HUNTING AND CHASING

IN THE SEVENTIES,

IN BENGAL, IRELAND AND AUSTRALIA.

BY

W. B. OLDHAM, I.C.S., C.I.E.

CALCUTTA:

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PREFACE AND DEDICATION.

NOVEMBER 1876 found me in the Pacific, making my way back to India by the Torres Straits after five months' travel and hunting in Australia, following a long season of fox and stag and drag hunting in the Meaths, Dublin, Louth and Kildare. Notwithstanding her size, the steamer Bowen in which I travelled had only three passengers besides myself, and none of them played chess or whist. Within the Barrier Reef we had to anchor every night; my supply of books was short, and the monotony became extreme. On the Bowen's very next voyage this was broken by an attack of Chinese pirates who had been taken on board at Brisbane as returning labourers, but while I was a passenger there was no such excitement or occupation, and so I wrote these narratives, intending them for the Oriental Sporting Magazine, in which they were subsequently published while Lord Ulick Browne was Editor. They have now been collected for the sake of the survivors among my companions in the scenes described in them, a fast dwindling band; and I little knew that, even as I wrote, Fred Cornish lay dying in India. They can testify that while in none of them—not even in the stories of the

Enchanted Boar or of the Barrackpore Tent Club's day out—is aught set down in malice or extenuated, so nothing is exaggerated; and the recollections are dedicated to Sir William Brereton Hudson, K.C.I.E. who, at his own Irish home, first introduced me to real fox-hunting.

W. B. OLDHAM.

CALCUTTA,

24 May, 1899.

CONTENTS.

W. AND FRÄULEIN. 1871

The March number of the *Oriental Sporting Magazine* is as varied and amusing as usual for those addicted to sporting, the best article being the account of "Fraulein, an inveterate bucking Waler mare, with the worst of tempers, whose counterpart may be found in many parts of India, with the exception, perhaps, of her redeeming qualities."—*Englishman, April, 1878.*

FRAULEIN: A MEMOIR.

By W.

Fraulein was some 15 hands 2 inches in height, and was made for strength all over. She had a great thick Hessian neck, which was saved from heaviness by its length and nicely rounded crest; a round compact barrel, high wither, and one of those beautiful broad muscular backs which are just long enough to admit the saddle. She was broad in the loins, and her back view was very spare and compact, but her quarters drooped much and were curiously short, and, as they were continued into immensely large flat muscular legs, gave her the appearance of being badly put together behind. I have had abundant evidences of her power in that part of her frame nevertheless. Her ugly points were her great long head with its white blaze and little unsteady vicious eyes, and an excess of hair about the fetlocks. Her beauty lay in her fine little ears, her crest, and a thin silky mane. She stood on beautiful short forelegs, a little round in the bone as might be expected from her sort, with the best feet I have ever seen. In colour she was a hot gold chestnut, with a coat like satin, and altogether, with her mixture of fineness and coarseness, of ugliness and beauty, was a somewhat queer-looking beast, the picture being finished by a little bunch of a docked

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tail, some four inches long, which was never quiet for a moment. She looked what she was, an immensely big little horse, well able for 18 stone, and the best hack in her paces, strength, and working power that I ever bestrode. I carry her picture vividly in my mind's eye, and have an excellent photograph of her to supplement that vision.

I am writing her biography because of her peculiarities, and have often wished that she could have written her autobiography. For in that case we should have those peculiarities from a subjective point of view, and an immense deal of light would be thrown upon my mind, and per haps on those of others interested in horses. As it is, I can but skotch her characteristics objectively, the only subjective element being the degree in which they have been impressed upon my own person.

I have never felt this desire for an autobiography with regard to any other horse that I have ever known except Fräulein. Whether I have been kicked or bitten, or only frightened away, or bucked off, or reared with and fallen back on, or rolled over at a fence, or while innocently cantering along the road ; whether I have been bolted with or smashed up in a trap, or otherwise maltreated by a horse, I have always had such a sympathy with and understanding of the animal, as to comprehend (or at least fancy so), either at the time or afterwards, the causes and motives of its conduct. But Fräulein was always inexplicable. With her and from her I have experienced every one of the above described phases, except her falling, without even in the least being able to know the reason of any of them, while each may be said, as it happened in its turn, to have been more unexpected than the last.

came to the station as the buggy horse of an ephemeral District Superintendent of Police. I was greatly taken by her apparent capacity as a saddle nag, was assured by her owner that she was quiet to ride, and gladly accepted his offer of a mount on her. She certainly did put up her back most perceptibly on my getting into the saddle, but it was little wonder if she resented at first, unused as she was to saddle, the 3 stone excess in my weight over her owner's. We went for a good distance along roads and across country, pottering after foxes and hares with Kangaroo dogs, and every moment made me more pleased with my mount. We had no galloping; but I did not then care for speed. My last Australian horse had been very fast and was a great beast across country; at that time, in fact, he had won some races in the East. But he had once fallen and rolled over me on the road, was always a slobbery careless mover unless at top speed, and had been within an ace of coming down several times both in saddle and harness. Fräulein moved with the steadiness and strength of a rock. Her trot was a beautiful even action and very fast, her canter equally safe, while, when in motion, she held up her big neck with her crest just sufficiently bent, in a way that made her most pleasant to ride, and she seemed to require no holding. All this was then new to me, nor indeed have I ever found since so incomparable a roadster; and though she would not stand, and sometimes in company would not walk, such defects counted little, and I determined to try and make her my own. So as soon as I got home I picked up her feet; she standing like a cow or a toy-horse while I did so—and finding them what I have described, wrote off at once offering her owner, who, I knew, wanted to reduce his stud, Rs. 500/- for her as a test, and to my great joy and surprise he at once accepted, and Fräulein was mine.

I have mentioned this examination of her feet because it was the first time I handled the animal. She then showed no opposition to my doing so, and stood for me as quietly as possible. It was the first instance of her character to be recorded, for after a fortnight's acquaintance with her, I would not have attempted to do the same without taking the utmost precaution, and even then should have been lucky had I got off without a stroke, a kick, or a bite.

Her former owner came over that evening to tell me what he knew of her history. He had seen her first as one of a freshly landed batch in Messrs. H. and Co's stables in Calcutta, and had selected her for trial before purchase. Some demur was made to putting a rider on her, but at last she was saddled and mounted in her stall, and on being let go, disappeared with her rider like a flash of lightning down the yard and through Dhurrumtolah—it was thought for ever and all. However, she was brought back, and in consideration of the taste of her quality which she had shown, my friend was given an abatement of some Rs. 100/- or Rs. 200/- of the price originally demanded, and got her for Rs. 500/- Though a moderate rider he was an excellent man with horses, and by dint of patience had made her very fairly quiet, though she never got over her trick of bounding away in harness at a gallop the moment the reins were touched. He had only ridden her a little, and found her much quieter in saddle than in harness, and never shewing any disposition to buckjump. She was rising 7 when I got her.

I had then no need of her in harness, but rode her daily, attempted to develop her jumping capacities, which had never been tried, and was daily more delighted with my purchase for which I would then have refused Rs. 1,000/-

lived twenty miles away across country, and sent on Fräulein as my second horse for the last ten miles or so. How well I remember that ride! How I trotted her along some even ground, and then cantered her over some of that hoe-dug stuff—called *kopani* in Bengal,—just to try her power, and then lifted her through the holding ground in a marshy plain, till we came to a widish drain, over which she carried me in her stride, and without an attempt at baulking. I had to bustle, as there was not much time to spare to let me get in and dress before dinner; so, though it was February, we were both very warm when I pulled her up at last on quitting the country and reaching the road, some half mile from my destination. I intended to walk in and get cool; we had both done over twenty miles, Fräulein the last ten at a slashing pace, and with over 13 stone on her back. Not trusting her as a new horse, and knowing her fidgetty temper, I had never let go her head before; but as she plodded steadily along the road, with the knowledge that her stable was close at hand, and after the burst I had given her, I thought that I might surely do so then. So I dropped the reins on her neck, and was raising my hands to untie the strings of my big hat, when I was conscious of her making a swerving bound which shook me as I sat loosely in the saddle. The next moment it seemed as if all the powers of the earth and air had dashed me into space. Except that space is probably impalpable, while my next act of consciousness was the perception of acute pain all over, and that my hands, mouth, nose, and eyes were filled with dust. I then became aware that I was lying on the road—happily, an unmetalled one—unable to rise, and in great agony. My groans must have attracted my own dog-keeper, whom I had sent on with one of the dogs before me, and whom I had nearly caught up when

I was thrown. The mare galloped past him in the gloaming and then he heard my groans, and turned to my help. By his aid I managed to crawl to my destination, where, at all events, I was sure of all the attention that could be given me. But I passed a sleepless night, and next day had to be carried back to the station. By that time the pain had localized itself in the small of my back, which was much swollen, though my head must have borne its share of the fall, for my big double-storied sun-hat, in its cotton covering, was precisely like a bag full of chips, so thoroughly had it been smashed. Our Civil Surgeon had me put to bed, and all that next night was spent by Willson, (now alas! no more) and Fred Cornish in directing the efforts of nineteen leeches to my back. How well I remember, in the dozing intervals from pain, the half-heard ejaculations of the latter, who took a sporting interest in the progress of the leeches which he superintended—the ludicrous adjurations to and execrations on the backward—the gleeful applause bestowed on the voracious!

The Doctor said I would never get over it, but I did, and in three weeks' time began to think of riding Fräulein again. I had been, ever since I bought her, on the look out for an opportunity of educating her to boar-hunting. Just before my fall, I had had her out for a day with Kilby and Fred. Cornish; but, though there were plenty of pigs afoot, we could get no run. She had proved very fidgetty, would not stand for a moment, would scarcely let me take the spear, and every time it was moved, seemed to think that it was to be used on her, and resented it accordingly. But these were trifles when a boar is on foot, when one's horse being able to stand up at all, and then to go up to the animal, is all that is thought of; so, though much tired with half a day on her back, I augured hopefully for Fräulein. It was, by the way, during

this excursion, that finding the river Bhagirutty at Caxiali Ghat, between me and my destination, I put my favourite little Cabul Black Harry, at it, and swam safely across, with the loss only of both stirrup leathers and irons, which went to the bottom.

Just when my accident occurred, a party had been formed, presided over by J. O'B. Sceales, to hunt Tantibandhu, and I was to have joined them. Of course I could not go, but Fräulein went on, and was taken possession of by a distinguished judicial officer, * who, in those days, was very keen on pigsticking, and who, according to his wont, had turned up at the party just to take his chance. He heard from my syce that I had been hurt, but knew nothing of the cause, or perhaps he might not have ridden Fräulein so light-heartedly as he did. But, when he came back, he described her as having behaved like an angel—the possibility of her buck-jumping was out of the question. She had carried him over the biggest bank and ditch he had ever crossed in his life, and had given him the first spear off the biggest boar killed at the meet, or which he had ever seen. All this I can quite believe, both from my knowledge of the narrator and the mare. I am bound to say, however, that the last item was stoutly denied by J. O'B. Sceales who claimed the honour for himself. But he was disposed to be captious in those times, for at this very meet, while riding a new Arab of which he boasted greatly, a boar, which he had chased to the cover's edge, suddenly darted out on him, just as he had pulled up, prostrating him—new Arab and all—and giving him a fall which necessitated his being taken home, as it were, on a shutter, and from the effects of which he had not fully recovered four years afterwards, if he has even yet.

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* R. M. Towers, I. C. S., Retd. Now Professor of Bengali-Cambridge University.

However, concurrent testimony went so far to re-establish Fräulein's character, that even I myself began to have doubts if she had buckjumped. A year later I knew better.

Our next meet, after my recovery, was to hunt a great newly-formed peninsular on the Burdwan side of the Bhagirutti, where Fred stoutly maintained he could shew us 500 pigs. We were a strong party—Fred and some elephants to beat—Needham, Showers, and Boddam, besides Willson and myself to ride, and all well mounted ; but we tried in vain, all day long, to get the pigs into the open ; and, though they were continually afoot, we could do nothing in the dense high grass, and never kept one in sight for as much as a quarter of a mile. Another difficulty was an arm of the river which intersected our ground, and, though partially dry, with its precipitous bank of 15 to 30 feet high, formed, unless where the bank sloped, a complete barrier to a horseman ; and yet not quite so complete as I supposed at first sight.

I had not ridden Fräulein since my fall. She had been on full food all the interval. I was still weak, and notwithstanding the good accounts given of her, thought it wise to take some precautions. So she was led out into a soft piece of ground, and the syce held her head, while Willson stood by, to see me mount. I had barely thrown my leg over, and had not got the off stirrup, when she set to—broke away from the man at her head, and though I clung on manfully for five or six jumps, at length put me over her head, and off she went. I was not hurt and she was soon caught, and we found the effort had cost something, as her curb was bent, almost twisted, one girth strap burst clean, and the holsters which I had strapped on in place of knee pads, almost carried away—

V. AND W. G. WILLSON.

WITH

LEONARD ABBOTT AND RAWSON BODDAM

KISHNAGH

sulkily straight for about 200 yards, but, the moment I put her into a canter, swerved away, got her head down, and threw me at the second effort. I got on her again, and, this time, behaved with such circumspection that I found she was not going to try and put me off any more, at the start at all events.

But I had a bad time of it. What with her morning's performance, the dense long grass in which we rode, the elephants and beaters, and pigs occasionally breaking, she was perfectly frantic. Never still for a moment, she pawed the ground with her chin tucked into her chest when pulled up; and then used to dart round and try to get off with a jerking swerve, which, by repetition, became most fatiguing to sit, and when she did go, she burst through the thick matted grass and over the billowy uneven ground like a steam-engine. Though I was abundantly comforted on the score of her sureness, I was more than once nearly pulled from the saddle by the tangled vegetation. At last and, while I was in the very thickest of the jungle, a succession of shots, a roar from the beaters, and above all, a ringing shout from Fred on the elephant, told me that a boar had broken for the open. Away went Fräulein and I, she with her head down, bursting through the grass and minding the bit as little as if her mouth were of iron. "Very well," thought I, "as long as it lasts," but I suddenly became aware that the grass was getting thinner; the next minute I saw the open fields beyond, and almost in the same moment a yawning chasm before me. There was no time to take observations, or even to reflect if my last hour had come. To turn or stop was out of the question. I had emerged from the jungle right on the precipice's brink. I plunged in my heels desperately, and over we went. But Fräulein made no bound, or I might

her falling over the edge, and then turning over in mid air, and touching me as we fell together. Then there was a sudden stop, a confused scramble in mud and water, and I rose to my feet and found myself standing waist-deep in a pool of water, just under the precipitous bank of the river into which I had fallen, with Fräulein scrambling up the opposite side, my companions sitting on their horses staring at me at varying intervals around, and one of the largest pigs I ever saw just doubling back into the jungle in the distance. I at once began to grope for my spear, and at last pulled it out of the mud, into which it had descended perpendicularly, leaving its haft projecting from the bottom about 2 feet under water.

The whole catastrophe occupied some three seconds, and long before I had recovered my spear, my companions were in full pursuit after the boar, but lost him. Like myself they all declared he was the largest they had ever seen. What seemed the most curious part of the affair, and best illustrates its catastrophic aspect, was their pulling up; not only my own station-mates, but Showers, then a foreigner and than whom I have never seen a harder or keener rider after pig. He is a man of few words at any time, but broke through his usual taciturnity at lunch to explain that he thought I must have been smashed up. Considering that after half a day's toil and some score of false alarms, a fine boar had at last really broken in the open, it was truly wonderful. The rest of the party had been advantageously stationed outside the jungle, and above a slope in the otherwise precipitous bank, when Fräulein and I, who had been inside with the elephants came bursting out and over in the manner described.

It was during this lunch, I remember, that one of the

authority on all sporting matters, when he heard of Fräulein's morning performance, explained that she must have been either shying or kicking as mares were never known to buck-jump!

I rode her into the station next morning, and she went like a lamb. I now conceived the idea that all she wanted to keep her quiet was regular exercise, and so used to ride her daily to office and about the station, and for some days her behaviour was still most lamb-like. It was still March, hot and dry. I had taken her to the jail one morning; she seemed to be perfectly quiet now, both at mounting, dismounting and while moving. After breakfast she was brought again to carry me to office. A Bengal metalled road in March at midday, with the sun beating right down upon it, is one of the hardest things imaginable; and that particular one, along which Fräulein was slowly pacing, was under my peculiar care, and in smoothness and hardness had on that especial day few superiors. She was going uneasily, and I was watching her carefully. She would not walk, and at length began to go sideways. As I checked her she suddenly made a furious swerve which snapped the curb rein. I then remember revolving in the air and nothing more, and when I came to myself many hours afterwards was lying in bed in Needham's house, trying in vain to recollect what had happened. The only single visible trace of my fall was that the brim of my broad-leaved two-storied hat was broken in two behind; not a scratch, bruise, or tender spot on my body, nor the least injury to my clothes. I had been turned clean over in the air, and had alighted exactly on the rim of my hat where it projected over my back. I was insensible nevertheless, at intervals, for a long time, and did not begin to move about

it; and though some of my friends still hint with deep significance that he was right, I had got the strongest set of reins procurable in Calcutta and was riding Fräulein again within the fortnight.

Though I have often fallen on my head, both before and since then, this was the only time that I was hurt by so doing. In fact with some constitutions it is doubtful if it be not the safest portion of the frame on which to come down. At a parade of a distinguished troop of a very distinguished cavalry corps in Bihar, when the order for some evolution was given, a horse ridden by a very able-bodied young trooper, gaily pranced out of the ranks, and, after a few vigorous efforts, flung its rider over its head. Like one of Homer's heroes "Prone he fell on the ground and his armour rattled upon him." That is, he descended amidst a sort of clashing cataract of sabre, scabbard, and accoutrements, and alighted exactly upon the spike of his helmet. As soon as our captain * had done swearing he rode up and sympathizingly demanded if his man was hurt; "No," answered T. in astonishment. "Why, I fell on my head!" "Silence in the ranks"! roared our chief, "You drivelling set of idiots! don't you know it's the hardest part of his body?"

By this time I began to suspect my mare of some uncertainty of disposition, and with a deep conviction of its only being natural to her sex—"varium et mutabile fœmina semper"—I christened her Fräulein. She had, meanwhile, manifested a good many other peculiarities. Though more tractable in grooming than any horse in the stables, and invariably kind with her native attendants, she would apparently have infinitely preferred a mouthful from me, or any wearer of a white face, to her own bucket of gram any day.

Whenever I approached her box she would gather herself up in the farther corner, and then, with ears back, flashing eyes and grinning teeth, come down on me like a thunderbolt, and when baffled in her attack she would retire again, and savagely paw the ground as long as I was within sight. I tried to appease her with dainties, but once narrowly escaped a severe bite while she was making believe to lick a lump of salt in my hand, and yet, by shewing a steady determined front, I could always go up to and handle her. The letting her go again was the most dangerous part of the operation. Once when I did so, she swung round and threw up her heels within a few inches of my face. She was most savage when her syce was by. I suppose she looked on him as a protector. I was once holding her in harness, firmly gripped by each cheek of the snaffle, while he was arranging the back of the dog cart, and she stood with no other signs of impatience than her angry eyes, laid-back ears, and pawing feet showed ; but the moment he appeared in front she made a bite at one of my arms, which but that she caught my sleeve instead of my flesh in her mouth, would have mangled me badly.

But in this respect too she was most uncertain. Any emergeney seemed to quiet her at once. I have repeatedly taken her over a deep stream in boats in which there was just room for her, myself, and the boatman, and which the least turbulence on her part would have overturned. I have also had to dismount from her, remount her, saddle and unsaddle her by myself ; and though at first I did so with some trepidation, found her almost always perfectly quiet. She seemed to appreciate the situation.

Her facility at boats was something marvellous, and once indeed well-nigh cost my friend* Judex his life. He and Fred

* R. M. Towers, I. C. S., Retd.

and I once found ourselves belated on the edge of a deep and wide water channel, the only means of crossing which was a sort of canoe paddled by an old woman. Judex arranged to sit in the stern and swim the horses across one by one: when Fräulein's turn came, instead of stepping into the water, she lightly jumped into the boat then some feet from the brink. It overturned instantly, and to our horror she jumped out right on poor Judex who had sunk between it and the shore in some 4 feet of water. He disappeared altogether, and we rushed in and pulled him out and found him covered with blood which was flowing from a wound in his head. He had only just been grazed however by one of her plates.

I once took her across the Ganges, at that point a mile wide, in a cockle-shell of a boat, with her head protruding over one gunwale, and her hocks over the other. In mid stream we rocked about a good deal, and the least motion on her part must have capsized us. Nothing but the lateness of the hour and the choice between this mode of transit and our passing the night on the river bank, and missing the party at Tantibandhu next morning, would have induced even me, who knew her steadiness, to go with her. W. G. Willson, who had a horror of the mare, was with me. At once on getting into the boat he pulled off his coat, his boots and breeches, and on our reaching the other side safely, assured me it was the greatest escape he had ever had in his life.

After my last fall I fancied that Fräulein was quietest when far from her stable, and so used to send her on for my distant journeys, and to drive her about the station. On one of these occasions when she was the relay, her boy, in approved native fashion, was tightening her girths with his toes on her halter, when he remembered something in his

been standing inattentively by, and was roused to consciousness by her making for me, and she got so much way on that she came right through my whip, with which I saluted her, and drove me into a bamboo clump which happened to be handy, luckily without making good her charge. She took to the driving more kindly, but once when I was going to office, because a dried leaf alighted on her stern, bolted furiously with me off the road into the cutcherry compound, galloped right across it, and only pulled up on coming to a masonry drain in which I had resigned myself to be smashed up.

Shortly after this I got leave, and paid a fortnight's visit to Australia. It was easy to find billets for my other horses, but Fräulein had a reputation by this time, and though I offered her to my sporting comrade, who has been alluded to, it was necessary to leave her on pension. But even in this capacity she distinguished herself. Needham just then got up a very handsome tandem cart, and he borrowed Fräulein to bring it from the railway station. She was only to have been led, but bolted away and just managed not to smash to atoms the expensive trap. Then a young fellow in the army came down to stay with his brother, who was then with us, to read for his examination. He was a very resolute lad, and a very fair horse-man. He took Fräulein in hands, but she threw him three times, and on the last, hurt him so much that he gave her up. On each occasion she had got him off so suddenly that he was unable to say how she had done it.

After two and a half months' absence I returned, bringing with me an Australian saddle which I had bought in Adelaide. Fräulein had not been mounted or driven for about two months, and though Willson had reduced her to 4 lbs. of gram a day or less, she was just

as if she had been in training all the interval. The very evening I returned I had the new saddle tied on, and got on her back, and from that day to the last time I mounted her, some fourteen months later, never had any further trouble with her, in saddle at all events.

I used to attribute this in some degree to the following incident. She could jump well, and I used often to sky her over a paling some three and a half feet high in front of our house. I rode her at it a few mornings after my return, and for the first time she refused it. I gave her a severe punishing with bit, spur, and whip, but she was obstinate, and, at last, I rode at a gap in the fence, which had been repaired with split bamboos. She rose at it, but in so slovenly and half-hearted a manner as to strike it heavily, and I found she had received a deep gash in the arm which had to be sewn up. It was then September, and the wound was very troublesome, and she was not fit for work for two months. But, though she had to be kept on full food all this interval, she came out at the end of it as quiet to ride as possible, so I have always fancied that she considered this cut as part of her punishment and was cowed accordingly. Not that I would put that forward as the moral, or in any way advocate skying horses, particularly over split bamboos.

Probably the real cause was the Australian saddle. There is a great prejudice in India amongst riding men against these things, with their clumsy deep seats, high cantles and pommels, and exaggerated knee-pads. But for riding young or troublesome horses they are not to be despised. Stockmen say that the chief use of their shape and knee-pads is, not as a provision against buck-jumping, but to secure a steady seat for all the swerves and sudden turns which stock-horses are

make such a sudden bound or swerve as shook her rider, and so displaced his hands, no matter how well he had her by the head, and then she did as she pleased ; and I have seen other horses resort to the same trick. With the Australian saddle, however, I never lost my hold of her head, and was never thrown out but once, as shall be told in its place. Not that she did not often bound and swerve as before.

In the year that followed, she must have fully paid her price, for the amount of work she did was surprising ; and so sound was her constitution, that she throve on any food, and was always well. In fact one of her uncertain points was, that, while she came out of her stable, after being laid up for two months on full food, as quiet as when she had only a third of her regular portion for the same interval, another time, after being for three months on from 1lb. to 2lb. of gram a day while she was laid up, she came out a perfect born raging fiend, as has to be related hereafter. Though I worked her constantly, I never relaxed my vigilance, and as we walked or trotted, or cantered along, no matter which side of her neck I looked, I could always see a corner of her eye looking back on me. I got to the length of being able to take out my handkerchief while on her back, but would not have dared to have lighted a pipe or cheroot.

That Christmas I took her with me to our annual party at Tantibandhu. This was the first opportunity I had had of shewing her a pig at close quarters, and after Judex's favourable report of her doings with him, thought she would be a most satisfactory mount. She was a little hard in the mouth certainly, but I would try a bit and bridoon to turn her with, instead of the twisted snaffle on which I habitually rode her. I had adopted it because she had happened to have a bit and bridoon on, on each occasion of her bringing

A fine pig rose to our first beat, and away we went in a cluster, Fräulein tearing at her bit with her head down and utterly ungovernable. I might as well have pulled at the side of a house as hauled at her, and with her great strong neck, it was impossible to get even her chin the least bit to one side. After the next boar Nolan and I got away together, and then she kept boring into him to such a degree, that it was all he could do to keep his spear point clear of us. This pig was our celebrated Enchanted Boar. While it was charging Nolan I managed to get a strong spear into it, but this was the purest fluke. For presently its attention was drawn to me, and down it came. The mare was standing still at the time, and there she planted, gazing fixedly at the boar, in spite of my utmost efforts with hand and heels to move her; of course it was a few second's work. Just as he came within distance, she swung round, and I felt a sort of volcanic convulsion behind and under me, the grunts of the boar mingling with a resounding thud, and she moved on. The boar charged again, and the same thing was repeated. The third time she did not face him at all, and he came in from behind. The same convulsion as before ensued, but then she moved on readily, and answered the rein and heel. Nolan told me that, on the first two occasions, she had kicked the boar right over; and the third he had got in on her, and I subsequently found that she was slightly cut close to the teats. I had to pursue this boar afterwards, carrying a broken spear, and sustained some five or six charges from him, but she always sheered off, and I could never get close to him. This day's work had an extraordinary effect on her, for, the following morning, she was tucked up as fine as a greyhound, looking queerer than ever, and was still so excited that she would let no one approach her. I had

Her adventures with me are now very near their close. She returned to work, and we went over an immense deal of ground together. She kept her bad reputation, for I often sent her out for men who asked me for a mount, but she almost invariably returned unridden, followed or preceded by the asker, on a tired nag, to reproach me for having sent such a brute. In the following July, however, a long-legged subordinate of mine who rode some 15 stone, and who has lamed many a horse of his own and of others, asked me for a mount for 10 miles. I tendered him Fräulein, and, though he demurred at first, eventually he accepted her. She was sent out for 12 miles, and then he mounted and rode her 10 more, and, finding her so much more tractable than he had expected—(she possibly mistook his figure for mine,) rode her 10 more miles back, and she walked in the remaining 12. Whether this exertion, in the rainy season, was the cause or not, I cannot say, but, the next time I saw her, she was distinctly lame behind. I made every effort to discover the seat of the lameness, but without success. Her action was somewhat like that produced by string-halt. She appeared to me to suffer in the stifle. Fred Cornish whom I consulted, said she was gone in the loins. I laid her up on 2lb. of gram a day, but, though she kept her condition, her lameness got no better, while she herself grew daily more vicious, and sometimes seemed like a possessed demon. November came, and we began to think of the pigs again, so I determined to have a final trial with Fräulein, and if she could work at all, to use her either as a road hack or in harness. One day when Fred was in, we had her brought out and the Australian saddle put on. She never looked more mischievous, and, as she stood, gathering herself together as if for an effort, I had her moved on to the grass. I tried to get fast into the saddle, but long before I had

down, she tore away from the boy at her head—for Fred declined to hold her for me—and, with one buckjump, threw me with such precision, that after turning in the air, I alighted with the small of my back exactly on the grasscutter's head, and so bore him to the ground. I had not counted on my fall being so broken. He—poor lad—was much hurt, and might have been killed. The mare had galloped off, but we caught her again, and, at last, I rode her by herself round the compound, and she went as lame as ever. Fred who had been a delighted witness to her performance, now gave up his loins theory, and swore with many oaths that the—— was pretending.

A week afterwards I was transferred to a district where rocks are as plentiful as paddy-fields—where the only riding is on the stony roads—and I could not help reflecting how I might fare in contact with such a rude soil, and with no grasscutter to break my fall. So I resolved to sell Fräulein. I owed her some gratitude certainly, but also many sore bones. The balance was about even on both sides, and I felt sure she would not mind parting from me. So she was sent to Messrs. Cook and Co.'s and, after a due process of advertizing, in which, it is needless to mention, my name did not appear, was brought to the hammer. I attended to see her knocked down. She trotted up and down as quietly as a tame jackass, and I could not help smiling when a dubious sort of a white man deliberately walked up and looked at her mouth while she allowed him to do so as easily as a baby might have done. She fetched Rs.115,—just double what I had expected. I pocketed it thankfully and walked away, my only feeling of regret at the termination of our connection being, that I knew as little of her guiding principles and motives at the end of our acquaintance, as I had at its beginning.

IMPERIAL

DRAG-HUNTING

AND

STAG-HUNTING.

By W.

Ideas of sport are very relative, according to the different countries in which they prevail. I have heard of places in which rat-shooting is thought a high-class amusement; and I know of others where shooting pigeons from traps, or killing hares with greyhounds, is looked on as the very cream of sport. Some of my readers must pardon the idiosyncratic antipathy expressed in this last allusion; I confess to not being a coursing enthusiast. In Ireland, stag-hounds take the first rank among hunting packs; while a master of harriers, when hares are scarce, or he wishes to give his field a sure good gallop, runs them on a drag. In England, fox-hunters call stag-hunting, calf-hunting—the Devon hunt after the wild stag being, of course, excepted; while they would as soon think of comparing drag-hunting with what they consider their own legitimate sport as they would playing at marbles with deer-shooting in the Highlands.

"Quot homines tot sententiæ; suus cuique mos,"

says Terence. Runs after drags in Ireland average stiffer and faster than those with any pack of fox-hounds in that country. In our Australian colonies, the Hunt Clubs hunt the drag alone, and ride over timber which would make many a man from the shires open his eyes, and at a pace which could not fail to astonish him.

The first contemptuous objection urged against drag-hunting and stag-hounds, generally by those who know nothing about either sport, is that in neither is there any real riding, the drag generally running along roads, or over a few despicable jumps, while for the stag-hounds gather a mere cockney assemblage, for which a shivering hind has sometimes to be whipped out of cover by the huntsman. I am still speaking of Ireland when I deny these charges. Let him who doubts, go and see and try. Your typical old stager, who is so fond of "seeing hounds hunt," will probably have an opportunity of reviving his strength and youth in the approved classical method by an embrace with Mother Earth—that is, if he tries to keep the hounds in view. As for the stag, I have never seen him till he was secured, when the company was always marvellously small and select; and, oftener, never seen him at all. Sometimes he quite beat the field at the finish; sometimes he got away altogether. In the last run I had, there was a field of some two hundred and fifty at the start, composed principally of men from the garrison—horse and foot—who are the chief supporters of the hunt, with a large sprinkling of horse-dealers aud horse-breakers. Only eight survived to see the deer secured, and among them was not the master, or the secretary, or the huntsman, or the whip—good men and gallantly mounted as they all were.

The next objection, which has more show of reason, though it is generally urged with most force by ladies, is against the artificiality of the proceeding. Fancy, they say, all those men, dressed up with such care, to ride after a red-herring, or a spongeful of aniseed, or a kerosine oil canister, or even a poor tame deer, which has to be taken out in a cart, and saved and carted back for another day's hunt!

on thousands of pounds worth of horse-flesh, assembled with a pack of hounds which, in themselves and their appurtenances, have cost a fortune, to chase a poor little vermin which, but for the care and money expended on his preservation, to say nothing of the numbers of his kind brought over from France or Belgium, would be extinct altogether. Is not that artificial? But, it may be replied, he is *ferœ naturœ*, at all events; he runs a course of his own, and is something to kill at last. And so does the deer run a course of his own—one, too, which never ends in a drain or a hole from which he has to be dug out. As for the killing at last, it is little satisfaction for any one who has, either in company or alone, chased and fought the sullen boar, to see an animal not as big or as fierce as a jackal run into by thirty or forty dogs, each one of which would be almost able to swallow him whole, and then partially dismembered, while perhaps still alive, by a not too fastidious huntsman.

It is, however, a valid objection to the drag that the course is not a natural one, and that, generally, owing to the exigencies of the ground, a rider who attempts to take a line of his own, may be stopped by wire, or some insurmountable obstacle. In Australia, the prevalence of wire prevents any other hunt but the drag being pursued in the cultivated districts. But at home it is not necessarily always so, and the exigencies of the ground must be very great, or the drag have been very injudiciously laid, when the field have to tail through or over any single place in single file. And does not this frequently occur in fox-hunting?

Then comes the final and crushing objection that it is not hunting at all; that to "see the hounds hunt" is the chief attraction of fox-hunting. It has been urged, in fact, that,

gallop two or three times over a steeplechase course, or steer in a bee-line across country to some distant land-mark. To this last I reply that, with the baying pack in front, and with the struggle to keep up with them, to any one with the slightest tinge of imagination the verisimilitude is quite sufficient for him not to care whether he is pursuing a fox or a mere impalpable scent. Though it be treason to say so, I believe that nine men out of ten hunt for the gallop, compared with which they do not value the "seeing hounds hunt" one jot. If this be not so, why are harrier packs, which show the perfection of hunting, so sparsely attended in a fox-hunting country?

Those checks and flashes are, certainly, pretty sights to see; but then one cannot have everything, and I am only comparing relative advantages and disadvantages. As for the checks, and the subsequent scientific liftings of the hounds, or their subtle puzzling out the scent, no one has had greater cause to bless them than the present writer, particularly when they have occurred just at that critical juncture when, after twenty minutes' steaming alone as fast as he could go, he has found his horse, which he does not like to spur except at a jump, beginning to slacken; when the man, who has been behind him all the way, has just passed him, and the two others in front show as little signs of flagging as ever.

And for seeing hounds hunt, I can only say that one may have too much of a good thing. Just take the case of W. as an example. He is home from India on furlough, and, with one horse, and as many mounts as he has the conscience to accept from his friends, is trying to see as much hunting (by which he means runs with hounds) as possible. The meet is at Cooksborough Gate, a new country to him, only seven miles off. He has been getting himself up all the morning, but in plenty of time to allow him to get slowly to the meet;

gets on his mare, which has been carefully bottled up for this occasion; and leisurely walks or jogs along, avoiding every puddle from which his boots could receive a splash, as though it were a fathomless boghole, and steering as wide from his companions on the road as if they were stricken with leprosy. It is not a good scenting day, and the cover is a huge one. After a long interval, the hounds proclaim the presence of a fox, and there ensues a series of gallops first to one likely point, then to another, as it seems about to break; only diversified by a specimen of hounds hunting afforded by three couples of youngsters getting away in full cry after a hare, while a temporarily-officiating-assistant whip, who recognizes neither them nor their quarry, halloes the pack and field to follow on. After some two hours of this work, the reluctant fox is either chopped, or given up as a bad job; and away the master rattles for the next cover, some six miles away. For this hunt is famous for the speed with which they travel between covers, and though, when across country it is not bad fun, to-day it is all on the hard road. Meanwhile, the rain has begun in torrents and, though W. is still full of hope, he becomes the least bit melancholy when the next cover is drawn blank. After another five miles, each change taking W. further from home, a charming piece of gorse is reached, and out of it is turned, almost at once, a fox, which runs straight into a wood, or rather forest, about half a mile off. The next hour is spent by W. in the rain in watching the hounds hunt, varied by gallops through the deep holding woodland rides. This fox, too, has to be abandoned. The master mounts his second horse, and is off to his next finding-place at the same speed as before. W., of course, must per-

distance variously estimated at 15 and 20 miles, and by roads which he does not know in the least. He reaches it, however, exciting exclamations of pity and horror by his drenched and draggled appearance, and by the colour of his bright crimson mittens having run into his white breeches, giving him the aspect of one bleeding to death. His mare gets her white drink, and he watches her gloomily as she stands, dull and listless, even while the mud is being rubbed off the generally over-sensitive spots inside and between her thighs. She is sheeted up and bandaged, and left to her warm mash, while W. very soon forgets his cares by his host's fireside, but cannot help thinking that he has seen enough that day of hounds hunting to last him for a lifetime. Next morning, his earliest care is to visit his mare, and he finds her gathered up in a corner of her box, regardless of his approach, tucked up as fine as a greyhound; her skin sticking to her ribs, and as tight as that of a drum; her feed tossed about untasted; and even her favourite peeled turnip, with which it was sought to tempt her, only half-chewed, in the corner. Her legs and feet are happily all right, but it will take, he is afraid, far more than the ordinary week's interval to get her fit again.

For his native air has now brought up W. to 15 stone in saddle, and a day like that described scarcely allowed him to get off his horse once, and was far more trying to her than a severe run. For then, at least, there is an interval of rest, and W. was almost always content to take his mare home at once, after any such piece of good fortune, without staying to see the day out.

Let us now take him in another phase. He has ridden to a meet of the drag-hounds, just leisurely enough to let his mare digest her corn and water, for he will not have her

has arrived in time to have a close survey of his favourites—16 couple of as strong and compact harriers as ever hunted over Cotswold, whence they have been imported—level enough, and almost tall enough, to stand for a fox-hound pack. The meet is a small one, and its pleasantness is only disturbed by the presence of a horse-breaker on a rough four year old, who having paid his field-money, thinks himself entitled to accustom his horse to hounds by walking it in among them. Your attention is first drawn to his presence by his horse's mouth violently striking your shoulder, leaving on your clean brushed coat a mingled deposit of foam and half-chewed hay and corn, as its rider attempts, with his smooth snaffle, to haul round the unformed beast in the throng. A lad on a kicking mare also threatens to be obnoxious; but a move is soon made, and, after proceeding a few yards down the road, the master takes back his horse, and disappears through a gap between the hedge, over a low wall and yawning ditch, into the field beyond, followed by the huntsman and the pack. This obstacle before the start has been very judiciously chosen; for, to every one's great joy, the horse-breaker, who thrusts at it next, is left in it with his mount, and is seen no more for the rest of the day, while the kicking mare and about half the assembled horsemen decline it altogether. W., like many others, detests a crowd, though he does not object to himself for being a member of one.

All who intend to come, are well into the field before the hounds have picked up the scent, and away we go, W. holding back his mare, with the pleasant consciousness that he can make free with her if he likes, and pursuing his usual tactics of saving her till he can drop into the last field, and be up at the finish with the foremost. He has now got sufficiently used to the country to be able to tell at what fences

he can take a line of his own, and so save a good deal of ground as he rides behind, and to recognize those points at which he must follow the drag, or be pounded. There are a good many falls, for the walls are high and the ditches are wide, but no one is hurt, and, after about five miles without a check, nearly half the number who crossed the initial obstacle are up at the finish. W. is about eight miles from home, and starts for it at once, leading his mare for the greater part of the way; for this is Tuesday, and he wants to go out with the stag-hounds on the Saturday following, and is quite conscious that, whether walking or galloping, 15 stone are 15 stone. He has little doubt as to her fitness when he sees her nearly nip a piece out of the small of the back of the groom who is undoing her girths, and next morning, finds nothing left in her manger but the lump of salt which was smothered in her oats, while she is just as full and round as she was before her gallop.

The stag-hounds were more serious work of course, and a day with them always entailed a little nursing, though never so much as one with fox-hounds, because there was only the journey to the meet, the hunting, and the ride home. I have certainly contrasted a very bad day with fox-hounds, and an ordinary day with the drag; but my experience of the former has been that nearly one half of the days I was out were blanks, while very seldom did we get a run till after several tries and a long and fatiguing preliminary hammering on roads, and riding about and between covers. But I am very far from wishing to depreciate fox-hunting. On the contrary, I have enjoyed exceedingly even such a bad day as that described. I want to show the advantages of that condemned and vituperated sport, the drag-hunt, as compared with the

After all, may say some stiff-necked vituperator of the drag, you have only shown its advantages for a poor, one-horse, half-pay Indian on furlough. Perhaps—but, had I had two horses I should have hunted one with the drag, and then it and the other with fox-hounds or stag-hounds; had I had three, the same; and so on, *ad infinitum*. The members of the drag-hunt which I most frequented had, most of them, two horses or more; the master many more, and all good ones; and all were fox and stag-hunters. The chief promoter of the hunt and best rider in it was a man who had been very noted as a first flighter with the Kildare fox-hounds and Ward Union stag-hounds, but had abandoned them for the drag, giving, by the way, as his reason that he had been elected an officer by the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, to which he belonged, and that as a consistent and prominent humanitarian, he was not justified in hunting anything more capable of sensation than a spongeful of aniseed.

For stag-hounds, it is sufficient vindication to say that in Ireland they are the *élite* of all hunting packs. And, with the certainty of a run, whether a 20 minutes burst, or one diversified by as many checks and casts as fox-hounds could show, I preferred them to any kind of sport which was to be indulged in at home.

A DAY WITH THE CANTONMENTPUR TENT CLUB.

By W.

Sometime about the middle of 1870 was created an association which called itself the Cantonmentpur Tent Club. It was formed principally by some military men and railway officials living at Cantonmentpur, but included among its members a well-known hard-riding indigo planter, and two civil officers. I remember seeing its prospectus, if I may so describe the circular issued by its promoters, and recollect that the chief objects which it was to have in view were the furtherance of sport and good fellowship. My narrative will illustrate how far this intention was carried out. In truth, the elements composing the Club were too heterogenous, while they had no acknowledged head. Another condition of its existence was, I believe, that it was to hunt every Sunday. Perhaps this profanation may have been the cause of its bad success while it lasted, and of its ultimate and speedy dissolution.

Its formation was brought to my notice by Judex, who, in those days, exercised a peripatetic function which kept him half the month with us, and the other half at a native town on the railway, an hour or two from Cantonmentpur. Admiration for military rank is inherent in every Irishman, and though Judex himself, in point of precedence, came somewhere between a generalissimo and a commander-in-chief, he would have paid far more respect to a sub-lieutenant than to a Judge of the High Court. So it was with great pride that he showed me a letter inviting him to join the new Tent Club, while

Mr. R. M. Towers, late I.C.S. now Lecturer in Bengali
& sometime (acting for Sir Raymond West) in Law at

he never seemed tired of going over the names of the "Captains and Colonels and Knights at Arms" of whom it was composed, hinting at the same time very broadly that such small fry as myself could not expect so much notice. As a matter of fact, he was the most valuable member they had, not for his riding prowess, for they had some fine horsemen, but for his acquaintance with the language, his influence with elephant-owners and the natives generally, and his knowledge of the country.

Notwithstanding their observance of the Sabbath the Club had met with no special success till February, 1871, when they prevailed on Judex to arrange a meet for them from the site of his apogee from our station. He hurried in to acquaint W. and Fred Cornish with this fixture, and to insist on their going down with him to help him in entertaining the party. Now both W. and Fred had declared that they would have nothing to do with Judex in connection with this Club, because, in the November previous, while they were absent on leave, he had brought the Club on to the pet station hunting ground. They were pacified, however, by his entreaties, and though W. was very unwell at the time, consented to accompany him.

Fred, however, obstinately refused to ride. For some cause or other he had become slack in those days, though I have always regarded him as the second best pig-sticker I have ever seen, assigning the palm to matchless Archie Hills; nor is this opinion formed on any hasty or imperfect survey, for I have seen most of the talent of Bengal at work, the planter of the Gangetic districts, the Tent-club men, and the light weights of Calcutta. With the Behar men comparison is difficult, so scarce are pigs in that otherwise favoured country. The last time I was out with them the field mustered

some twenty horsemen, comprising Mr. Pat,[1] Mr. John,[2] Mr. Gilbert,[3] Mr. Rowland,[4] Mr. Edmund,[5] some heavy-weight polo champions, and, as if these were not enough, two Ballygunge riders and winners from Calcutta; while the rest were young assistants fast treading in their seniors' footsteps. Is it too much to say that the party contained the cream of the riders of the province, if not of all India? When at last, after infinite trouble, one solitary boar was started for this assemblage, they simply chawed him up, treating him with as much ceremony as they would have done a hockey ball. Theirs, assuredly, was the *fortiter in modo*, but finished elegance, and neatness combined with strength, I retain my preference for the two already named.

Fred agreed, however, to go on the elephants, saying he should get some shooting. Of his shooting he was very vain and not without reason, for I have never heard but one rival to him named, Ridge of Bogra. As his brother, W. H. Cornish, was thought the best shot in Behar when there, and we knew the respective prowess of the two, we thought ourselves right in regarding Fred as the champion for the province. I don't think I ever saw him miss.

We drove down with Judex to stop the night in the large native house which he inhabited for half a month at a time at Bengalighat.* The ground was some nine miles distant on the river bank, and a tent had been sent thither. The arrangement was, I believe, that Judex was to provide the beaters

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1. Sir W. B. Hudson, K. C. I. E.
2. Mr. J. J. Macleod.
3. Mr. Gilbert Nicolay.
4. Mr. Rowland Hudson.
5. Mr. E. Carlyle.

* Rapaghat.

and what elephants he could muster; the other elephants were to be provided and despatched by the master, or captain rather, of the day, and the members were to arrange each for their own horses.

This post of captain of the day was, for this meet, held by a young artilleryman whom I shall call Gunner.* He and a friend joined us at dinner, and we were all much pleased with his keenness. He had been at a ball the night before, had been galloping horses since before dawn, and, that very afternoon, had ridden the winner in two metropolitan steeplechases. Nevertheless, as soon as dinner was over, he rode off in the dark to the tent, to have everything ready in the morning; and went away, managing an unsteady youug Australian with uncommon skill.

We had retired to rest, when, at about one o'clock in the morning, I was aroused by a sort of pandemonium in the adjoining dining-room. Oaths, loud laughter, howls of pain, and occasionally the noise of struggling bodies were the sounds which proceeded from it, and I lay awake and listened. I gathered that the rest of the party had arrived by a late special train, and were in a high state of conviviality mingled with quarrelsomeness. They were promoting good fellowship to such a degree that one of Judex's colonels and the most elevated of the party could scarcely be restrained from laying hands on each other, while an unfortunate visitor, who had come as an absentee member's substitute, had been so roughly treated in the train that he could not ride the next day, and thought, or actually ascertained, I now forget which, that two of his ribs had been broken.

Judex, with kind forethought, had fastened W.'s door, and, after providing refreshments for the party, shut himself into his own room. I could hear the voice of Jimmy Landale,

* The Honble Sir Edward Law. Financial Member Govt India, 1901 to 1905.

the only one of the new-comers whom I knew, trying to assuage the tumult by reminding the rioters of "poor W., ill in the next room;" but to no purpose. As for Fred, he abandoned his bed, lit a cheroot, and enjoyed the scene to the utmost. He paid for his fun, however, as the Colonel took possession of his bed, and could not be roused when Fred attempted to re-enter it, and as there was no other vacant he had to pass the night on the table.

We prepared for an early start next morning, but of the new comers, only Jim Landale was able to join us. The others cared for nothing but sodawater. By some mismanagement their horses had not come, a fresh cause for recrimination, and nothing had been heard yet of the Cantonmentpur elephants, which were to rendezvous here. Fred agreed to wait for the latter with the party, who had already recommenced their quarrels of the night before. Judex, Jim Landale, and W. started together for the ground.

There we found Gunner in great distress. The beaters provided by Judex were all ready, and so was his one elephant with a supply of bombs and provisions, but nothing could be heard of the horse Gunner intended to ride, nor of the other elephants which he had left to the Colonel, who had left them to a Captain, who did not turn up at all. So we waited and debated, till we were somewhat surprised by the appearance of Fred and two of the Bengalighat derelicts. W. was overjoyed to find that the Colonel, an old campaigner, but still with a wisdom beyond his years, had secured and ridden W.'s best horse, which the latter had ordered to be led after him, intending to have it bottled up quite fresh on the field. Fred *more suo*, had then tendered the colonel's chief

It was then resolved to begin with the available resources, the grass being fired wherever practicable, and the bombs being greatly relied on. But a thousand beaters could not compass those huge riverside grasses. Our men were excellent, and I never saw any one work so hard as Gunner, who rode right in amidst the thickest of the jungle, keeping them in line, while Judex maintained their spirits with encouraging ejaculations and occasional appropriate *bon mots* in Bengali. But, after some five hours' almost incessant toil, we had only had a short run after one small boar and had lost him.

I remember that run well. The ground was the very worst I ever rode over, a succession of mounds and ridges, divided by deep furrows and watercourses, and rendered difficult by stiff clumps of reeds and grasses. It was a marvel that none of the men fell, for all did their best, and some of the horses did nothing but make a series of bounds, stumbles and recoveries, while the speedy ones were easily distanced by the more active. W., who was riding perhaps the least bit jealous on this occasion with the strangers, pushed his clever little horse through the ruck and was first up, but in the bad ground only touched the pig, and though it was speared also by Jimmy Landale it got into a watercourse and escaped.

As for the jostling, crossing, shoving, shouting and swearing in this gallop, I can only compare it with the behaviour at a meet of the Kildare hounds when the fixture has been near the metropolis, and the field are stopped by a gate.

It was now about 3 o'clock, and we returned to lunch. About that meal, at all events, there had been no mismanagement, and, with the recollection of its exceeding goodness fresh in my memory, I confess to feeling some compunction at telling this true story. But we were Judex's guests, and he,

much enlivened by further efforts at good fellowship, and recriminating accusations of mismanagement. Fred and I escaped, but the Colonel happening to assail Judex, the latter turned and responded in such a scathing tone and with such caustic and incisive emphasis as at once to silence the man of war. Gunner did his best to keep the peace, but he was by far the most junior of the party, and had little influence.

The missing horses now arrived, one of them, I remember, being Corisande, who, for all I know, may be still running and losing at Ballygunge, as she has done for years past. News, such as this, does not reach the far Queenslanders. After Judex had, by his timely interference, saved the lives, if not the backs and ears, of the defaulting syces—though I doubt if they were one whit to blame—Gunner, who was as keen as ever, got us to start again.

The country which we were hunting is very peculiar. Long before, the Hooghly had formed a deep bay in its eastern side, the whole of which is now filled by an alluvial formation covering many thousands of acres. The original river bank still stands up in a precipitous bluff; and under it lies a long stretch of deep still water, an arm of the river now closed at both ends, called by the natives a "dead Ganges," or goer. On its low side this water is bordered by a stretch of marsh and grass cover. The land then rises again in its new formation, stretching away for two or three miles to the river, where again it was covered with a dense growth of high grasses. The intervening space is beautiful sandy soil, cultivated in winter and spring crops, and dotted over with small horse-shoe shaped pools like the Chumparun lakes in miniature. Each of these pools had its edging of grass and marshy growth, but far too thin for a pig in ordinary times to take shelter in them.

It was now nearly 5 o'clock. We were passing one of these pools, on our way back to the jungle, when I saw a pig trying to hide himself at the edge. He was slain within about 15 minutes, Judex securing the spear.

At this time Judex had one of the nicest little horses I have ever known. We used to laugh at Judex for calling him an Arab, but changed our tune when we found him galloping past the Australians with his owner on his back. He was a 10 or 11 stone horse, and Judex weighed over 13 without his clothes, but this mattered little to him, till at length the game little beast utterly broke down. To illustrate his quality, Fred., who now has him, tells the following story. He and Judex and W. G. Willson were hunting at Dignagar, and had waited so long for the pig to break as to have become inattentive. Judex was sitting on his horse, which was browsing the grass, when it suddenly threw up its head, and, with a bound round which very nearly unshipped him, started after the pig, which had broken unobserved by beaters and all. Judex says, he merely sat his horse and kept his spear steady, till the pig turned, charged, and impaled herself, for it was a sow, upon it. The spear must have been held uncommonly straight, as neither of the others touched her, and though a big beast, she perished at this single stroke. The only other horse I have ever seen at all coming up to this one was one of the same sort, well known as Bartimæus in Behar, where, in his combined capacity of hack, charger, flat and steeple racer, and hunter, he is still unrivalled.

Scarcely had we despatched our first pig, when we heard the shouts of some cultivators in the plain, and saw another making across the open. This was a big beast, and Judex again was the first to spear him. The boar doubled back to our starting point, and here encountered Fred. who had

been accompanying us on foot, knocking over every ill-starred snipe that showed itself. Fred snatched a long spear from my syce who was with him, and, quick as thought, received the pig with a tremendous prod, and then instantly dropped the spear, and sped like a lamplighter over the plain, his heels seeming almost to touch the rim of his big sun hat in his efforts to get away. To us, who were riding, it looked as if he were flying from the pig, though in reality he ran to avoid the crowd of horsemen who were sweeping down right on him

The sun was now sinking fast, while the plain seemed literally alive with pigs. Renewed shouts directed us to another, which Judex again speared first, and then another, which fell to Jimmy Landale. The party had now split, and I followed the most distinguished, who were speeding after a very fast pig in the far distance. As I tried to catch them Judex passed me as if I were standing still, but a minute afterwards disappeared, head over heels, horse and all into one of the pools I have described, which he disdained to go round. His horse stood for him, and he was soon up again, streaming like a water-cart and covered with mud, and he and I got up together to find a lively young pig squealing piteously on the ground, while, a short way off, were drawn up the Cantonmentpur chiefs—including, I am ashamed to say, the blameless Gunner—engaged in a hot wrangle as to who had got the first spear. I walked up to the pig and examined it with some curiosity. She was a half-grown sow.

Fred had now come riding up. Judex beckoned him and me aside. "Look here," said he, "we can get nothing more out of these fellows. Let's go home." We assented, and as he knew the points, made straight across country for Bengalighat. Cries of pig! pig!! still resounded over the plain from

badly cut by the big boar, Judex's was now dead lame, and it was quite dark, so we heeded them not. The pigs, so vigorously harried in the morning, were migrating wholesale for the village covers inland. We benefited by this day's experience in a nice quite little party which Judex gave on this ground in the May following.

We had now reached the original river bank, and found ourselves stopped by the long stretch of dead water lying beneath it. This "dead Ganges" was several miles long, but at length we found a cranky ferry boat, navigated by an old woman. The boat would not have held a toy pony; Judex, therefore, sat in the stern and, held the horses' bridles as he swam them across. But, when it came to the turn of W.'s mare, she jumped into the boat, which capsized in an instant. Fred and I often recall the figure of the old woman, who, before the mare had touched the boat, dived like a frog into the water, and swam to the other shore. Judex was knocked out, either by the shock, or by the mare herself, and fell between the boat and the shore, while she sprang right on top of him. The succeeding moments in which he remained submerged, were those of the most heart-sickening terror which I have ever experienced. We pulled him out and found his head and face covered with blood. Wiping it from his eyes with one hand, he plunged the other into his pocket and, drawing out a pair of riding gloves which he had purchased expressly for this day, but never worn, exclaimed with great impatience that there was three rupees worth utterly destroyed! We were much relieved, and as soon as the mare was got across, put him on her and despatched him to Bengalighat, while we trudged some six miles thither on foot, leading the disabled horses.

disproportionate, for, besides sustaining two duckings, and narrowly escaping being killed, he had lamed his invaluable horse, and, in his first fall, lost both his hat and his watch. I saw him with a very handsome new one a short time afterwards, and by some leading questions, managed to elicit that it was his tenth watch within as many years, all its predecessors having been either lost, stolen, or strayed.

When Fred and I did get in, we found him covered up in bed reading a volume of Plutarch in original; but in his anxiety to avoid cold, he had neglected to wash the blood from his face and there it had dried and caked, covering the whole of his visage, of which it left nothing visible but the outline and the eyes, and forming a spectacle at once ghastly and ludicrous, which I can never forget. We laughed of course, but he received us with great acerbity, and began at once to reproach Fred for not having ridden, and W. for his retiring demeanour throughout the day, assuring us that he had brought us down not through any desire to please us, but as the most easily procurable hunting men of his acquaintance to form a faction in his support should his military fellow-members prove oppressive. Considering his achievements throughout the day, and the perfect success of all the arrangements in his hands, we did not think it necessary to enter into any defence. We were glad to find that he had only been grazed on the top of his head by the mare's feet.

About 3 o'clock in the following morning we were roused from the soundest of slumbers by a repetition of the uproar of the night before, and our fellow-sportsmen burst in. They wished, it seems, to catch the early train at about 7 A. M., and had mistaken the rising moon for dawn, and so stampeded to

Fred rose to do the honours, and his bed was again usurped in his absence from it.

This was the last I saw of the Cantonmentpur Tent Club. They said it was the best day they had ever had, and I doubt if they killed any more pigs after it, nor did the Association last much longer. They complained, I believe, of jealousy on the part of the Metropolitan Tent Club, which interfered with their elephants and their ground, but they did not seem to have the elements of success within themselves. I do not think that their Indigo-planter member ever condescended to go out with them. Fred and I were asked to join, but declined. In fact Fred, whenever their name was mentioned in his presence, used to say, with much contempt that he had only been out with them one day, and then had taken first spear off their biggest boar on foot, a slight but pardonable exaggeration. I do not think I heard the Association spoken of again, till two or three years later, when I received a letter from Judex, dated from Paris, in which, amidst a variety of matter, theological, sociological, political, and all interesting, he asked, "What has become of the Cantonmentpur Tent Club? I wonder if they remember that they owe me 16 rupees—and 16 rupees are something I can tell you, in this country."

The most readable paper in the November number of the Oriental Sporting Magazine is "Home on Furlough"—*Englishman*, December, 1879.

HOME ON FURLOUGH.

By W.

"Virginibus puerisque canto," sings Horace. I, at least, write for bachelors, and of that not undeserving brotherhood only for those who are fond of horses and riding. If the *virgines* be at all interested in the following, it can only be by the necessary implication connoted by the word bachelor. Their intervention would but tend to interfere with or altogether mar the career which it is my design to recommend, and if they are to be addressed at all, it can only be in the warning note of the bard ~~already quoted,~~ Virgil.

"Procul! o procul este profanæ!"

One line more from Horace before I have done with him. A very large part of my object in writing is to controvert his oft-quoted saw that

"Post equitem sedet atra cura."

If there be any sport where black care cannot settle, it is behind or with that horseman who is flying in pursuit, whether of the great sullen boar, the wily fox, or the scent left by a parafine oil tin.

An old French author, whose name I now forget, and who wrote a treatise in praise of hunting, points out that, by withdrawing its votary from all opportunity for sin, it forms not only a pleasant but a sure path to holiness, and will land its constant followers, if not in the heart, at least in the suburbs

of sport to our author. However much this argument was scouted in a metaphysical age, it surely ought to have its weight in our experimental times. But, if the ground it takes be too high, let me at least insist that in hunting will be found not only a pursuit which will maintain a healthy mind in a healthy frame, but a sure refuge from cankering care, and an unalloyed joy which leaves no sting behind—no painful reaction to succeed. Of what other pleasure can the same be said? Let, then, that candidate for furlough of the class addressed not resign himself to the idea that on his furlough pay he must leave all thoughts of riding and hunting for India. Let him set it before him steadily in view as something to be done, and, by so doing, he will enjoy his holiday ten-fold. If he or his friends be so circumstanced that he can look forward to indulging in it without any self-restraint, or abstinence from other pleasures, he is to be congratulated; in that case perhaps even my warning to the virgins may be withdrawn; but if he can ride under 12 stone, he is, under any circumstances, "*ter quarterque beatus.*" For he can be mounted cheaply and, if it is in him, can hold his own with the best.

As, at billiards or in shooting, a moderate performer will get just as much enjoyment from his pursuit as a champion, so it is by no means necessary to be an excellent horseman to derive the utmost possible delight from hunting. But, for their comfort and encouragement, I may tell those who have not had experience of hunting at home, that, if they have pursued the sport in India with any constant interest, they will be astonished at their own proficiency in the English hunting field, after a single day's practice. It will not be the smallest part of the novice's pleasure to find that, diffident as he was, he can wait on, and be up with, in an arduous run, some Nimrod whose riding prowess is vaunted throughout the

country. India, he will find, has taught him to make light of casualties and of difficult horses, while it has probably given him greater readiness in some unexpected contingency, or for some abnormal obstacle than the majority of his untravelled fellows in the field possess.

Our absentee probably arrives early in the year, having, most likely, travelled through the Continent, where he has fancied that he has been enjoying himself, till the breaking up of the party with which he has been travelling impels him suddenly homeward. His first steps are naturally directed to the ancestral hearth; but here, in the early mornings, and in whatever vacant moments or hours he may have, he feels himself urged by an irresistible restlessness to be up and doing, to be making the best use of his time. His stay in the bosom of his family seems, therefore, marvellously short to his expectant kinsfolk. The fact is early friends are scattered, or have married, while time has worked its inevitable changes; and when he has experienced the utter delusiveness of the Derby day or the Oxford and Cambridge boat race, if he has arrived in time to witness either of those cockney carnivals, the first taste of bitterness enters his soul, and if east winds are prevalent, it is odd if he does not sometimes heartily wish that he were well back in India.

Of course, there are a hundred sights to see, a hundred objects to give temporary occupation to the mind—but which of these all does not have its interval of objectless vanity? Now is the time for pouring in advice, for imparting the fruits of experience, and suggesting a remedy for this unsatisfactory state. Let not absentee fly back to the Continent in pursuance of his first impulse, but let him employ this cheerless interval in performing the duties of his furlough, in paying the debt of gratitude or of piety, and in those tedulous attentions to

any aunt or other relation from whom he may have expectations, which his own interest demands. Depend upon it, he will find little time enough for these necessary duties afterwards, while no course will so soon familiarize him with his real position at home, and with the difference between it and India. There is, however, an object of still more absorbing interest to be suggested which shall be dwelt on in its proper place hereafter.

July has now come, and, in its balmier air, and the delightful possibility of being out of doors all day long without either fear of the sun on the one hand, or the necessity of smothering clothes or constant exercise to keep himself warm on the other, our Indian begins to feel himself more reconciled to home, though he still regrets his bearer, and boasts of the comforts of Bengal. His time is probably spent in sprawling on the sea beach, in resuscitating his old dexterity with the lightly-feathered oar, or basking in the sun in a yacht or sailing boat ; and in such pursuits, varied by no more active exercise than his daily swim, or an occasional turn at lawn tennis, he finds that he is spending his leave somewhat meritoriously. This is a critical period for the exile ; for in its reaction and utter idleness, he runs great risk of what my hunting friend, who had himself succumbed, somewhat homelily expressed as "going to the stud." Well, if he must he must, and perhaps he will do well. His bachelor friends will part from him with some natural though selfish regret ; for, no matter how much he may wish the contrary, he must be thenceforward in a great measure lost to them. Not for him is the remainder of my homily. For what epithet short of *contaminated scoundrel* can be bestowed upon the cold-hearted calculator who would deter his marriage till he had first

breaking his neck, must only survive to be deservedly jilted.

But, if he has avoided, wriggled through, or altogether run away from all such perils, a more active season is now at hand. If he can afford it, the mountain side and the heather-loving grouse may now claim his care. If grouse-shooting be beyond him, he will do well, in part pursuance of his social duties, to visit some of the show-places of his father-land. To do so may ultimately save him much trouble ; for, once he has expressed with some openness that he does not think some stunted hill as grand as the snow-clad Himalaya, or the half-grown woods at its base as luxuriant as the foliage of Bengal, he will be pestered by well-meaning friends no more. Not that I would depreciate the scenery of that fairest of lands that I have seen—England. I would only claim to enjoy it in my own way, undriven over the hackneyed paths, where mingled guides and touts and tourists are as thick, as buzzing, and as appreciative as flies in summer time. To me there was no sight more beautiful, perhaps because none so full of contrast to what had met my eye for ten years before, than an undulating landscape, where in the distance the sea bayed in under mountains covered deep with snow, which was fast melting from the shaded slopes and hedgerow sides around me ; while at the edge of the cold grey sky appeared long patches of pale blue, against which stood out, sharp and clearly defined, the leafless branches of the hill-side wood. But, as I fed my eyes upon this scene, we were hastening fast to cover side, and we had a memorable run that day ;—so strong is the power of association to imprint !

But hard indeed must be his luck if the 1st of September does not find the absentee, gun in hand, among the partridges. If a fair shot in India, he will probably find that unfatigued

by the beating sun, he is somewhat above the average at home: but, even if he misses as constantly as I did, he must enjoy the breezy hill-sides of the midland counties, with their quaint picturesque landscapes, and his hunting interest is kept constantly alive by the long inexperienced pleasure of watching dogs at work. If he lets off his birds, he will, at least, solace himself by stopping an occasional rabbit or hare, or may even unexpectedly increase the bag by bringing down an outlying pheasant. This last feat, to be pardonable at all, should be accomplished in the purest innocence; and then the perpetrator will probably be consoled for the chaffing of his host, the upbraidings of his fellow-sportsmen, or the gamekeeper's dark muttered hints of £50 penalties, by the smiles of his hostess who has her own ideas about *toujours perdrix* and a sovereign contempt for all game laws.

Cub-hunting begins in October, in some places as early as the end of ~~September~~, so between it and the shooting, there is little interval. If, by this time, the Indian be provided with a mount, he may be considered as fairly launched, and may be safely left to himself; his thorough enjoyment for the next six months is sure. Before giving any further hints which might serve to guide him to this desirable climax, I will now digress to relate my own adventures at this period.

I had experienced some of the vicissitudes here briefly sketched, when the middle of October found me again vacant and uncomfortable. I had no horse, and, where I was, no hunting friends. The only one surviving of my former companions who knew anything of the subject, had been an ardent rider, till a severe fall, sustained by him while leading the field some years before, had made him abandon the pursuit altogether, and, as was only natural, from him I could

elicit neither information or sympathy. He had quite dropped his old hunting connection. Meanwhile, the newspaper notices of preparations, and at length the formally published fixtures continued to fire my blood, and I made several efforts on my own account to procure a hunter, and pending that, to get properly mounted on those hired horses which, at most hunting centres, are to be had for two or three guineas a day. But though in pursuit of this latter plan I made attempts at Rugby, Birmingham, and Dublin, they were without success. This was, perhaps, due to the difficulty a heavy weight must experience everywhere in getting properly mounted ; for some lighter men have found these hired hunters very fairly satisfactory. My trials of them had no other result than to make me acquainted with a class of men of whose existence I had before been ignorant, and who, in the county of Dublin, are known by the most suggestive name of *wreckers.* More than once have I and my hired horse been obliged to their assistance for our extrication, nor had I then the presence of mind which, one day subsequently, distinguished a companion with the stag hounds. From some exigency he was following them on one of these hired hunters, which he succeeded in imbedding hopelessly in a bog-drain too wide for it to clear. It was extricated, after some three hours' work, by the assistance of some attendant "wreckers," to whom the hero of my story proffered a guinea in recompense. This they indignantly refused as inadequate, when he promptly tendered them the horse itself, remembering that his two guineas for it were in payment of all risk.

At this juncture I bethought me of a friend* with whom I had travelled home, and who had long been known as one

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* Now Sir W. B. Hudson, K. C. I. E.

of our very finest horsemen in Bengal. He had come home in ill health however, and I did not know if he was able to hunt that season or not ; so I wrote detailing my difficulties, and asking for advice. His answer, which came by return of post, was a characteristic one. It began with some abuse for my not having gone to see him before, and ended by saying he would meet me at the first train on the following day, and mount me with the fox hounds the day after. A postscript warned me to bring my breeches and boots, for middle part this pithy letter had none. Here was luck in earnest, though I then little dreamt of its extent. I was unable to comply with the exact terms of the letter, but succeeded in getting down to Hudson's place the following week, and many a day passed before I left that hospitable home. I fell in love, at first sight, with the mare which was to carry me, and, after hunting her two or three times, persuaded Hudson to let me have her. He consented only on my making one final trial, a mere pretext to prolong my stay. She seemed to improve every day I had her, and with her I travelled about from pack to pack, visiting the old scenes of my adventures with the "wreckers," of whom I was now independent, but always recurring, and after short and frequent intervals, to Hudson's where I passed the best enjoyed days of that most enjoyable period in my whole life.

The chief attraction was my host's father, with whom he was then living, and, after a very short acquaintance with whom I ceased to wonder at his sons being the fine horsemen they have all proved. Though in his thirteenth lustrum, it was absurd to call him an old man when he not only surpassed us, who were not half his age, in vivacity and in the freshness of his interest for every single object, but in actual physical powers. He was still the best

county, and I found, when accompanying him and his dogs on a bye day after the snipe and plover, that he was just as hard to follow over the ditches on foot as when mounted on his favourite thorough-bred. To him did I attach myself, and in many a ride, and drive, and tramp over the bogs together, did I listen to the store of experience and acute observation which every little incident, no matter how trivial, could not fail to open, and which he seemed almost as pleased to impart as I was to take it in. He had that quick observant eye which nothing ever could escape, whether a throat lash was a single hole too loose, or the lace of a shooting boot drawn tight enough to tell upon the wearer. And when, from these special points, he could be drawn into generalities, he would often point them by a classical quotation so apposite as to lend fresh savour to his ever instructive discourse. Every face in the county was known to him, and from his casual enquiries on the road, he seemed equally well versed in the hearer's domestic history, from the calving of his red cow to the measles of his last infant. Such a frame and such a nature a life in the open air alone can give. And the interior of the house, with its perfectly unembarrassed hospitality, the last fox brush over the dining-room chimney piece, the cat and the fox-terrier sharing in temporary amicableness the comfort of the hearth, the whips in the hall, and the bookshelves on which might be found a volume of the classics reposing between a Bible and a book on farriery, was as delightful and suggestive as its master. He and Hudson then had some seventeen horses, of which nominally three a piece formed their hunting strings, but in reality all were, with or without training, fit to go. Of this I had the following prominent instance. My mare formed one of Hudson's string and, soon

fatally, his thorough-bred, while his third horse—the handsomest hunter I have ever seen—had been lame ever since our first day's hunting together, a very long and trying one, in which he had mounted a friend upon her. He had still his choice of two or three others, but, rejecting some as too light, and others as too heavy, he cast his eyes upon a young and, to me, coarse looking horse, which he had been driving in double harness, and which, if I mistake not, I had seen in an emergency doing duty in the manure cart. It was on the last day on one of my visits that this animal was brought out, and I was employed in giving it leads over ditches, into some of which it was thrown, into others whipped, while into others it fell itself, in attempting to clear them. Hudson and his father, however, appeared to think the trial entirely satisfactory; while I, though I said nothing, wondered at their persistence with an animal which was so obviously unfitted for a hunter. I left, and did not see them again till Hudson and I met in a distant country, at the house of another Indian friend of mine, to whom he was related. The country was equally strange to us both, though this little mattered to Hudson who, in two good runs, led the field all the way, mounted on the horse regarding which I had formed so low an opinion, which, with the crest and carriage imparted to it by its new name, its more martial pursuit, or the spirit of its rider, was almost unrecognizable.

In their style of riding and their tactics in the field the father and son were very dissimilar. Hudson, with a good deal of inherent lethargy enhanced by his residence in India, found it too much trouble to do otherwise than go perfectly straight. He was fond of a maxim which

hounds ; because—he would add with an appearance of almost judicial reasoning—when they disappear, you may know that the place must be a terribly big one. That he himself ever acted on the natural deduction from his explanation I could not see ; but, if he fell, as I have known him to do three times in a run when schooling a thorough-bred steeple-chaser to hunting, he and his horse seemed to get up again together, and to be in their old place, just behind the hounds, almost as soon as if no interruption had occurred. Whether the hounds were in cover or in full cry, he observed his rule ; in the former case, either sitting on his horse outside, or just walking it about sufficiently to prevent the possibility of cold ; in the latter, with a seat which distinguished him from the whole field, deep down in the saddle, with reins held very long in hands which never stirred, and eyes directed straight before him on the hounds—the most immovable horseman I have ever seen. He was too good a rider ever to take an unnecessary jump, but I have known him almost out of humour, even when hunting, because the run led us for a short distance along a road ; while he declared that nothing spoiled the sport so much as a knowledge of the country.

To this his father was the completest contrast ; a far lighter weight, and without one touch of lethargy in his disposition he was seldom quiet for a moment. No one knew the country half so well, while he boasted that he never left the road if he could help it, though any one who followed him in the expectation of an easy ride from this profession, would have experienced delusion in most concentrated bitterness. When cover was being drawn he kept moving from point to point, now with a word of counsel to the huntsman or whips whose chief oracle he was, and now punishing or threatening a stray

first to view the fox, and if he chose, the first to get away. In the run he might be seen, now up in his stirrups racing over the grass, now sitting down to ride over some appalling jump, at another time riding apparently right away from the hounds to make for some well remembered point, while sometimes he would disappear altogether, only turning up at the finish which had no such constant attendant; for no one in the hunt was so frequently up at the last.

The sort of intuition by which he seemed to know exactly how the fox would run and what points to make, is to this moment inexplicable to me. In the first hunt we had together I was counselled by Hudson to stick closely to his father as the likeliest way of seeing the finish. The moment the fox got away, my pilot, who as usual, had been the first to view him, turned straight in the opposite direction, made for a gate which led out on to the road, and then took me along the latter for about three miles at a hand gallop, and as far as I could judge, exactly as if the fox were some ravenous beast from which we had to flee for our lives. Suddenly he turned in through a gate, crossed a few fields, and then, pulling up on the slope above a wooded valley, stood still and listened. I could not hear a sound; meanwhile he was placidly talking to the owner of the ground on which we stood, about a hayrick, as well as I remember; and I, who almost thought he had made this sudden diversion to settle this business with the farmer, was inwardly chafing at having lost what promised to be a good thing; when suddenly emerged from the valley, and coming right towards us, the hounds, followed by as many of the field as had been able to keep up with them. I still adhered to my pilot and, for the next

Long after this, and when I was well acquainted with him, we met in the distant country*before alluded to, where neither of us had ever hunted or been before. ' We had a curious and difficult run after a fox which, starting from a cover on the steep side of a high spur, ran round the hill and re-entered the cover, again breaking from it at its first starting point for the country beyond, and thus taking us over the neck of the spur. As we scrambled down its steep side and through the dense wood, we got separated, and I emerged at the bottom, just opposite a delightful gap in the enclosing fence, and only a few yards behind the tailmost hounds. My mentor had diverged in the wood and was nowhere to be seen, and as I got well away, with no one before me but the huntsman, I exultingly imagined that I had at last eluded him. The fencing was stiff enough to absorb all my attention and take it off the huntsman, till I found myself stopped by a small bog, across which the hounds made with ease. A road between high banks, and then a plantation, intervened before I could next view them, when they were a long way ahead, the most conspicuous object between them and me being the perfectly straight back of my mentor, and the short tail of his varmint looking thorough-bred mare. How he got there I never quite understood. He had emerged from the cover at a different point from mine to avoid the bog, which he must have smelt, as not even the huntsman knew of its being in the way till we had crossed a good many large fields.

Much the same thing happened afterwards in his own country.† We had started a fox from a pet cover on his own land, and as it was to be my last hunt with my friends, I

determined to stick to Hudson this time for a change. It turned out to be one of the best runs of the season. In crossing a road, I noticed that Hudson's father did not follow into the field beyond, and after a stretching gallop down a hill side and over a succession of drains in the bottom, had the satisfaction of finding the hitherto numerous field before me reduced to Hudson and one other. The pace seemed only to increase, and while a whole field lay between them and the hounds, the distance between Hudson's broad back and myself was gradually widening. What had become of the rest I had no idea. I knew the master had been stopped by the big stone-faced bank and ditch on the hill-top as we crossed the road. I had had passing visions of one or two casualties at at the stone fences on the hill side, and, as we got into the drain country below, they began to multiply fast. At the first drain the whip and his horse disappeared altogether and were seen no more; at the last I, as nearly as possible, jumped upon the hard riding secretary, as he and his mare lay on the ground together. And now there was only Hudson to catch, but such a pace under 15 stone was fast telling on my mare. On crossing a ridge I raised my eyes for a last survey. It looked as if the hounds were going to beat even Hudson and his companion, and, actully racing in front of them, standing in his stirrups with a rein held low on each side of his mare's neck, was the former's father! How he got there I have not the faintest idea. We seemed to me to have taken only one turn, and the fact that he was alone appeared to shut out the possibility of his having taken a short cut along the road; nor, though—happily for me—there was a check just then which let me up, did the master or any one else appear for some time afterwards.

It was, after all, if not easier, infinitely less nervous work

to follow Hudson in his bruising course than his father, notwithstanding the latter's profession of never taking a jump. He disdained to ride anything but thorough-breds and, though he had one perfect little horse which, with an unwilling rider who clung to reins, pommel and cantle at the same time, on his back, took the highest jump I have ever seen, his favourite mount was a varmint looking steeplechase mare with anything but a good temper, on which he could easily gallop away from anything in the field. His great delight was in teaching her cleverness, and many a hard struggle have I witnessed between him and her at the edge of some obstacle which she wanted to fly, but which he would make her, to use his own words, walk over—that is, compel her to creep down some stone-faced side into a bottomless looking pit, and then scramble up the opposite perpendicular bank, with a hole in the hedge barely big enough to admit a goat, to be crawled through on its summit. More than once, I must confess, he came to grief; while I had to follow, the back of my head almost touching my mare's croup in the descent, only escaping being swept off her by some over-hanging branch, by clinging to her neck like a Commanche Indian in the ascent; or totteringly walking after him on the summit of a bank, as high, as steep, and as narrow as an average wall, always in a state of nervous apprehension. As for the falls my pilot only seemed to regard them as most valuable instruction for his mare. He himself invariably shewed an instinct and alacrity equally unexampled in rolling away just in time to avoid her plunging heels, or at the precise moment when it looked as if she must come on him and crumple him up.

But, if I dwell longer on this theme, my digression may become interminable, while it serves no other purpose than to illustrate the sort of companionship which the hunting field

produces. Though every one cannot expect to be as fortunate as I was, still even in venturing with a strange hunt, where the foreigner has not a single acquaintance, he can scarcely fail, if he rides at all, to fall in with some pleasant companion before the day is over; and, with his footing once established, can extend his acquaintanceships just as far as he likes. My first introduction to the master of the hunt which afterwards I most frequented, and in which at first I did not know a single soul, was by thrusting before him at a wall which my horse refused, and then, turning sharply round, cannoned into him, and with her mouth and bit hurt his hand so severely that he had to leave the field. Had I saved his life instead of nearly knocking him off his horse his conduct could not have been more cordial. I doubt very much if many masters who, after all, are like many other officials dressed in a little brief authority, have been found so courteous, but the spirit is one which the hunting field essentially tends to promote.

And now to return to what I have before hinted at, that is the means for giving our absentee a continued interest at home from the very week of his landing, and at the same time for finding him satisfactorily mounted on the very first day of the season. By attending the spring sales at Tattersall's he will find hunters being knocked down for from thirty to fifty guineas, which, when fit, and at the beginning of the season, three or four times the money will not buy. Let him try and secure one, or better still, two, or if he can afford it, three of these animals, and arrange for their being "*summered*" by some farmer where he can have easy access to them, no matter how or where he spends his own time. Such an arrangement can be made for a trifling sum, and long before the cub-hunting is over, he will have had time to

ascertain exactly what each of them can do, and to dispose of the rejected on not disadvantageous terms. If he has taken the trouble to ascertain anything beforehand about the horses he bids for, there is scarcely a possibility of his ultimately losing; but I believe that, even if he walks in and gets knocked down to him the first which takes his fancy without having seen or heard of it before, the chances are very much in favour of its turning out a success.

In May, 1876, I accompanied a friend* who, with a string of four good ones, had been enjoying himself supremely in Lincolnshire, to see sold at Tattersall's the stud of an American friend of his, who had just left for his own country, leaving his horses to be knocked down without reserve. There were six of them, and all had been hunted, both in the shires and Lincolnshire, throughout the season, and their capabilities and frailties were known to my friend. The first brought out was a magnificent chesnut, well up to 16 stone, and precisely like one of those slashing big-boned weight carriers which Leech used to draw so well. He showed signs of work certainly, but was young still, and with all his low condition, was the sort of horse I would most hanker after. He was knocked down for sixty-three guineas. Another, a bay, without any exception the most powerful looking horse with any pretensions to looks or breeding—and she had great claims to both—which I have ever seen, went for a hundred guineas. The others were lighter horses in which I took less interest, but finally, amidst the genuinely expressed lamentations of Tattersall, the entire stud, which within eight months had been bought for over a thousand guineas, fetched a little more than four hundred, and this

* Now the Hon'ble Mr. George Toynbee, I. C. S.

seemed to be the case with almost every lot put up. The winner of the Prince of Wales's cup at Punchestown—that is, of the steeplechase of Ireland—in 1876, had been bought at Tattersall's the May before for thirty guineas. I confess to being one of those whose pleasure in a horse's ultimately turning out well is much enhanced by his having been picked up cheap in the first instance.

But oh? my expectant friend, perhaps after all, you had better not be too happy. The inevitable hour must come when the hunt steeplechases are over, and the hawthorn has begun to bloom, which finds you once more on the ocean wave, trying to console yourself for your parting with the gallant horse which has carried you fifty or sixty miles in a day, with a stiff run in the middle of it, by anticipations of those short-lived bursts which India will only permit of; and of being mounted either on an Australian which will very likely try to kill you before you have gone 100 yards, or on the safer but melodious Cabul. It is still in your power to avoid the remembering of former joys, and the full bitterness of contrast.

AN OUTSIDER'S OBSERVATIONS

ON

STEEPLE-CHASES

AND

STEEPLE-CHASE COURSES.

By W.

I MUST premise these observations by disclaiming all pretensions to writing as a sporting man. Though I acknowledge to having owned, and run, and won with race-horses—that is, with horses which I could not ride myself, and which were of no use, except for racing—I have never been at all *en rapport* with the sporting section of the community; and merely record my observations as those of an outsider, who has a great fondness and admiration for that noble animal, the horse.

The first jumping race I ever saw was at Sonepore, in 1869, and it made a profound impression on my mind. A valuable Cup, presented by a well-known owner* of steeple-chase runners in England, remained unassigned on the last day's racing; so the Stewards arranged for a hurdlerace for it, to be run after lunch. Apart from the general question involved in afternoon and morning racing in India, an after-lunch jumping race seems particularly objectionable. The course in this instance was prepared by the officers of the Rifle Brigade then stationed at Dinapore, and, as one

of them was to ride, they cannot be accused of having made it designedly dangerous. It was half a mile, over six flights of hurdles, made as stiff and strong as split Palmyra palms could possibly render them, and from $3\frac{1}{2}$ to $3\frac{3}{4}$ feet high.

There were six entries. One, I remember, was a flat-racer which had won during the meet, ridden by a then famous professional trainer and jockey. A second was another well-known flat-racer, which had never been ridden over hurdles before, steered by her owner, who was then the most successful gentleman jockey in India.* Two others were also, as well as I remember, racers on the flat, ridden by professionals. The fifth was a small jumping horse, ridden by one of the Riflemen.†

The sixth was the winner. He was ridden by the son of the donor of the Cup, and was entered in the race by the merest chance. His rider, who was only anxious for a mount at any terms, had, about half an hour before the start, applied to me for a new purchase of mine, and, but that the horse had been sent to be shod, I should most probably have won the handsome trophy; for he was a known jumper, and fast as well. Another friend, however, tendered a cart-horse looking animal, with the assurance that he could jump at all events, and, after skying him once or twice over a hurdle, our winner rode him to the post, and took his place.

As may be imagined, the pace, as long as it lasted, which was for about one furlong, was tremendous, and the start was precisely like that for half a mile without any obstacle,—except for the winner, who could not have gone half as fast as the rest had he been whipped and spurred from the post. At the first hurdle, the professional-ridden successful flat-racer

came down, and his rider had to be carried home. The rest got over the second hurdle in safety, but, at the third, another of the professionals came down; and, to us spectators, it looked precisely as if his brother jockey and the Rifleman jumped on him, for they fell likewise,—the whole catastrophe being horrible to see. At the fourth hurdle, the plater mare took off a full length too soon and came over on her rider; and so our cart-horse cantered in, and won.

The ground was hard, and yet no one was killed. All who had fallen, however, were more or less severely hurt, and one horse was badly injured. The crack gentleman-jockey got off the lightest, though he bore a scarred face for many a day after. With the sort of instinctive fore-knowledge which one sometimes sees, his confederate had stationed himself at the hurdle at which he fell, had picked him up and set him going again, and he came in very little behind the winner.

Now, apart from the moral to be drawn from so many falls, I fail to see how this contest answered any legitimate racing purpose, when it was won by a horse so obviously inferior to any of the others on its merits.

Since then I have seen many a steeple-chase and steeple-chase course, and the variety of the latter is something wonderful. That at Mozufferpore had long a reputation for its danger and difficulty, but has now, I believe, been much modified. In the sister district of Chumparun—that nursery of daring riders—the course was one which a decent pony, *crede experto*, might canter over; and yet a fine horse was killed over one of the jumps in it. At Barrackpore, in 1870, they had one of the most dangerous looking courses I ever saw; and here again, in the big steeple-chase, all the horses fell, except the winner. On the whole, the Ballygunge course,

not only in India, but anywhere. I have known it called too easy in the papers, but have never read such a description without wishing devoutly that even I might engage this fastidious critic to ride a race at even weights over it. Something the same was said of the Calcutta course in 1872, and many of us remember what a calamitous event happened there.

I had always heard of Punchestown as exhibiting a course which, in size and difficulty, was not to be surpassed, and I attended the races there in 1876, with the intention of making an accurate survey and record of the jumps. That I have not done so is purely because they were so different from what I had expected. I rode thither from Leixlip, a distance of some 18 miles, on my own hunter, which had been laid up on soft stuff for over three weeks previously on the close of the season. I had to hurry to catch the first race, and was caught on the road by some drenching showers, which soaked the heavy over-coat I wore, and I could not have weighed in saddle less than 16 stone. It may be supposed that my horse was, all things considered, in no great jumping trim. I arrived just at the finish for the first race, and started round the course. The first jump was across a small ditch on to a high bank. I was surprised at its easiness, but supposed it to be meant for a judicious beginning. I then went on till I had to cross a low drop and ditch, and, looking round for the course, found that I had come between the flags, and actually over the second jump. I crossed the third, which was much the same, in the same way; and then the fourth, called the first water-jump. I had to canter my horse at it, but it was nothing but a low bank, a drop, and a ditch of running water. It is possible that I may leave out a jump or two in my description; I am not writing by book, but,—to the best of my

recollection—the next jump was the brook. The water had been dammed up to form the jump, and a low hurdle, to make the horses rise, was sloped about two feet over it; and, had there been the least inducement to do so, and had I not been able to cross beside it, I could have jumped it with very little more effort than the others had cost me. For it must be explained that I only went over them as the shortest way of getting round the course.

After the brook, the course turns at a right angle, and the next jump is an ordinary ditch and bank, and then comes the double—the 'lep,' as the natives call it,—of the whole course. Riding at it, it certainly looked very big, and the bank between the two ditches is a high one; while the drop over the far ditch into the next field is deep. It is, nevertheless, what would be called in the hunting field a very safe jump, so broad is the top of the bank in the middle, probably some 6 or 8 feet. This bank has been made purposely high and broad to prevent the horses trying to fly from field to field. They, nevertheless, sometimes still attempt to do so. Five runners fell in one race at this fence; in fact, it was almost the only one at which any casualty occurred.

There is scarcely time to land when the course turns at right angles again, and next comes another bank and ditch, which I cleared without going out of a walk; and then the wall, which my horse hopped over withont touching. It can be barely over three feet high, and the top is only a few inches thick, built of rubble stones held together with mortar. The remaining jumps are all insignificant banks and ditches, the last in the straight being a furze hedge, with a small ditch on the landing side.

Such was Punchestown in 1876, without a single stick or

hurdle, or timber of any kind. The pace, of course, was something tremendous, everything being taken in the stride. I was told that the Fairy House Course, where the Ward Union Hunt races are held, was much easier still; and so did not go to see it.

My next instance is the Annual Hunt Steeple-Chases in South Australia—the event of the year—which I saw in 1876. The Australian principle is that a horse will never make a greater effort than when he is being raced, and they lay out their steeple-chase courses accordingly. Curiously enough, the sensational jump, for which a place was chosen opposite the grand stand, was a trough-shaped pool of water, less than a foot deep and some 10 feet wide, with a low rail to make the horses rise, and most carefully winged on both sides. I can speak to its depth, because most of the horses galloped into it; and next to it in local importance and sensationalism was a mud bank, also placed in front of the stand, and which any Ballygunge man would have laughed at. I give these two jumps such prominence because of their ludicrous disproportion to the other obstacles, and the extraordinary importance attached to them by the spectators, purely because such a kind of fence is never met with in the country. The remaining fences, of which there were ten or twelve, according as the races were run, were all of the same character; that is, solid posts, formed of tree trunks, with solid round rails, formed of smaller tree trunks, morticed across them, one having a hoarding of boards to make it look additionally solid, and all being as firm and strong and unyielding as they could possibly be made. In fact, in five races, in which most of them had to be crossed twice,—for they were merely planted on the flat race

from the ground. It was four feet eight inches; and I was assured that there was one higher still, though they all looked to me the same. The ground, where not altogether bare, was covered with stunted grass; and was just as hard and parched as an Indian compound in the dry season; while no attempt had been made to mitigate the falls by scattering litter, or ploughing up the ground at the fences.

No one was killed, strange to say, though there were one or more falls in every race; and twice I saw a horse fling its heels perpendicularly skywards, as it turned right over on its rider. The course, except for the water-jump and bank, was really only a type, though a strong one, of the ordinary hunting country of the place. The pace was, of course, not equal to that at Punchestown, but was very fast; in two races the favourite attempting to come right away and cut down the field. The horses, though high class animals, were none of them thorough-bred. The top-weight was 12 stone.

The riding deserves a word. With scarcely an exception, the men never once stirred in their saddles throughout, whether over fences or between them They all rode however, in 14lb. and 16lb. colonial saddles, with the deep seat and great knee and thigh pads. Except in two instances, I thought the jockeyship bad; and notwithstanding the length of the races, scarcely saw an attempt made to ease the horses. But one rider, a gentleman, was as perfect a horseman as I have ever seen.

I have now instanced there kinds of jumping courses—first, the utterly bad, unnatural, or mantrap course, like that of the Sonepore hurdle-race, or of the Barrackpore steeple-chase in 1870; then the galloping course, of which Croydon may be

form, as a severe jumping test, and my favourite model, Ballygunge, in a much more modified degree.

Putting the first out of the question, it may, at least, be said in favour of the second that, although bad accidents often do occur on these easy courses, they are the least dangerous; and by any one who has had a near kinsman, or a valued friend killed, or injured for life, in a steeple-chase, this point is not likely to be under-estimated. But it is hard to say what purpose they fulfil. As jumping tests, they are valueless; and, if they are meant as mere trials of speed, why not minimize the danger by having them on the flat,—where, in judgment of pace, in the judicious easing, in coming along at the precisely right moment, and then at the squeeze in at the finish, there is scope for the very perfection of horsemanship. As a matter of fact, they seem to produce and maintain a class of horses which are useless for anything else, and which are far more fitted for flat-racing than for the hunting field. I have seen some of them hunting, it is true; but they were dangerous mounts, even though their owner's utmost efforts had been concentrated in making them unlearn their steeple-chase teaching.

The third kind of course, even when a genuine jumping test, would not be especially dangerous, but that the horses and riders are racing against each other; a fact which gentlemen stewards, who lay out courses of which they remark, with airy buoyancy, that they could have cantered their cover-hacks over them in their young days, would do well to bear in mind. Perhaps these courses are most satisfactory of all. Nevertheless, I confess that to me it was an unpleasant sight to see, as I did in Australia, a horse turn right over on its rider, then struggle and stagger up, while

wind, unregarded by the shouting crowd, or even the ladies on the stand, all concentrated on the finish, till a tardy Police ambulance drove up, and carried him off, apparently only to be out of the way of the next race. And Ballygunge has not been without its accidents.

Nor apart from the question of danger, do these courses seem to fulfil all requirements. We want horses that can jump and gallop, certainly; but in a steeple-chase there can be little room for cleverness. What sensation in the hunting fields is more pleasurable than when, with a touch and a kick, one's horse clears a well, or one of those high, steep, insurmountable looking banks to be found in Devonshire, or the south of Ireland; and, yet, who would now dream of placing such a jump in a steeple-chase course, and what would be the the result were it done?

Nor, in favouring so highly as we do this kind of sport, can we boast that it is an example of the riding prowess or adventurous spirit of the age; nor can we say of ourselves with regard to it,

"Ἡμεῖς τοι πατέρων μέγ' ἀμείνονες εὐχόμεθ' εἶναι,"

for so recent is its introduction that "Nimrod," when writing for the *Quarterly* in our own fathers' days, though he alludes to it as a novelty, appears then never to have seen a steeple-chase. And yet we have never surpassed, if we have attained to the jumping feats recorded as performed by horses during the Regency.

I have tried to show that it does not meet its objects. It costs us, in India, a good man every year killed, to say nothing of the wounded. So deeply has it taken root, and so

men, that I am conscious of how utterly useless—nay in the pages of this *Magazine* how treasonable—it is for me to propose the only remedy for its unsatisfactory state ; that is, its discontinuance altogether.

THE ENCHANTED BOAR; A TRUE LEGEND OF TANTIBANDHU.

By W.

One of the witnesses to, and a prominent actor in the incidents I am about to relate, is dead. This is not the place in which to pay his memory its tribute, for it is only a story about a wild pig, and he was my near friend. Suffice it to say that, though a scientific man, and rapidly rising to distinction in his scholarly career when an early death cut him off, he was a true sportsman. He was not conversant with current odds, or the pedigree of this or that useless grey-hound, but he was altogether an open-air man, and with the true hunting instinct. Though a very moderate horseman, and never really well mounted, he was a most deadly spear, never touching unless when he could thrust deeply and fatally. He was an ardent lover of the sport, and never have I ridden with a pleasanter, a stauncher, or less jealous companion; and with his keen observation, no one, with so short an experience, could tell so well where the boar was likely to be found, how to be got out, and how likely to run. As a shot, particularly at snipe, there were few in Bengal who could beat W. G. Willson.

The other witness* to, indeed the hero of my tale, is living. Were he not so, to vouch for it, I should hesitate to give it forth. The incidents are in themselves by no means

incredible, but, certainly, quite beyond all my experience in boar-hunting, as well as anything I have ever heard from others on the subject.

Our Christmas party in 1871 was managed by young Barrow, then assistant at Pabna. We thought it particularly well organized, as the Viceroy, who, with his party, had left on the 23rd December, bequeathed to us six elephants, in addition to the three local ones on which we usually relied. We had a farrier and a doctor, and two good horses at least to each of us. There were French and his brother, with their guns, to superintend the beating, not to count the Chaudhari himself and several of his kin. And there were to ride Barrow, and Nolan from Serajgunge, Willson and W. from Kishnaghur, and—'facile princeps' in talent and experience—the veteran pig-sticker Tom Brae from Dobrakul.

Brae and Barrow had been hunting with the Viceroy, and we were much pleased at finding that the former had taken the opening spear in a company composed of those well-remembered dashing aides-de-camp, of some of the elite of the Tent Club, not to count Archie Hills, chief of pig-stickers in all Bengal. Thirteen boars had been slain—we did not mind. Tantibandhu, we thought, could supply as many more, and we did not then count on having so many fruitless runs after their widows. The chief incidents of the meet had been the heavy fall sustained by Grant, and the phenomenon, (for that part of the world), of a jumping pig, which had cut right through the boot of a Tent Club man, just below the knee.

Next morning a fine boar answered to our first call. It had a bare half mile to run; and though deeply speared just at the outskirts of the next cover—the jungle round a large

for the elephants and began to beat for it, an apparently interminable job. Nolan and W. were stationed near each other during this operation, when a herd-boy signalled to the former that there was a pig in the open plain. The plain in question was a type of a thousand such to be found in Pabna, containing the rice fields of the villages which, with their groves and jungles, shut in the horizon on all sides, while some water and rice stubble still remained in the central dip, forming in this instance a considerable marsh, called in Bengal and Orissa a "bil", or, Anglo-Indian, bheel. Sure enough, in a sort of island in the water, a large black object could be plainly discerned disporting itself, fully a mile away. Nolan cast a glance round to see if Brae was looking, and started towards the water's edge, and was almost at once joined by W. who had begun with loud remonstrances against his unsportsmanlike behaviour. Arrived at the point nearest the pig, for such it was, Nolan dashed into the water, his gallant horse Squire splendidly exhibiting his powers as he carried his ponderous rider at a canter through the marsh, with the water dashing round and over them like a shower-bath. At this apparition the pig stopped his gambols, and, after staring fixedly at Nolan, began to make leisurely towards the edge, at a point not very far from where W. had drawn up to watch the event. As the boar bounded along amidst showers of spray, followed a few yards behind by Nolan and the Squire in the same fashion, the two moving bodies in the distance did not look at all unlike quarto and duodecimo editions of the same animal.

Meanwhile W. had galloped round the edge and joined Nolan just as the latter got to land, about fifty yards behind

the villages. A wide and deep drain, or rather canal, between high banks, now intervened, and we arrived at the edge while the pig was swimming across it. Nolan plunged in without hesitation and W. followed, both finding to their surprise that it was fordable. On surmounting the bank the pig was found trotting on before them, and, after apparently a moment's reflection, he turned round and came in on Nolan who had pressed forward to close with him.

Nolan received him with a strong spear in the back, recovered his weapon, and galloped on. Instead of staying to meet W., who was close behind, the pig turned in pursuit of Nolan, and, while so doing, was overtaken by W., who left his spear standing straight up between its shoulders.

Both horsemen now drew up, and prepared, as they thought, to despatch the pig at their leisure, after the two severe stabs he had received. They counted without their host. It must be remembered that, so far, there had been no real run, nor had the pig ever been put to his speed. The dash through the water had been a mere preliminary canter—quite a freshener to him—and Nolan and the Squire were as fresh as when they had started. W., whose mare was an ungovernable beast, and who had the longest gallop, was alone a little blown for the time being.

I cannot tell whether it was Nolan or the boar who began the next charge, so equally eager were both for the fray. They met with a violent shock ; Nolan's spear was shivered, and to W.'s great joy, his was jerked out of the pig's back, bent but unbroken. As the boar still pursued Nolan he jumped off and picked it up, and prepared for his turn in the combat.

Little did he know what his part was to be. As soon as

head bent, and ears pricked stood fast as a rock, utterly mindless of her rider's spurs which he kept spasmodically driving into her flanks. The boar made straight for her chest, but, when about a spear's length off, she turned, and caught him fairly wth her heels and knocked him over. She just turned to look at him and, as he came in again, again she kicked him over. The next time she did not deign to turn, and he had got in between her legs and cut her near the teats before she got rid of him. She then, smarting from the cut no doubt, moved on, but all W.'s efforts were unable to make her face the boar, and he handed his spear to Nolan who was now disarmed.

In the next charge, Nolan was obliged to leave his spear firmly planted up-right in the boar's back, leaving us both completely weaponless. But help was at hand. We had, by this time, nearly made the circuit of the water, and Willson came riding slowly up, spear in hand, attended by a syce carrying two more. Willson never hurried himself unduly. He and W., who had hunted much together, have killed each their pig at a single stroke. Nolan, a more powerful man than either, was better mounted too, and Willson naturally thought that two such horsemen were quite able for one pig. He had witnessed the encounter between the boar and W.'s mare, and merely asked what it was all about. Nolan snatched a spear from the syce, and only responded that now, at all events, the brute would receive its 'coup-de-grace.'

Up to this point Nolan and W. had kept it pretty well engaged, though at no time did it shew any particular interest in making off. Now, however, it began to move slowly towards the villages, when Nolan rode past it, wheeled, and came down right on it at the Squire's best speed. The boar met him at the 'pas-de-charge'—there was a tremendous

concussion—it stopped quite still while Nolan's spear flew from his hand, and his horse carried him down to us. Willson uttered an exclamation and rode after the pig, while Nolan sat stupidly on his horse, his right arm hanging by his side, and asked me for water. I was afraid he was going to faint, and dismounted and held him. Two villagers, who had been watching the combat, ran up. We got him some water, bound a wet cloth round his head, and with one of the natives leading his horse, and the other supporting him in the saddle, he was despatched to the tents about two miles away. He complained of great pain in his shoulder, and faintness, but could then say no more.

W. then picked up his spear and remounted. At first sight the spear appeared intact, but it was really shivered. Though butt and point still held together, the middle of the shaft had been split right through in four or five places, and it was useless.

On turning so Willson, W. found him some 400 yards off in the act of taking a fresh spear from the syce, while the boar was entering the water, with *two* spears standing upright from its body. It could easily have gained the jungle, but chose the water instead, and had made more than one charge—receiving a stab each time from Willson—while W. was engaged with Nolan.

And now ensued a most curious scene, of which W. was, for some time, the passive spectator. Willson, with his fresh spear, advanced to the water's edge. The boar coolly came out to meet him, charged, received a stab and again retired into the marsh. This happened some three or four consecutive times. Though Willson's grey was a perfectly staunch little horse, the two waving spear-shafts in the boar's

anxious not to part with his last spear. At length they met for the last time. The boar seemed to hang for a moment at Willson's girths, and, as they separated, the first thing noticed was a deep gash in the white horse's stifle, soon the flank and leg were crimsoned with blood, while the boar sullenly retired to the water, bearing planted in its back a *third* spear, the bright point of which protruded from its belly. Willson coolly dismounted and led his horse towards the tents, followed by the syce and some natives. The scene showed the wide open plain, with the two mournful cavalcades slowly marching, at wide intervals, from their different points, to the distant tents—the boar in the water, and W. alone on the edge watching him.

W. gave a shout and the boar at once came out on him as it had on Willson. W.'s mare, however, avoided the charge, and the pig, instead of returning to the water, pursued its course, making for some distant point known to itself, though it had plenty of cover much nearer than by the direction it took. It was moving at a fast trot, with W. following it behind, when it suddenly quickened its pace, and W. saw, to his horror, that it was making right for Nolan and his party, who had moved very slowly, and were now not more than a quarter of a mile off. What to do W. did not know. He knew the villagers would run the moment they saw it, and was afraid that Nolan would fall from his horse. They had not even a spear with them. He was afraid even to shout, so he rode forward and provoked a charge; but, as soon as the boar had frightened off his mare as before, it made steadily for Nolan. At this juncture unexpected aid supervened. The plain was covered with cows and calves, and, for some time previous, they had clustered together in alarm at the appearance

in the two sides of a square, and it looked as if, in their close order,—the cows with their heads down and the calves behind them—they would bar the pig's progress. But, with a grunt and a snort, he moved right to where they were massed thickest—the three spears nodding threateningly over his back —and, as soon as he came close, they broke and scattered, and he passed through them.

This served to divert him from Nolan, for he now made for his original point, his course only being interrupted by his repeatedly turning to charge W., who, at one time, was able to strike the spears planted in his back with the broken shaft which he himself held, in the hope of knocking one of them out, but they were far too firmly planted. In this manner they proceeded, till they reached the new road which was being made to Pabna. The boar stood for a moment at the edge of the excavation from which the earth had been taken, turned and surveyed W., and then seemed to fall in and disappear. A few moments afterwards he was scrambling up the other side, but now with only one spear shaft standing in his back; he crossed the embankment and was hidden from view. On riding to the edge of the excavations, W. found that it was some 6 feet deep, and at the bottom lay two broken spear shafts. Whether the boar jumped in and fell, or fell in, he does not know. He took back his mare and jumped the excavation, and, on surmounting the crest of the road, was greeted by the following sight. A village with its out-lying jungle, lay about 400 yards on the other side, and along a path by the edge of it were proceeding an old woman laden with market produce, a young one carrying a basket on her head and a child on her hip, while another child hung on to her skirts; while our boar was making at a good canter for

first speechless with horror, W. plunged forward with a shout, very nearly falling at the opposite excavation. The women screamed and ran. The boar came back at W., and then trotted into the jungle, and was lost to sight.

W. marked the place and rode straight to the tents. Nolan was in bed, his great arms and torso bare, being ministered to by the doctor with bandages and liniments, and suffering a great undefined pain all down his right arm and side. Willson was moodily eating, for it was now past 3 P.M., and we had been engaged with this one boar since about 11 o'clock that morning. His grey horse was done for; it had sustained a cut some 12 inches long, no one could say how deep, for the flesh and tendons were protruding, and it was impossible to stop the bleeding, Willson's and W.'s second horses had not yet arrived. So W. too, in deep chagrin, had to sit down and eat, the gloomy meal being accompanied by Nolan's groans. After a short interval, however, and on the Doctor's assurance that he could sew up the gash in Willson's horse, a start was made. This time W. rode the Squire, and was attended by a syce bearing six spears. Willson took his breech-loader and a bag of shot and ball cartridges. Nothing had been heard of Brae and Barrow, and they were still beating for our first pig when Willson left them to join Nolan and W.

The Tantibandhu covers need little description. They are almost invariably formed by the waste land in, among, or attached to the villages; or by the sites of tanks, or neglected gardens; and it was in one of the latter that our boar had taken refuge. It was a bamboo and mango plantation, choked with a thick undergrowth, close to the houses, and with the village paths running through it, the whole covering about 2 acres of ground. It was arranged that Willson should go in and

W. had not long to wait before he heard a shot, followed by another, and then a third which was succeeded by a tremendous uproar and shouting. The fourth report was accompanied by the whizzing ring of an unmistakable bullet through the open; and W., not at all liking the turn the sport seemed likely to take, hailed loudly in remonstrance. In answer to his shouts Willson came running down a path, accompanied by some villagers, one of whom—a stout young fellow—was bleeding plentifully from a gash in his haunch. Willson had very speedily found the boar, and had fired twice without effect; but on the third discharge, instead of making for the open it had come down and routed the party, driving Willson up a tree and cutting one of the villagers. Willson had then tried ball, but with no result, though he was certain he had hit. W. had his own opinion on this point. The pig had now taken up an impregnable position on the top of a mound, amongst some dense bamboo clumps, and it was hopeless to attempt to dislodge him.

W. had in those days, and deservedly, the reputation of being the very worst shot at a moving object, in all Bengal; but he was supposed to make up for this by being very deadly with the rifle at a target. Willson reminded him of his proficiency and asked him to go in and shoot the pig, as it was now late and we ran the risk of losing him altogether.

W. was easily prevailed upon. We had in those days adopted the practice of despatching pigs brought to bay in cover with our spears, on foot; but neither the antecedents or the position of this one, entrenched as he was, invited such a procedure. So W. took a steady pot shot at him at about 20 yards off.

The only effect was that, with almost a roar, the pig rush-

under-growth. Willson and W. looked at each other silently. They soon found him again, and, securing themselves behind some bamboos, re-loaded, and W. fired.

This time his response was to charge down upon the party. Before W., always slow with a gun, had extricated it from the interlacing branches, Willson had sprung up the bamboos, snatched it from his hand, and leaning down, fired the second barrel *au bout portant* into the boar's ear. The brute stopped a moment, and then, with another snort, turned and plunged into the jungle!

We walked slowly and silently back to the nearest house and sat down in the verandah. Willson, always delicate, was almost done up. W. pulled out his pipe and lit it. But it was almost dark and, with the determination to do or die this time, we returned to the jungle, Willson with the gun, W. with his spear advanced at the charge, and the timorous natives behind. No signs of the boar were seen till we stumbled on his body, stark and stiff, extended on its side. He was pulled out to the cover's edge just as Barrow and Brae and the French's and the nine elephants arrived to our assistance. Even then we could scarcely believe that he was dead.

He was an averge sized Pabna pig—they all run large—which our metropolitan friends might have made 38, but, by our reckoning, was 36 inches. But, if it went by size, as they say in Ireland, a cow might catch a hare. The largest and longest tusked pig I ever killed shewed no fight at all. From this one we extracted four spear heads, all planted in up to the wood. That which projected from his belly had gone outside the ribs—the others were deep in his back. He had received some twenty stabs and at least two bullets, not to count the kicks from W.'s mare, and he was perfectly

scarified with shot. We found that W.'s last discharge, which had provoked his final on-set, had been from a shot cartridge, put in by mistake for a ball one.

Nolan has the head, which only shews a light indent above the eyes, from the stroke which disabled Nolan. His arm, by the way, was found by the Civil Surgeon, though not for some days afterwards, to have been dislocated at the shoulder, and he was a long time getting over it. I believe a somewhat similar accident happened to a hard-riding barrister* and Tent Club member the same season.

Brae dealt out some mild reproaches to the three deserters, but Nolan's misfortunes prevented anything like harshness. And it turned out that Brae had shot his pig also. French and his brother were unable to dislodge it, and Brae had mounted an elephant to try himself. But, as the brute only ran backwards and forwards in the cover, in a moment of impatience he seized a gun, and, with too lucky a shot, laid it dead at the first fire.

We dined in deep dejection. After a whole day, two pigs shot! (though, N. B. the first pig I ever saw killed at Tantibandhu was shot by no less a person than J. O.'B. Sceales—after being speared by him it had taken to a tank). Nor could I help reflecting that at this rate the expedition was likely to prove expensive. That is, one pig had cost us a whole day, one man, two horses, (for W.'s mare had been cut), and five good spears, and then had to be shot at last.

Just after dinner our friend† Judex turned up, in the most unexpected manner, from Calcutta. He had been asked to join us, but had steadily refused; and then, finding the fit

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* Now the Hon'ble Sir G. H. P. Evans, K. C. I. E.

† Mr. R.M. Towe rs, I. C. S. Retired.

take him, had as suddenly come and worked his way across the 13 miles which intervened between us and the Railway station, on borrowed ponies, wheedled out of their owners by his inimitable faculty for making jokes in Bengali. He protested that nothing was further from his thoughts than riding, but, though he had brought neither boots or breeches, or even a spear, we found his spurs stowed away with his pipe and tobacco. But, though he was in highest spirits and in one of the most humorous of his variable moods, he failed to charm us from our despondency.

Such an impression did this boar's conduct make on W. that, next day, though mounted on that staunchest of pig-stickers, Black Harry, and though he got away with a fine boar on excellent terms, he failed to touch him, and lost him, because some acacia trees and jungle and uneven ground would only admit of the animal's being speared anyhow, and not of his administering a disabling thrust. Had it been wounded at all, it would in all likelihood have been brought to bay and secured. Willson, however, revived our courage by killing the next boar with a single spear. After that we only got two more, and tried our horses with pursuing incessant sows, the relicts of the victims of the Viceroy's party. I need scarcely add that, notwithstanding his protestations, Judex found his spurs come in very handy; but all three spears on the second day fell to Willson.

Such is the story of the Enchanted Boar. To realize his vitality it must be remembered that he sustained a fight for nearly six hours, including a rest which must have served to stiffen his wounds; that, for the greater part of that time, he had four spear heads in his body, while he charged and fought and ran for two miles with the long leaded shafts of three of these heads quivering over his back.

The Doctor succeeded so well in sewing up the wound in Willsons' horse that, six months afterwards, on his removal to Calcutta, I sold it for him for the money he had given for it.

THE END.

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