule he should go round and see to the shoes of all the hunters going out, every hunting morning; it avoids so much annoyance with loose shoes and broken feet. I recommend this practice to all my hunting readers.

CHAPTER XI

STABLE MANAGEMENT

WOMAN is handicapped by her sex in this most important matter, and by her inability to be as much on the scenes as is advisable; but by showing the grooms she understands what she is talking about, combined with quiet determination, much may be accomplished.

If building your own stables, it is an easy matter to have them made properly—facing south, on dry ground, just the right height, efficient ventilation, water supply, concrete floor, glazed brick walls, and all the rest of the details best suited to horses' requirements and well-being. But I am here wishing to deal with stables as we find them in our everyday travels—common or garden stables—most of which are badly ventilated and much too dark. Horses will not thrive in the dark any more than children or flowers

will. Give them abundance of light and air; they love the sunshine as much as we do.

It is only in recent years that proper attention has been paid to the ventilation and light in stables; many even now do not properly understand how these two essentials ought to be managed. As it is not always possible to have stables all you would like them to be, I will try and give my suggestions and instructions in a way that may be possible and helpful to those anxious to make the best of what they have.

No four-horse stable should be less than 10 feet high, a six-horse stable 14 feet high.

The ventilation should be near the top. The air a horse has breathed and exhausted is lighter and warmer than the surrounding atmosphere, therefore it ascends. If there is no means of escape, when cold, it descends, and is breathed over and over again, which everybody will readily understand is not advisable.

When no proper means of ventilation are provided in your stables, have a few bricks knocked out high up, so as to avoid the draught on the horses' heads, and have a

proper ventilator or two put in; it will only cost a few shillings. A good temperature in stables is 48° F. to 62° F. At the same time, if there are no proper windows, have some more bricks knocked out, making room for some good big windows, that will pull up and down with cords and pulleys.

Horses do best when the stables face south or west; when they lie north or east there will always be more sickness, colds, coughs, etc. Plenty of fresh air and light are as much an essential to a horse's well-being as his food.

Grooms have a perfect passion for hot, badly ventilated stables, doubtless actuated by the Christian principle of doing as they would be done by; they are not happy themselves unless every window and door is closed in their own cottages and apartments.

I have noticed when returning from balls and parties in the early morning, when the air is at its freshest, making you feel glad you live, the grooms' cottages will have everything shut up and blinds down, while I know that, though there are three bedrooms to each cottage, as many as possible cram into one room, and, to make all quite

perfect, have a board fastened up in the fireplace, to prevent a draught!

So whenever anything goes wrong—a horse gets a cough, bad eyes, or even if one goes lame, or any of the hundred-and-one annoyances which cannot be escaped among a number of horses—it is always the mistress' fault, she *will* have the stables so cold and draughty!

It is a bad plan, though dear to the heart of stablemen, to have sloping floors; it may make them easier to keep clean, but is very bad for a horse's back tendons, keeping up a strain. You may notice horses standing on sloping floors stand as far back as they can, so as to put their hind toes in the gutter. They do this to relieve the strain on their sinews. The best kind of floor is made of Staffordshire bricks laid in edgeways, over a concrete foundation. Drains should be surface drains, to dress out at one end of the stable, not to run just underground.

Unfortunately, it is not possible in most stables for every horse to have a loose box, though I wish it were; it is a horrible practice tying horses up by their heads, and is not good for them. When the boxes are

limited, keep them for the older horses ; they are more likely to become stiff after hunting than the younger ones. Think what a joy it must be to them to roll on the straw and stretch out their tired limbs!

No loose box ought to be less than 12 feet by 14 feet, and I prefer them a good deal larger. The doors should be made in two parts, an upper portion and a lower, which open and shut independently of one another, so that on fine sunny days the top half may be left open, allowing the occupants to put their heads out and enjoy the sunshine and air.

In many stables, instead of the loose boxes being the great feature of the stable, they are poked away in the darkest corners. I should like to see the person whose large and brilliant brain evolved the scheme shut up in one himself for a week, his food thrown in at him through a trap-door above, so that when he looked up in hungry anticipation of his dinner, his eyes and ears were filled with it. A little justice untempered by mercy would be very wholesome. It is such a senseless, stupid practice, throwing hay and chaff into a rack above a horse's head; it

probably was invented by some person anxious to avoid trouble, and who thought he would throw a week's supply in at a time.

A horse's food should be placed in a rack, manger, or trough a little above the level of his knees; but before going on with the food question, I must finish what I wish to say about these loose boxes in dark corners. Even if they do not look out into the yard and open air, still have the doors made so that the upper half can be left open, and the prisoners able to look out and amuse themselves watching what is going on. Some of the worst stable habits are formed by horses being bored and dull, with nothing to amuse them. They cannot stand all day, when not eating, in a state of demi-sleep and mental apathy, so take to crib-biting, wind-sucking, and other bad tricks for amusement.

I am an advocate for letting horses drink as much as they like and when they like, and would like to see a slate trough filled with nice soft water beside every manger; it is a much better plan than taking buckets of water to them at stated intervals.

When allowed to please themselves, horses will drink about five gallons of water a day,

while if given to them at stated hours in buckets, they will drink as much as eight gallons a day, which is more than they really require, or is good for them. But experience has taught them they may not be able to get a drink when they want it, so drink more than they require while they have a chance.

The proper feeding of horses must depend on the work they have to do, and the fads of their owners.

Some people declare a horse should never be given cooked food, others politely call this theory "all rot." Again, some great and experienced sportsmen and women say a horse must have four good feeds a day, others say three feeds a day are better, but dividing the quantity of the four meals between the three instead.

What shall I say among so many authorities? Who is right and who is wrong? All my life I have bought and sold my own horses, looked after their welfare and comfort as far as in me lay, hunted any day and every day I had a chance, on anything and everything that came my way, so will tell you what I do, having had fairly satisfactory results.

No hard-and-fast rule can be laid down about feeding horses, some being gross feeders, others the reverse, delicate feeders requiring little and often, with plenty of variety. Few grooms understand what delicate digestions horses have, added to which it is much easier, of course, to throw a feed of oats into a manger and a bundle of hay into the rack, than to prepare food for them.

When away from home I do not like disorganizing other people's stables, but when at home I give my horses their corn cooked and then cooled in the morning. I have been laughed at by some and my example followed by others, who for the horses' sakes, I am glad to say, have been in the majority. When you think about it, it stands to reason, the food is better cooked, for all food that is swallowed has to rise to a temperature of just on 100° before digestion can work healthily; therefore it is wise to help towards this given point by cooked and chilled food, easily digested. When oats and corn are given raw even the strongest animals with the best digestions seldom reap the full benefit, a certain quantity always passes

through their bodies just as they have bolted it, while with cooked grain all is used as nutriment, nothing wasted.

From the point of economy alone, if for no other reason, I would recommend giving horses cooked food once a day. Every grain should swell to twice its natural size, making half the quantity sufficient. Not many horses could eat the full daily allowance of oats if all were boiled. The proper method of cooking the corn, oats, or barley is to boil it, keeping it well covered with water, adding more as it evaporates so that it will not stick to the boiler. Horses are very delicate feeders, and will not touch anything burnt or with a nasty smell. When sufficiently boiled and quite tender turn the food into trays to cool, but do not throw away the water, it is excellent for mixing with their mashes, being full of nourishment.

In the raw state, 5 quarterns (a quartern is $2\frac{1}{2}$ lbs.) a day is what a horse in hard work should eat, with a few beans mixed with it after Christmas. I do not give my horses beans before Christmas, for two reasons ; one is for fear of their being too new, the other because horses are generally

fresh enough without them till that time, but for the last half of the season I give them a few crushed beans mixed with their oats, especially to the older horses; they like them very much, and it does them good, though for younger horses it does not do to give many, as they have a heating tendency.

Do not place more food before a horse than he will eat without leaving any; a good servant who watches his charges will know exactly what each one will consume. It is difficult to lay down hard-and-fast rules as to quantity; a horse must have plenty, but not leave a single particle in his manger; this answers to the rule laid down for the health of human beings, always to get up from the table feeling as if you would like some more, in other words, leave off eating while still hungry—very unsatisfactory, but without doubt wholesome, making just the difference between having to make a bee-line for the nearest armchair and slumber on the one hand, or renewed activity and energy on the other.

The best hours for feeding horses are 7.0 a.m.; 12.0 noon; and from 4 to 7 in the evening. The first feed at seven should be

of cooked food—boiled grain, as much as they will eat; also as much chaff and chopped hay as they will consume. At 12.0 noon, I only give chopped hay and chaff; hunters ought not to look for a big feed in the middle of the day, for this reason (though they must have a certain amount of bulk)—when out hunting they have to miss the meal, which must create a terrible vacuum not conducive to showing their best form, or lasting through a long day, so I accustom them to only having chaff and some chopped hay, but let them eat enough of it. The evening feed, between 4 and 7 p.m., as much crushed grain as they will eat, usually about 3 quarterns, mixed with some crushed beans, as much chaff and chopped hay as they will eat.

During the course of the day I allow each horse 6 lbs. of long hay to play with, but do not believe much long hay is good for them, it gives them a blown-out look, and is bad for wind and digestion.

For a horse in hard work $5\frac{1}{2}$ quarterns of raw oats, or grain of sorts, is not too much for them each day; while three times a week I give a good mash—one always on Saturday night. The following makes a good mash:

a quartern of oats, a pint of linseed (whole) which has been boiled for quite three hours very slowly, mixed well up with enough bran to make a nice mixture, not too thin like soup, and not like poultice, but just an appetising-looking consistency. I have never had a horse that would refuse to eat it when nicely made, though occasionally for a very delicate feeder I have had to put in a little treacle or sugar, which has been much enjoyed.

I give a few carrots most days, taking care they are either given whole or chopped up very fine; if left in large pieces horses are apt to choke themselves.

As far as I can gather, the chief reason against given cooked food is: it gives the groom a little more trouble. I never allow this to stand between me and the well-being of my horses. I engage my servants to do as they are told, always explaining while engaging them it will be no use their coming to me unless prepared to obey me; it does not matter to me what they have "been accustomed to," or what "the best families do," they must do as I tell them, also impressing on them I give no servant the

opportunity of deceiving or disobeying me twice; the very moment I find a man in my stables roughly treating a horse, off they go without notice, and wages only to the date of dismissal.

Grooms are only the same as the rest of their class—eye and time servers; still by dint of being firm and at the same time rewarding any extra work cheerfully done, or if I observe any extra unsolicited attention to any of the four-footed occupants of the stable it gives me much pleasure to reward it with an extra sovereign, and by degrees I find what they begin by doing for love of lucre ends in becoming an established habit.

Gruel is the best thing to give a horse when first he comes in from hunting, but it must be properly made, not the sort of mixture I have often seen offered to the poor beasts who, though empty and thirsty, often turn away from it; a pail full of hot water with a couple of handfuls of oatmeal floating on top is not gruel. Horses love the proper mixture called gruel, which should be made by putting about half-pound of oatmeal in the bottom of a pail; pour boiling water on this,

stirring till it looks like cream, then fill up with cold water, giving it to the horse when it has the chill pleasantly taken off, neither hot nor cold. You can soon tell the right heat by putting your hand in and stirring right to the bottom of the pail with it. A careless servant may have the mixture cool enough at the top but much too hot at the bottom.

When a horse is much done up and tired put a little whisky (about a wine-glassful) into the mixture, or a pint of beer, it will help to pick him up. Beer is, perhaps, the best if you can get it.

I always keep a few packets of "Grula" in my store-room. This is also a grand pick-me-up, and I take one out hunting with me to give in some gruel to my mount before returning home after a long day; it seems to put new life into them. Any stores or good chemist keeps this Thorley's Grula for horses, and it costs a few pence a packet.

When buying fodder for your horses buy the best, and buy it yourself, keeping a sample and comparing it with the bulk when it is delivered. Occasionally I have had very inferior stuff sent, quite different to

what I chose when giving the order. I sent it back promptly.

It is better to buy oats by measure, not weight. The best go about 42 lbs. to the bushel, when all the chaff is gone this only leaves about 35 lbs. of grain. Another quality is to be bought about 30 lbs. to the bushel, but is not worth buying. A hard-working horse is worth the best of everything.

Oats should be quite dry and hard with no scent or smell of any kind; they should chip and splinter when crushed. When buying rub a few between the palms of your hands, if they have any smell avoid them. It happens occasionally when buying from fodder merchants that they offer you oats that have been dried by some process; you can generally detect it when you rub them between the hands, there is a sort of sulphury smell. I have known these oats give a horse horrible gripes and pains.

Buy from the local farmers, even if you have to pay more for the things: you will get them fresher in the first place, and in the second it is right to buy everything you can from them; but for their goodwill there would be no hunting at all.

Taking farmers as a class they are a long-suffering, cheery, sporting lot. They love a grumble, certainly, but are always ready to have a laugh at their own expense when you tell them so.

The prices of fodder have gone up in leaps and bounds, in company with all other provisions. Good, sound old hay, the only kind fit for hunters, cannot now be bought under £5 10*s.* to £6 a ton, whereas a few years ago £3 would buy the best.

It may be a help if I give the prices of most of the things you will want, but you must remember they are always varying, though the variation is generally a rise.

	£	*s.*	*d.*		£	*s.*	*d.*	
Old hay .	5	10	0	to	6	0	0	a ton.
New hay .	4	10	0	to	5	0	0	„
Straw					2	10	0	„
Oats					0	10	6	a sack
Beans					0	18	0	„
Oatmeal					0	15	0	a cwt.
Whole linseed . . .					0	1	9	for 7 lbs.
Barley					0	4	6	a bushel.

I like clover hay mixed with the meadow hay, the flowers in it are sweet, and the stems fine and short, but it is very fattening.

You must have a corn-crushing machine in your stables, and see it is used. When

new they cost £1 10*s*., but can be bought as good as new very often, at sales, at half that price.

There must also be a boiler for cooking the food, mashes, etc., and having plenty of warm water ready when horses come in. Most stables have one; if not, there is always a boiler of sorts near the cow-houses and piggeries, but be most particular about its being absolutely clean, if used for stable purposes, for if dirty and leaving the taste or smell on the food in preparation for the horses, it will be wasted, as not one of them will eat it. They are very fastidious feeders, and will go hungry rather than eat anything they do not like. Some people say, "Well, let them go without!" By all means let them go without, if you like, but they will not carry you out hunting with nothing in their insides, so perhaps it will be wiser to see their food is given to them in a clean and appetising form.

Horses will eat and enjoy all sorts of odd things, such as fruit, apples, bananas, pears, potatoes cooked and raw, biscuits and sugar, and so on; the change is good for them, though these must be looked on as treats

and not everyday food, but they will not eat anything sour or dirty.

It is a good plan to take dainties with you, like fruit or biscuits, when you go to see your horses in the stables; they look forward to it. Pet and make much of them, talking to and stroking them, they learn to know your voice and have confidence in you, which you may be glad of some day when you are down together in the hunting field, your voice may then restrain them and keep them quiet till help comes, whereas a horse that did not know your voice might flounder about, hurting you and spoiling your appearance by rolling on or kicking you in his, perhaps, useless endeavours to get up.

I have already said stables ought to have slate water troughs in every box or stall, which should always be full, though a horse must not be allowed to drink copious draughts of cold water when he comes in hot. Otherwise let them drink as much as they like, it is a sign of good health when they help themselves plentifully. Soft water, very clean and pure, is best for all stable purposes; if unable to get it, and the water

is hard, throw in half-an-ounce of carbonate of soda to a pailful of water with the chill off.

Supposing at any time you wish to give your horse a drink, you know the water is too cold to be good for him, then put in a handful of hay and give it a stir round.

Do not allow physic of any sort or kind to be given without your orders, and have a duplicate key of every door and cupboard in stable or harness room, so that you can at any moment go where you please and see exactly all that is kept for use.

To avoid unpleasantness and misunderstandings, make it thoroughly understood by all the tradesmen that nothing ordered in your name is to be delivered to your servants or anybody else without a written order from you, signed by yourself, these orders to be returned with the bill when sent in for payment. This is a plan that really works very well, being better for the tradespeople, better for the servants, and better for you, in this way. Supposing, after a groom has left your service, a bill comes in from the saddler for sponges, bandages, and all the small items which help

to make such formidable totals; the man has gone, you cannot speak to him about it, the tradesman swears they were ordered, and you are in an annoying position, and in the end have to pay. It may be the servant was a rogue, or it may be the tradesman is one, but one point is certain, you have to pay.

By giving notice to the tradespeople, or putting it in the local paper, that you will not hold yourself responsible for anything ordered in your name unless an order signed by yourself can be produced, all this trouble is avoided, and everybody knows exactly the length of his tether.

I have order books made for me, each page numbered just like a cheque book, with the same counterfoils. I write my orders on the right-hand side, as if it were a cheque, signing it in the same way, tearing it out and giving it to the groom, maid, gardener, or whoever it may happen to be, the counterfoil, which remains in the book, reminding me of the date, who it went to, what for, person's name carrying the order, like this :

No. 17. Jan. 1st, 1913. To Messrs.	The Manor House, *No.* 17. Ashby. Jan. 1st, 1913.
Order taken by	By order of .....

I will now fill one in, to show exactly what I mean:

No. 17. Jan. 1st, 1913. To Messrs. Brown, saddlers. 3 new buckets, @ 3/- each; 6 water bandages, @ 1/6 the pair. *Order taken by* Jones, 2nd groom.	The Manor House, *No.* 17. Ashby. Jan. 1st, 1913. To Messrs. Brown, saddlers. Please supply bearer with 3 new stable buckets, @ 3/- each; also 6 new water bandages, @ 1/6 the pair. By order of Grace Gallophard.

So that if, when the bill comes in, any item is marked down in it for which no cheque order is produced, and you have no counter-foil to match the order, you strike the item out of the bill, and refuse to pay. I find it

works admirably, and everybody likes it, except the rogues, and they have to put up with it.

Having discussed the stable and food questions, we can now turn to the creature comforts of the willing slaves.

No matter what time in the morning a horse has to go out, he should have his feed and drink an hour before leaving the stable, and not be worried all the time he is eating it by grooming and fuss.

Insist on all grooming, saddling, and bridling being done in plenty of time before the horses are wanted; when the servants are late, they rush about, throwing on saddles and bridles, while the poor beasts have to suffer and bear the brunt of their ill-temper, being possibly girthed too tightly, saddle too far forward over the withers, numnah or saddle cloth crinkled up underneath, and other little carelessnesses, which make all the difference in a horse's comfort, and how he carries you through the day.

When I see a horse come round from the stable working his ears backwards and forwards, fidgeting, and with restless, agitated eye, while he shrinks and winces at the least

movement, I know there has been haste, and very likely ill-temper, in the stables. If a groom tells me he cannot help it, they will come out like that, I say, "Then you are of no use to me; it is your business to see they do not come out in a state of nervousness and fright, and I will get some one who can manage better."

It is quite easy to see the difference between a light-hearted dance round with a bright eye, full of life, and longing to be off, to the scared, frightened eye of a horse that has been roughly handled.

It is most pathetic to see the way a horse tries to find out what you want him to do; watch his ears, and see the way he turns first one and then the other if you speak, to try, by the inflection of your voice, to find out what you want him to do, the least movement of your hand or foot, on the alert at once, to meet your wishes if possible, and if *only* they can understand. It is worth a little patience to try and explain what you wish them to do, when they are so willing. The sorrows of their servitude are so many and so great, do not add to them by being impatient and harsh.

The treatment of hunters on their return to the stables is worth some attention. Do not allow them to be persecuted with fuss and grooming the moment they are inside the stable. The men who have had, in all probability, nothing to do all day, are full of energy, but the horses are weary.

By all means, loosen the girths, but leave the saddle on, and throw a light rug over him; a heavy one will make him sweat. Next take off the bridle, rub his throat dry with a wisp of hay, and pull his ears until his gruel is brought to him, then let him enjoy it in peace. Should he refuse it, however, put in a packet of the grula I have already recommended, or a little whisky; the horse is probably over-tired, and wants a pick-me-up. When giving whisky or beer it is a good plan to let the horse begin drinking and then pour it in under his chin, he will not then smell it. Some horses, however, will not drink it. Go on pulling his ears through your hands, it seems to revive and refresh them, and nearly all love it; mine look for it, and put their heads down ready for it. Unless something is wrong, he will then enjoy his gruel.

Next give him his chopped hay and chaff; while eating this, remove the saddle, rub his back dry, put on the clothing, give him his corn, and leave him to rest.

It was the fashion at one time to wash horses' legs; now people know better, the practice was productive of no good—on the contrary, was the cause of mud fever, cracked heels, and other mischiefs. Let the mud dry on, put the dry flannel bandages on over mud and all, and when the horse is rested rub and brush it all off; massage the legs, and again put on his bandages. Should you notice any swelling, dip the bandages in vinegar and water, it has a hardening effect. About 9.30 take off the bandages and move him into his loose box, which has been prepared with plenty of peat moss underneath, and well covered with nice fresh straw, where he may be left for the night.

Many horses will not lie down while wet bandages are on; indeed, if for any reason I wish to prevent a horse from lying down, instead of fastening up his head, I put wet bandages on from coronet to knee; they will not then lie down, and it frets them less than having their heads tied up.

Saddles should be properly dried, and then beaten, or they will get hard and give sore backs. I will tell you more about this and other little ailments and their remedies in another chapter.

A broken-winded horse requires regular work, and must have plenty of food, but not hay; straw is better; give plenty of beans, barley, and oats, and carrots three times a week.

Small doses of aconite are useful when a horse is gone in the wind, but it is given under a veterinary surgeon's directions. This medicine is accumulative, so remember, when the sad day comes that you have to give the order to have him destroyed, he must not go to the kennels. We once had several hounds poisoned, and were very worried about it and perplexed as to how it could have happened, until we found out a horse had been given to the kennels (by a neighbour of ours) which had been treated for years for broken wind, and was therefore saturated with aconite, and we lost several hounds through it. The kind donor never thought for a moment there would be enough of the poison left in the horse to do any

harm; he was a keen supporter of hounds, and it was quite the last thing he would have done if he had given the matter a thought. But it is worth mentioning, to prevent such a misfortune occurring again.

Grooming plays a very important part in a horse's health; it must be thorough. Whether a horse has been properly dressed or not is easily discovered by turning back a little hair and looking at the roots; or press your fingers into the horse's coat—if, when you withdraw them, there is a dirty, dusty sort of white stain on your fingers, beyond all manner of doubt he is not properly groomed. A curry-comb is a thing I do not allow to be used on a horse's coat, though many people do so; they were not made for a horse's body. Plenty of good, strong brushes, some good whisps or pads of hay, and abundance of clean stable cloths and rubbers, combined with plenty of elbow grease, give the best results. A horse in good health and properly groomed will shine like satin, his skin clean and comfortable, but you will have to see it done, not every day, of course, but turn up at unexpected moments.

Not long ago, when staying in the North,

after church one Sunday, I said to my host, "I should like to see the horses." He kindly took me at once. The first stable I went into, of six horses, not one was properly groomed, while two had staring coats and tucked-up bodies. The next stable we went into, I was so horrified I gave an exclamation, which I quickly recovered and tried to turn into a sneeze, for every horse in the stable had what looked like mange, but on closer inspection I found the poor beasts were covered with vermin, with bare rubbed patches all over them. My indignation nearly betrayed me into an overdraft on my Sunday manners.

This could not have happened if the master or mistress really cared about horses; neither of them ever went near the stables, and if they did, neither of them knew a fetlock from a wither, so all was left to the servants. This with an old family coachman responsible for the work of thirteen men under him! and greatly trusted.

CHAPTER XII

SUMMERING HUNTERS

HERE, again, we are met with a question provoking discussion. Some people will tell you to turn your horses out to grass when the hunting season is over; others tell you to do nothing of the kind, but turn them into a loose box or barn.

I will place the two methods before my readers, and explain what I like doing when circumstances will allow it; they will then be able to judge which they consider best for their own horses.

Those in favour of turning horses out say the grass is cool and refreshing for their feet, while the young spring grass is both food and medicine for their insides; that horses deserve this treat and repose at the end of the season.

Others who do not approve of this method will tell you the ground may be hard and bad for their feet; the flies and insects will tease

and worry them, resulting in the horses galloping about and laming themselves ; and it is easier to get a horse into condition when standing in a loose box or barn than when coming up from grass.

My own views are, horses do much better when turned out, provided they receive proper care—by this I mean they must not be turned straight out when the hunting season is over, but on sunny days let them out for an hour or two in the middle of the day, so that they may become hardened and accustomed to being out of doors by the time it is warm enough to leave them out altogether.

Have all shoes taken off, and tips put on : these are little shoes that just go round the toe part of the foot, to prevent the hoof being broken away ; any blacksmith knows what is wanted when told to put tips on.

Watch horses at first when turned out, to see if they agree, and that they do not gallop about too much. It is a good plan to turn an old hunter out with a young one ; he will probably kick up his heels with joy, trot round the field, look over the gates and hedges, give another kick or two, and then settle down to enjoy his well-earned repose

and rest. The younger ones will then follow his example.

Some horses are very tiresome, they jump out of every field they are put into, but this does not so often happen when they have another horse in the field with them, it is mostly when they are alone. One mare I had used to jump in and out just as it pleased her fancy, no matter where I put her, until I thought of the old white donkey that mowed the lawn, and turned her in, after which the mare never tried to get out any more.

All horses, when turned out, should be where there is a shed they can go into when they feel so inclined, away from the sun or wet, and flies. If there is a door to the shed, have it safely fastened back, and take care the shed is high enough in the doorway for them to go in and out without knocking their heads.

There must be water for them to drink, so if there is none in the field naturally—no stream or pond with sweet, clear water—place a cistern or tub in a shady corner, and keep it full, cleaning out the tub or cistern every three or four days.

I have found that by burning eucalyptus

in an old tin pot once or twice a week in the shed, horses do not get much teased with flies, and finding this out, they readily go into the shed when worried by these pests.

Horses with long legs and short necks do not thrive so well out at grass as others do, owing to not being able to reach down to their food so easily. If you observe a horse of this description out at grass, you will see he always feeds uphill if he can, and when on the level bends one knee so as to bring his head nearer to his food. But even this can be arranged by a little management. Place a cattle-feeding stand that has legs in the field, and put in it some chaff, some grass mown on purpose, and the daily feed of corn; he will then get enough to eat, and be able to enjoy the freedom of being turned out.

Some people never give their horses corn when summering them; this is a great mistake; they ought to have one feed a day up to August, then two feeds a day; about 2½ lbs. crushed, to a feed, is enough.

A horse that has no hard food during the summer is much more difficult to get into condition again when the time comes to take them up, and will not have half the strength

or be so benefited by the holiday as a horse who has had some corn daily.

So much depends on how you summer your horses, whether they will carry you well and last through long runs or not; besides, a horse that has been judiciously summered is worth so much more money.

Look carefully after their feet when out at grass; some horses grow horn much more rapidly than others, and may require the tips removed and adjusted afresh oftener than others.

Should any of my readers consider the other method better, that is to say, standing their horses in a loose box or barn, I will explain what is the proper thing to do. Have all shoes removed, and tips put on; see that there is abundance of tan, straw, sawdust, or peat moss for them to stand in; it should be several inches deep. Give plenty of green food, freshly cut grass for the purpose, Lucern grass or clover three times a day, as much chaff as he will eat, and two feeds a day of corn (crushed), no long hay, which is bad for horses' winds.

Walking exercise for an hour a day in the early morning (on the grass if possible) is

necessary, as horses who can only move about their loose box do not get the exercise their more fortunate brethren do who are turned out.

By August, both the horses in boxes and those turned out require a mild dose of physic, and then their corn increased, so as to begin to get them hard and fit. Bran mashes are good to begin with when they are brought up to get ready for the season.

If horses were allowed to decide for themselves which they would do—be turned out, or stand in a loose box—I know which they would choose ; it must be so dreadfully dull standing in a box all day ; but, of course, this is no guide or help to our decision, for we know from experience that even we, such intellectual, brain-given creatures, do not always do what is best for us even when we know which is best—we only know what other people should do, or think we know. I should rather like to moralise here, but refrain, morals are so much more palatable when we extract them for ourselves ; when served up cold, even disguised in the most toothsome adjuncts, they are apt to be nauseating.

CHAPTER XIII

HINTS—AILMENTS AND TREATMENT

It is a convenience, I know, to be able to turn to a certain page in a book to find any recipes you may require, I therefore place them together in this chapter, though several have already been alluded to.

In serious cases you will send for a veterinary surgeon, but I feel I can safely give you the result of my own experiences, on which you can act until skilled help arrives.

One of the most common everyday matters to be dealt with is

Sore Backs.

Look carefully over a horse as soon as the saddle is taken off. Run the hand gently, with slight pressure, over the back; if the horse flinches or shivers, find the exact spot that is tender; if the skin is not broken,

bathe with cold salt and water, after which dust well with Fuller's Earth. Do not allow hot water to be used, it only makes the place more tender and the skin more likely to break at some future time. I prefer using Tidman's sea-salt when I can get it, being a greater astringent than ordinary salt.

When the skin is broken, wash with tepid water and Condy's fluid, about one teaspoonful of the fluid to a pint of water, then dab it dry, and keep covered by zinc ointment. In a few days a scab will form ; keep this smeared with vaseline or homocea, it will be less likely to crack or break, giving the new growing skin underneath time to get hard before the scab falls off.

Look to the saddles, and see if there are any hard lumps or other reasons for the sore backs.

Girth Galls.

Treat in the same way as for sore backs.

Broken Knees.

Never poultice any injured joints, nor is it wise to foment them, the result sometimes

being permanent weakness and lameness; more especially does this apply to deep wounds. The treatment should be antiseptic.

When only the skin is injured, wash carefully with Condy's fluid and warm water, one teaspoonful of the fluid to a pint of warm water. Be careful to remove all earth or dirt; should any be left in, the result may very easily be lock-jaw. After the place has been cleansed, bathe three times daily with tincture of myrrh, letting it dribble over the wound.

Should the wound be deep, the same treatment will suffice, with the addition of a cotton-wool pad, soaked in sulphate of zinc, fastened on at night by means of a carefully adjusted bandage.

The horse must not be allowed to lie down; instead of fastening up their heads, apply wet bandages to the uninjured legs, from coronet to knee. I have never found a horse lie down while these are on, and it is much less irksome than having their heads tied up.

If you observe any unhealthy appearance about the knees, a weak solution of

bichloride of mercury is good: mix a twelfth part of the mercury in water. Gentle exercise twice a day is wise. Give nourishing food, and plenty of good mashes as laxatives.

When bones and tendons are broken, the joint-oil, which looks like white of egg, will be visible, and the horse is done for, except, possibly, for stud purposes.

Blistering.

The majority of blistering compounds are made up too strong: most of them will bear mixing with soap solution. When applying the blistering fluid, remember it is more the way it is applied and rubbed in than the deadly compound itself that does the work. Brisk rubbing is advisable, but not rough. Cover up any sore or tender place before you begin with wax and medicinal oil, which can be purchased at any chemist's or drug stores; there is no necessity to inflict any unnecessary torture on the hapless creatures at our mercy.

Mud Fever.

This is the result of bad grooming, washing horses' legs and leaving them wet; if you never allow your horses' legs to be washed, you will not be likely to require a remedy.

Horses suffering from this fever must not be worked. Apply petroleum jelly, and give a mild aperient, for which I give two good prescriptions at the end of this chapter.

Cracked Heels.

Poultice with oatmeal or linseed until all heat and inflammation have gone, then use frequently an ointment made of zinc, alum and lard.

Worms.

Do not allow any worm balls or worm mixtures in your stables. When anything of the kind is necessary, grate finely four drachms of areca nut, mix it in a soft mash, and give it to the horse every other day. Should it be necessary, add a little more areca nut

every other day in the mash, and add a pint of linseed oil. Areca nut should be grated fresh each time it is wanted.

Diarrhœa.

This trouble is usually easy to deal with. Half-ounce doses of bi-carbonate of potash will quickly bring about the desired effect.

Colic.

When there is great pain, quickly prepare a pint of warm gruel, add one ounce of tincture of opium, one ounce of oil of turpentine, and two ounces of nitric ether.

Try and get the patient to move about, it will take his attention off the pain.

Repeat the dose in an hour, if not better.

Lampas.

This means inflamed gums, and bars of the mouth. In extreme cases a veterinary surgeon may have to be called in to use a lance, but in ordinary cases laxatives and mash food will effect a cure. Horses will naturally not eat hard food.

Sore Throats.

Many of them would be avoided if, when horses come in wet or in a sweat, their throats and ears were always rubbed dry. However, when the sore throat is an established fact, apply linseed and mustard poultices, made large enough to come well up under and round the neck.

Chronic coughs are often the result of neglected sore throats.

Bronchitis.

Send for a veterinary surgeon; until he comes, apply strong mustard poultices, give plenty of air, but no draughts.

Inflamed or Congested Lungs.

Apply poultices until the veterinary surgeon arrives, and keep the horse warm.

Glanders.

I know of no cure. Bear in mind it is most infectious. I have known human beings

catch it from horses, and die of it. It therefore behoves you to send at once for the veterinary surgeon, who will mercifully destroy the sufferer, and properly disinfect the stables.

Farcy.

This is something like glanders in a mild form, and begins with a puffy swelling, with nasty-looking ulcers, but easily gives to proper treatment.

An ointment made of biniodide of mercury and lard applied to the ulcers, walking exercise, plenty of fresh air and food, with some good vegetable and mineral tonic which the veterinary will give, is all that is required in ordinary cases.

Indigestion.

This may be diagnosed by the way the horses' food passes through them, and by the way they lose flesh. There would be less of this malady if more cooked food were given. Careful dieting will be necessary, boiled grain once every day, crushed oats once every day, chopped straw and chaff, with,

for the time, no long hay. See the horse drinks before his food, instead of after.

Colds.

An ordinary cold requires much the same treatment as we should apply to human beings: plenty of warm clothing, fresh air, and warm mashes, with half-an-ounce of sweet nitre added to a mash.

Be careful of draughts, as the sweet nitre opens the pores of the skin, when, of course, the horses are more susceptible. Stop the corn feeds for a time.

Megrims.

This is caused by a rush of blood to the head, which is held in the air on one side, or violently shaken from side to side. The animal must not be ridden or driven a yard further, for he will probably end in turning a complete somersault.

Dash cold water over head and neck, if any is at hand. A veterinary surgeon can at once relieve the poor beast by dividing the palatine artery just above the second

bar of the mouth. I have seen this very cleverly done by a farmer. Copious bleeding follows, and the horse appears quite well again.

The best remedy I can suggest is to get rid of the horse; it is a thing likely to recur at any time.

Corns.

For these, search for a red spot in the horn near the heel; these are caused by bad shoeing and leaving shoes on too long. The corn must be removed by a qualified practitioner, after which apply frequently a lotion made of oil of turpentine and spirits of wine in equal parts. After a few days of this treatment, the horse can be shod with a thick leather sole, the space between the leather sole and foot being filled in with tow soaked in the lotion. The horse may then do a little work.

Never leave corns unattended to; they will produce lameness, and are liable to become chronic.

Navicular Disease.

When in an advanced state, this cannot be cured, but may be relieved by blistering the coronet.

A horse may go sound for a time if a skilled veterinary surgeon operates by dividing the sensitive nerves which supply the feet.

With this disease a horse will come out of the stable lame and return to it walking sound. But it is a malady dreaded by all horse-owners.

Over Reach.

Clean the wound, dust with iodoform, press any torn pieces into place, make a pad of cotton-wool soaked in sulphate of zinc, and fasten firmly with a bandage. If the place is slight, it will not prevent the horse from work, but if severe a longer rest will be necessary and bandages firmly applied.

Recipe for Mild Aperient.

1 drachm of saltpetre
1 „ „ ginger
1 „ „ Barbadoes aloes

with enough soft soap to make it work into a ball.

A Second Recipe for Mild Aperient.

2 drachms of emetic tartar
1 oz. of nitre
} mixed.

Given every day for a week.

Fomentations.

When necessary to foment a horse's leg, stand it in a pailful of water as hot as you can bear your hand in it, then with a sponge dribble the water down from the shoulder over the ailing limb; as the water cools, add more hot; it is of no use popping a horse's foot into a pail of warm water and calling that fomenting. Half-an-hour is not too long at a time, with the water kept up to the right temperature; it must not be allowed to get cold.

Swelled Legs.

Swelled legs mean overwork, under-feeding, and working when out of condition. Feed well, give gentle exercise, and bandage

with flannel wrung out in warm vinegar and water.

Any Injured Joints.

Never poultice. The treatment must be antiseptic.

Splints.

These are common when young horses begin work. I have seen it cured by Stevens' (the late veterinary surgeon of Park Lane) red ointment—a most charming blister, it is so efficient and so mild; when properly applied it does not even bring the hair off, and the horse can be used in moderation all the time it is being used.

In a bad case of splint, as a last resource, firing may be tried; when properly done with a pointed iron, it leaves very little mark.

Wounds from Barbed Wire.

These require special care, owing to the wire being so poisonous. Bathing with

Condy's fluid and warm water, or with boracic acid powder dissolved in water, or with brandy and whisky and water, must be done as soon as possible, after which apply carbolic oil plentifully.

Broken Wind.

When a horse's wind is gone he requires very regular work, plenty of food, and the best. Give no hay, but, instead, let him eat straw, a generous supply of oats, beans and barley; carrots, also, about three times a week.

Aconite is a powerful medicine often used for broken wind, but must only be used under a veterinary surgeon's advice.

Wall Licking.

When a horse seems inclined to do this put a piece of rock-salt in his manger, also a lump of chalk. He will not lick the wall any more; he finds what he is searching for in these two substances.

Crib Biting.

All woodwork must be removed or protected by being covered with zinc sheeting. If he still continues the practice, smear all the likely places with aloes. He will not like that, and you may be able to cure him.

Age Symptoms.

When a horse has passed his fourth year he has four incisors, or fore teeth, fully grown in each jaw.

Horse cast under Manger.

A horse in this most uncomfortable position cannot rise till he is drawn back by a groom, for every time he tries to rise he bumps his head and falls down again. The first thing a horse does when trying to get up or recover himself is to throw up his head. Mangers ought to be boarded up underneath, so that there is no chance of a horse getting any part of him underneath it.

Brushing.

To prevent this great care must be taken in the shoeing, also have a boot made of prepared horse-skin, and the hair left on. It should lace up on the outside of the horse's leg, and must have a concave piece of stout leather let into the boot, to act as a protection and to receive the knocks. This concave piece should be filled up inside with cotton-wool or lint soaked in zinc lotion.

This protection is called a boot, but it does not go on the foot, but fits over the fetlock, and comes a few inches up the leg.

The best medicines are plenty of good food, fresh air, and sweet stables, exercise and kind treatment.

Friction is both a cure and a preventive when applied to horses' legs.

Neglected saddles are an everlasting source of sore backs and sit-fasts. Too much stuffing is not good, but more especially do I urge saddles being properly dried, brushed, and beaten.

Veterinary science is a beautiful thing

compared with the rough-and-ready measures of a few years ago. It is now a pleasure to see the gentle, careful way a skilled veterinary surgeon handles his patients.

When medicine has to be given there is no struggle with those horrid twitches or balling-iron. Instead, the horse's tongue is gently drawn to one side, the pill or ball pushed down with the first and second finger, the mouth kept shut for a few moments to prevent its being returned, rubbing the throat with a downward movement till the ball is gone—it can be seen quite plainly going down the gullet—all done so quietly, without any fuss.

CHAPTER XIV

HUNTING FOR THE HARD UP

We are not all rich—in fact, some of us are very much the reverse—but that is no reason why you should not hunt. On the contrary, hunt all the more, to drown dull care and blow away the cobwebs.

Do not attempt to hunt in a swagger country with a swagger pack. If you are poor, go to Ireland, where, in many parts, people are not expected to turn out very smart. You can, if it so pleases you, tie your saddles and bridles on with string, keep your horse unclipped, and enjoy yourself none the less; while potatoes being cheap, you can both live on them, which means you will both grow fat inside and lean outside. But what matter?

There is a great charm in doing everything for yourself. I know a girl who gets

rather more than her share of fun out of life. She is gifted with a keen sense of humour, and does everything for herself. What more perfect combination could you have? She generally has two horses in her stable, which she grooms, clips, feeds, and hunts. To this stud she has now added a motor car, which she drives, cleans, and overhauls herself, with the help of a small boy at two-and-sixpence a week, who washes it, under the eye of the mistress. There is pleasure in grooming your horse and looking after him. You know then he is not neglected.

A one-horse woman has of necessity to consider the length of her day. She cannot hunt four days a week and stay out all day; but people will often mount a woman who can ride and show off a horse that they wish to sell, which fills in between the two days she allows herself on her own horse. I have met women who ride to sell, and very successfully they do it. There is no doubt a woman who is a light weight, and has good hands, can show off a horse to advantage. Those blessed with these qualities seldom lack a mount; everybody is ready to lend them a horse.

There are also many provincial packs in England where most excellent sport is shown without any great expenditure or splash; but Ireland is the place. I love Hibernian blarney! How much nicer it is to be told you are the "glory of the sunshine," "a beautiful pearl," and all the rest of it, even though you know the flatterer will within an hour call you a scarecrow, a kill-joy, and so on! What he says behind your back won't hurt you, only what he says to your face; you must take it with a grain of salt, and feel happy and amused. The astounding tarra-diddles they will tell you, looking you straight in the face with blue eyes of truth and earnestness, are worth going to Ireland for; and the happy-go-lucky way of living—it is all a revelation.

Some friends of mine, being in low water, thought they would go and hunt in Ireland. Seeing a place advertised sounding very cheap, they wrote to the advertiser, a Dublin agent, who sent a most flowing description of the place.

Off they went to see it, to find the beautiful old castle, as it was called, in a hopeless state of neglect; the front gates consisted of

the top and bottom of an old iron bedstead tied together with string. Being unable to master the Irish knots, they climbed this and went on up to the house, which was of great size. After a long fight with the key, they managed to effect an entrance.

In what had once been a drawing-room there were piles of chickens' and ducks' feathers, where they had evidently been plucked for market, otherwise surely there could never have been so many. In the old banqueting hall horses had evidently been stabled. Upstairs owls were making their homes.

An old man, who answered to a gardener, came to interview them, so my friend began asking about the shooting. Were there many snipe? "A' shure, and if his worship would only go down to the shore i' the marning, he would find them in their thousands!"

I do not know whether it was this that decided my friends to take the place, but they spent two very happy years there, and hunted to their hearts' content on an astonishingly small amount of money; but they did not play at being English,

they went to Ireland and did as the Irish do.

Nobody ever comes back from Ireland without being in love with the country and the people.

CHAPTER XV

PUPPY WALKING

It would not be moral to conclude my book without mentioning puppy walking. It is an important factor in hunting countries, for no hunt can hope to breed and rear puppies unless people are willing to walk them.

As a rule there is no difficulty in finding temporary homes for them. The neighbours will generally take a couple—farmers, and even cottagers, for Englishmen are sporting folk. It ought to be everybody's pleasure, as it is certainly everybody's duty, to walk puppies.

As a puppy walker I have served a severe apprenticeship ; there being plenty of ground and room for them to run wild, which is essential for their well-being, we have walked a good many of our own as well as other people's. Foxhounds, harriers, and beagles

—I have walked them all, such dear, happy, irresponsible creatures jumping out of their skins with joy of life. I love to see them in spite of their being so mischievous, but always wish they could realize how happy they are, though why they should be wiser than we are I do not know. How few of us know when we are at our happiest! But then it is mostly relative—we may consider ourselves very happy to-day if we are not as miserable as we were yesterday.

But to return to the mixed blessings. February, or thereabouts, is the time the authorities consider best for the appearance of puppies into this cold world; they stay about eight weeks with their mothers, and in May go out "to walk," where they remain till the following spring, when they return to kennels, and say good-bye to frolics and irresponsibility. From fifteen to eighteen months old they begin hunting.

If you can walk two puppies, they get on much better than when single and are really less trouble, for they amuse one another, romp together, and keep healthy. You must be prepared for long lists from the servants of things that have disappeared, been eaten

and broken, a small half of which you may safely put down to the puppies. Many servants have no sense of honour, and will gladly lay their own shortcomings on the backs of the puppies, or anything unable to defend itself.

I must, however, allow the youngsters have a great affection for a stable sponge as a *hors-d'œuvre*, followed by a boot or shoe; failing that, a glove does not come amiss, while for the *pièce de résistance* a doormat is much enjoyed, after which a young chicken or two as a savoury. Their little teeth are as sharp as saws.

It would be easy to fill a chapter with the mischievous behaviour of some of the puppies we have walked and that have been walked for us. How often they have put me to shame!

I remember a Gloucester farmer coming with a woeful tale. He had very kindly taken two of these imps of mischief to walk, but found them most tiresome. They would run away with the potato sacks and tear them to pieces. When frustrated in this, they frightened the cows into domestic indiscretions, and at last he shut them up

in the cider cellar to learn better manners, and went off in peace to his tea. Later in the evening, on going to see if they were all right and put them to bed, he found they had spent a pleasant afternoon pulling out the taps and bungs in the cider barrels. The floor was swimming with cider, scores of gallons wasted!

I mentally ran through my vocabulary to find sufficient appropriate words and terms to express my horror at their behaviour. What made it the more embarrassing was the good man was so forgiving; having relieved his mind by telling me, he wanted nothing more, and would not hear of compensation.

Another serious situation arose when we received a firm but polite letter from the Postmaster, asking us if we would be kind enough in future to send for our letters to the Post-office, as the postmen refused to have their legs bitten any more by the puppies!

Oh, those puppies! They have brought more wrinkles to my brow than the years have thought of doing. Some puppies are much more fiendish than others. Two I remember well as being exceptionally amusing,

though they cost us many anxious moments, for they suddenly refused all food, in spite of which they were fat and well and frisky, with shiny coats and bright eyes. After watching carefully to see if they were being fed by any unknown person, at last I discovered the secret of the lost appetite.

Whenever they heard a painstaking hen proclaiming her triumph, off they flew, both of them, so I followed, to find the glossy coats, bright eyes, and loss of appetite were due to new-laid eggs.

It goes much against the grain to repress and teach them; it is so blessed to see anything really happy, even for one brief hour.

A good deal of care is necessary, especially with well-bred hounds. It sounds rather paradoxical when we are told that well-bred hounds are more enduring, can work better and longer under trying circumstances than their poor relations, while in the same breath you are told that the well-bred, when they get distemper, curl up and die more quickly.

Never chain them up, let them run wild, or you will see a very poor return for all your trouble. If you can manage it, take

them for a short walk with you every day; they love human companionship, and it is good for them. Speak to them and address them by their names, which will have been decided and given to them before they are sent to you. The usual custom in kennels is to call the young hounds by names beginning with the same capital letter as the sires, thus, if the father was called Pilot, the son might be called Plunder, or, if a daughter, Patience; or say the father was named Tarquin, son Titus, or daughter Tuneful. You must accustom them to their names, and under no circumstances change them.

When first the puppies come from their mothers, feed them three times a day, the first feed about 7 o'clock a.m., the next about 12 o'clock, and the third, last thing at night when they are shut up. For the first meal I advise warm milk with stale bread soaked in it. Second meal, meat broth with a little cabbage in it, and some puppy biscuit in it one day, next day, well-cooked rice instead of puppy biscuit. Third, and last meal, warm milk with a little well-cooked oatmeal in it. When about six months old, two feeds a day are enough, morning and

evening. Porridge and milk in the morning, broth made from horseflesh, mutton, household bones or anything convenient; a little meat may be left in the feeding pail, if chopped very fine, add soaked biscuits.

Watch them feeding; it may be one is a delicate feeder, in which case he must be fed first and taken away by himself for a little biscuit or little dainty between the usua meals, as probably he will eat so little at a time that it will not be enough nourishment for him to grow on.

It is an excellent plan to give a tablespoonful of lime-water with the food once a day, it helps to form bone and make them strong.

If you notice the least sign of any puppy growing bandy-legged, or his elbows turning out, give lime-water in every feed and a little cod-liver oil mixed with some finely chopped meat.

By watching them feed you are able to tell how much each ought to have. Nothing should be left by them; what is not eaten up must be moved away. It is not wise at any time to let them eat till they are visibly blown out.

When any butter-milk is to be had from the dairy it is a most excellent thing for the youngsters, a pint a day is not too much, indeed it is good for any dog, no matter what age or class.

Let the puppies hunt anything they like, it is good for them. I mean anything in reason, not, of course, sheep or chickens ; any sign of hunting sheep must be punished, but do not beat a puppy severely, it only teaches it to run away from you. Give one sharp flick with your whip and then scold or rate them, the latter being the correct term, while you keep saying "Ware sheep."

Hounds are very shy, sensitive creatures. They know by your expression and the tone of your voice when they have done wrong. If too rough with them they will learn to read your intentions in your face and voice, and instead of coming to be killed like the farmer's ducks, will, on hearing fervent promises and vows to "cut them in two when you get at them," make themselves scarce ; may even run away and stay out all night, which, if they only knew it, is a great punishment to you, for your anxiety until morning, in thinking of all the sheep and

lambs they may be worrying, will cause you a sleepless night.

I have found that after one sharp flick of the whip, most puppies can be kept in order by cracking the whip or striking the ground all round them, it is quite enough for a nervous puppy whose eyes will bulge out with fright. Of all pitiable things, I think, to see a dog or hound come up with crouching body, affectionate, pathetic, questioning eyes, and stern tucked in, is one of the most distressing, instead of romping up as much as to say, "Here I am, ever so happy. Are you?"

Some people will tell you they dislike their puppies being allowed to hunt rabbits, in which case, you will, of course, respect their wishes as far as possible. Personally, I allow puppies to hunt and have never heard of any trouble with their running riot when they have returned to kennel. It is surprising how quickly they leave their youth and frivolity behind when once the kennel gates are shut on them. They follow naturally in the footsteps of their elders. Of course, I am only speaking from my own experience.

It is a charming sight to see quite small

puppies hunting a rabbit all on their own account, their little bodies stretched out galloping for all they are worth, while the music of their cry remains with you as something to remember.

You will, of course, shut up all puppies at night, and they must be kept warm. It is not wise to let them sleep on the ground or floor. Have a box or bench stood on legs, bricks, or anything convenient, for them to sleep on, not too high from the floor or they will not be able to jump in. I have found twelve inches high enough, and I give straw or bracken fern for them to sleep on; the latter is the best, being less likely to bring undesired bedfellows, but it must be quite dry and changed very often.

Puppies love to sleep in the damp heat of a steaming manure bed, which is very bad for them, and must not be allowed. Farmers find it difficult to enforce this rule, for as soon as the scamps are warned off one bed they fly to another.

Be careful when shutting them up for the night they do not carry in any bones with them they may have picked up outside, it often leads to serious quarrels and bloodshed.

No artificial heat is good; the puppies will huddle up together and keep each other warm, but there must be no draughts, and a warm spot chosen to shut them up in. A spare loose box answers well.

The moment you notice any puppy off his feed and refusing to play and out of sorts generally, shut him up by himself and keep him very warm, with plenty of food. It may be that scourge, distemper. When walking hounds for a friend's pack it is best to at once tell the master and follow his instructions faithfully.

When looking after hounds, if I have reason to believe it to be distemper I at once shut them up in harness room or a warm loose box, allowing plenty of fresh air but no draughts, and keep dosing with warm milk and coffee in equal parts just as you would mix it for yourself. It is taken more readily if a little sugar is mixed with it, giving nothing else and getting as much down as you possibly can. I believe the recipe came originally from Lady Gifford; it certainly is a most excellent and simple remedy.

For older hounds of any kind I begin with an emetic of salt and water, it gets rid of

some of the poison passing under the name of "distemper." We once tried vaccinating some hounds with Pasteur's Distemper Vaccine, but it was not very successful.

Another horrible disease to be dreaded is Chorea, a nervous affection often following distemper, the unfortunate sufferer losing power over his limbs, often dragging his hind legs after him. I have been told this is incurable, but if taken in time and a great deal of trouble taken it can be cured sometimes. Sprinkle eucalyptus about the room, it helps the patient to breathe and acts as a disinfectant. Keep the puppy very warm, put indiarubber hot-water bags wrapped in flannel round him in his bed near a fire. Keep feeding, a little beef tea every hour, or warm milk and lime-water. In very bad cases put a little brandy in the milk and some sugar; if you can get it down no other way, let a little dribble off your fingers into the mouth. Give a dessertspoonful of cod-liver oil warmed twice a day, they do not generally dislike it. Raw eggs and milk are also useful. Rub the back up and down gently from head to tail with cod-liver oil twice a day. I have found this work wonders.

It does not fall to the lot of every puppy to be so well cared for; how some survive is a mystery. Not long ago, passing a country-side hotel where a fairly brisk business was being done, judging by the motors standing at the door, I saw a poor, thin, miserable-looking harrier. I asked at the hotel what was the matter with it, but was told nothing that they knew of. I then asked what it was fed on, and was told they gave it nothing, it picked up all it wanted for itself. I know now what is meant by leading "a dog's life."

APPENDIX

In common with the authors of books designed to help men and women in matters connected with their sport, I am confronted with that most difficult problem to solve, namely, Shall I, or shall I not, tell people where to obtain all the impedimenta of the chase?

If I do not, the usefulness of the book will be seriously impaired, as where to "get things" is one of the most important matters for beginners.

On the other hand, if I do, I lay myself open to the charge of guileful advertising.

I fear I must risk this for the sake of the uninitiated, and the following appendix will, I hope, be helpful to those requiring assistance, while to those who do not I advise them not to look!

H. Guterbock & Sons, 8, Hanover Street, W., for habits, hats, breeches, and everything the hunting woman requires to wear.

Harrods, Ltd., Brompton Road, S.W., for habits.

Swears & Wells, Ltd., Regent Street, W., for children's complete hunting and riding outfits and ladies' underwear.

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