

RECORDS OF HUNTING

IN WESTMEATH



THE EARL OF LONGFORD, M.F.H.



CAPTAIN THE HON. EDWARD M. PAKENHAM, M.F.H.



A COMPLETE HISTORY
OF
THE WESTMEATH HUNT
FROM ITS FOUNDATION

WITH DESCRIPTION OF THE COUNTRY AND ACCOUNTS OF RUNS, REMINISCENCES OF
DIFFERENT PACKS WHICH HAVE HUNTED IN THE COUNTY DURING THE LAST
HUNDRED YEARS, AND SOME INTERESTING BITS OF COUNTY HISTORY

Amusing Scenes in the Field (Illustrated)

APPENDIX (IN VERSE)

The W. M. H. in Jubilee Year. List of Members (illustrated), with Likenesses by Colonel James Smyth

By EDMUND F. DEASE



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DEDICATION.

To fox preservers in County Westmeath.

To tenants or owners whose lands are free from wire.

To the past and present Members of the W.M.H.

To the farmers over whose lands we ride.

To the late and present Masters, and to friends who helped me with material for this book, the volume is respectfully dedicated.

If reminiscences of the past and records of recent events should call up happy recollections in the older generation, or inspire the present with a keener interest in preserving foxes and removing wire, and thus assisting to keep alive the national pastime, my task will be amply rewarded.

THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE

BY THE EARL OF LONGFORD, M.F.H.

THE Author's task is ended ; it only rests for me
To state what, in the future, I hope our fate may be :—
May our huntsman still be able to find his way about,
Our "whippers in" be active, our foxes bold and stout.
May our lines in pleasant places direct us clear of bogs.
May our bitches still be flying, and keen and true our dogs.
May our Master keep his temper—he hasn't much to spare—
And never shock the ladies by a tendency to swear.
May his face be clear of bloodstains, tho' his hounds be full of blood,
And may he find a weight-carrier to bear him thro' the mud.
May Dick Malone be able, with all his weight to show
A pigmy generation the proper way to go.
May our ladies take example from the riding of Miss Hall,
So judicious at a double, so audacious at a wall.
May attention still be given to the Master when he talks,
And for the puppies may he find innumerable walks.
May our vixens be respected, our coverts never blank,
And may every honest sportsman ride in the foremost rank.
May Canon Kearney never his proud position yield :
Would that his reverend brothers could join him in the field.
May our farmers breed good youngsters, and our leading riders, still,
Be Killian, Hope, M'Loughlin, and Fox of Sion Hill.
May they go in front as if they had a brace of extra necks ;
And may Daly still reward them with two hundred guinea cheques.
May new grass be well respected, that our dash and sporting fire,
May consequently never dread the hidden strand of wire.
Forgive me, all good sportsmen omitted in my song,
But to name each honest fellow would take me far too long.
So, as a last conclusion, a fervent prayer I'll breathe
That next winter still may find us fox-hunting in Westmeath.





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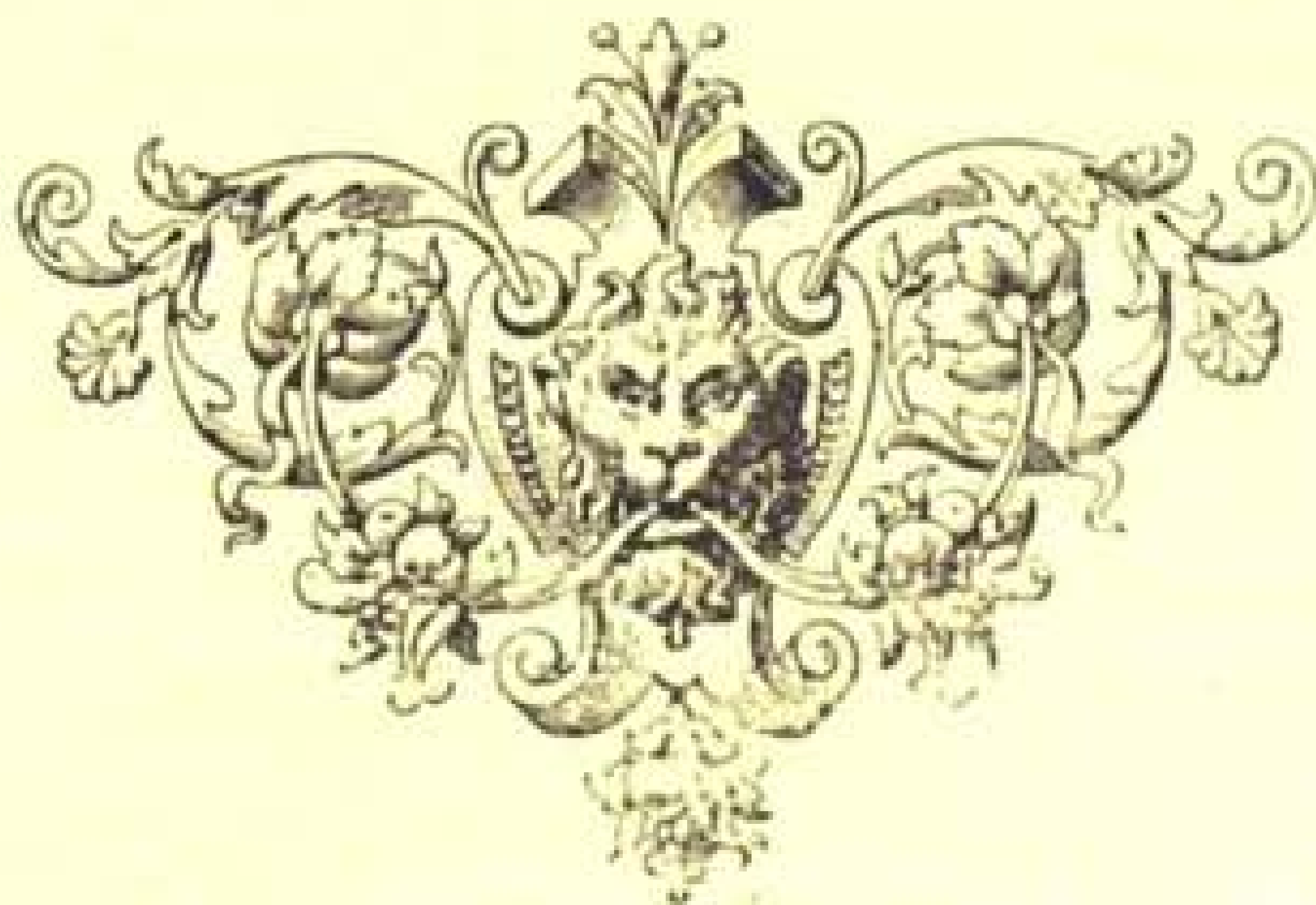
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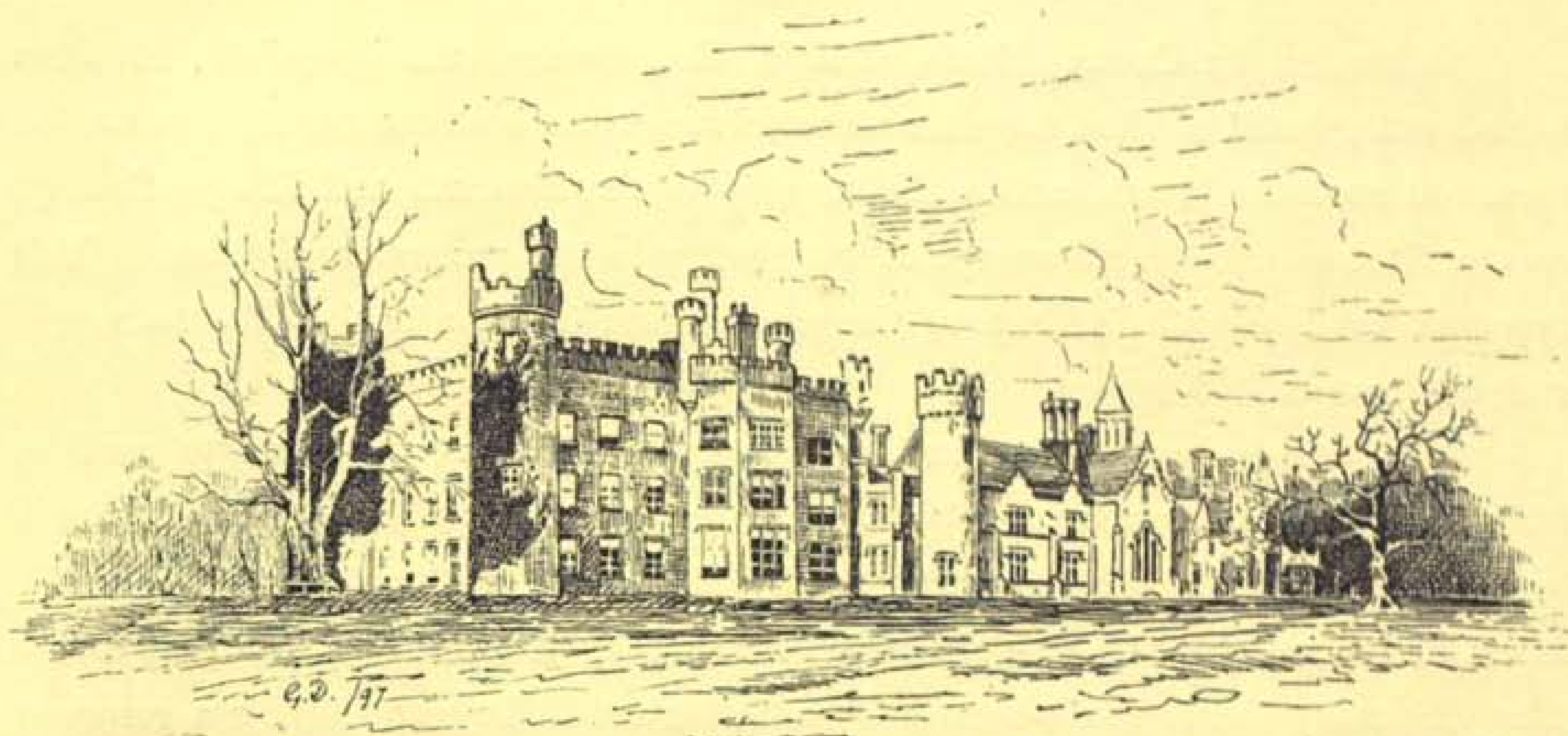
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PAKENHAM HALL.

RECORDS OF HUNTING IN WESTMEATH

CHAPTER I.

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WESTMEATH, as its derivation implies, is the central county of Ireland; the Gaelic *Midhe*, pronounced *mee*, signifies middle. It is 44 miles long and 26 broad, containing an area of 708 square miles or 453,453 acres. The population in 1891 was 65,109—little more than half the numbers in 1841; and the houses have diminished in proportion. The chief town is Mullingar, which has a population of over 5,000, and is an important centre.

Westmeath is less celebrated in history than its sister county, Meath, but there are a good many places of interest: for instance, the Hill of Usnagh, near Rathconrath, which was a residence of the kings of Ireland in the first century; and Cormorant Island, in Lough Ennell, where Malachy died, in 1022.

It borders on Cavan, Meath, King's, Roscommon, and Longford; but from a fox-hunting point of view, there are no actual neighbours, unless, perhaps, an outside corner of northern Meath, and a similar strip of the Ormonde and King's County, so that it has not the advantage of reciprocity in the protection of foxes. This may suit the free trade instincts of the present day, but is a trial to the owners of outlying coverts.

The boundaries of the hunting country proper may be taken to run as follows:—N.W., a large tract of bog and the river Inny. N., the river Gloré and by Lough Lene, Sheepstown, past Rosmead (which is neutral) and north by Lough Adeel and Scurlockstown Castle, Slievebane, and by Crowinstown due east to the county bounds; thence south-west to Tyrrellspass and Kilbeggan, cutting a corner of King's County; and to Athlone, whence the Shannon and Lough Ree form the western limit.

Though Westmeath is chiefly pastoral, its surface is much broken by hill, lake, and bog, almost 100,000 acres being taken up by these features, which though they detract from its wealth, as compared with the eastern shire of the same name, add considerably to its beauty. The scenery is varied and picturesque in a remarkable degree, and in some parts, such as the southern end of Lough Derravaragh, the neighbourhood of Lough Lene, and the eastern shore of Lough Ennell, it rivals the beauty of many more celebrated districts. Hills and bogs are not words that appeal to the imagination of a fox-hunter, but it is astonishing how little they detract from sport in this country. As to the former, there is not a spot throughout their extent which cannot be compassed by a good man on a good horse (the highest is under 900 feet above sea level, and a good deal less above the surrounding table land) whilst as regards the latter, a fox rarely takes to the heather of the "red" bog, and drainage has made many low lands rideable, which were not so a generation ago. On the other hand, there are several parts, each almost as large as an English hunting country, where an unbroken expanse of undulating pasture, with sound fences of many kinds, afford as perfect hunting grounds as could be found in Ireland—and therefore in the world. Such are the country due west of Mullingar between Loughs Owel and Ennell, by Frewen Hill, Slanemore, and Rathconrath; the district further west, whose stone walls and springy turf are similar to those of Galway; and that which includes Edmonton, Cooksborough, Reynella, and stretches away past Drumcree and Sheepstown towards Archerstown and the borders of Meath.

If fox coverts were as numerous and well preserved in these beautiful hunting districts as they are in the English shires, each of them is almost sufficient in extent to provide sport for a separate pack of hounds.

Mullingar is an excellent hunting centre, and within railway distance of several Meath and Kildare Meets. Hunting boxes and country houses are to be had at half the rent asked in more fashionable, and perhaps less sporting, hunting countries, and the Westmeath farmers are beginning to find out the fallacy and danger of wire as a fence, and to think that an influx of wealthy hunting strangers would be of more advantage to them.

Some of the landed proprietors have still to show the example, by removing wire fences and putting hunting gates in their demesne walls.

Westmeath is not, in general, a game-preserving county, though naturally well adapted for wild shooting. Its river and lake fishing are far-famed, notably in the Green Drake season, hares are not numerous, and with only two deer parks in the county a Westmeath huntsman is not troubled with much riot. The park at Killynon is small and of little or no trouble to hounds, and Baronston lies rather on the outskirts of the hunt, in the "Wednesday" country, which is hunted once a week, that being part of the bargain made with Mr. John Longworth when his hounds were amalgamated with the county pack. Mondays are generally confined to the northern end of the county bordering on Meath, and Friday meets are within easy reach of Mullingar.

Knockdrin and Pakenham Hall are ideal cub-hunting woodlands. There are rough hills and woods where cubs can be got at as early as August, and only a few places where fat cattle must not be disturbed till November. Westmeath is naturally a suitable country for foxes, and their plentiness has been the cause of carelessness in their preservation.

The earliest records of hunting in Westmeath take us back to the year 1738, when Mr. John Henry Pakenham, coming on a visit to his brother, Mr. Thomas Pakenham, who was M.P. for Longford, and owner of Pakenham Hall, or Tullynally, as it was then called, found to his surprise that a fine pack of hounds was kept there, together with what he described as "a set of horses." He also mentions "eight or ten hunters," these "hunters" being evidently two-legged ones, as the hunt servants and attendants in the field were part of the retinue of henchmen enumerated by Mr. Pakenham in the interesting diary of his travels round the world. In his journal John Henry says, "the horses here are very good and the common people's horses the hardest I ever saw, much the size of the Polish, and will do great service and

live upon little or nothing: it is a good hunting country and plenty of game." Mr. Pakenham adds a sketch of his brother's residence and a most amusing if at the same time rather grotesque representation of a *fox* hunt with reynard, of course, in the same field with the hounds. There was the ubiquitous "runner" even then, 160 years ago, following hounds and carrying a long pole—not a bad mount over bog-drain or in a fen country, and perhaps useful to poke a fox out of a hole. This was in the very earliest days of fox-hunting and some years before Mr. Nicholson, of Balrath, instituted foxhounds in Meath, which he did in 1745. How interesting it is to think that now as then, though a century and a half have passed away, members of the same family are in this year of grace, 1897, Masters of the Westmeath hounds.

Bishop Dopping, of Meath, kept hounds at Lowtown, near Killucan, in 1697, but they can scarcely be ranked as a county pack. One of the many scratch packs that were then hunting in Meath probably found their way as far as Drumcree, so there was hardly a district in the county where hunting in some shape or form was not carried on. Racing was popular in those days also. There was a meeting held near Mullingar in 1792, the date selected being November the first; then as now, of course, a church holiday (it was so in the ninth century). The Mullingar folks evidently thought *Bon jour bonne œuvre*, and the races were attended by hundreds of the people from miles round. Mr. J. Dennis was very much to the fore that day, his horse "Quiz" was followed home by "Penultima." This horse belied his name, for he was "second first" and not "second last" unless it so happened that Mr. Nugent's colt by "Bagot" was the only other starter. All three of these placed horses were the produce of the same sire. The races were run in heats. People cannot have been as pious or as straightlaced in those days as in 1895, when it was said to be a crime to hold in connection with the Mullingar Show a parade of prize horses and a jumping competition on the afternoon of a holiday, the fifteenth of August.

In the year 1800 Mr. John Fetherstonhaugh hunted round about his own place, Grangemore, and towards Killucan. A little later than this, when Sir John (then Mr.) Kennedy was Master of the Kildare foxhounds, he extended his operations as far as Oldcastle. Loughcrew was a favourite rendezvous, and fine woodlands for cub-hunting they were. The Kildare earth-warner, Nolan, has been known to walk from Johnstown-Kennedy to Loughcrew, do his work and return home within the 24 hours! The present-day earth-stopper who strolls out after breakfast for his so-called "night stop" would not have relished Mr. Nolan's job. The Kildares also hunted

Clonabreany and the hill country north of Lickbla, as they had no suitable woods for cubbing in their own county. The Master often came to Turbotston, having ridden with his hounds from Johnstown-Kennedy.

Stopping out overnight for an early morning's work, near Fore, the huntsman and whip were, on one occasion, put to sleep in a room at Loughbawn, heated by a stove: both the poor fellows were calmly asleep in death next morning, smothered by the fumes. Two years after Mr. Kennedy had taken the Mastership of the Kildares, the Committee which had existed in Meath under the directorship of Mr. W. Waller (uncle of Mr. W. N. Waller, who was M.F.H. in 1872) joined forces with Mr. Hopkins, who had kept a separate pack, and then, for the first time, they were called The Meath Hounds.

The Kildares, consequently, ceased to make so many excursions into Meath. The Benison hunt was then in existence, and the Kildare sportsmen used to emigrate annually for a month to Castlepollard, where they put up at the head inn, Denis Kirkan's brewery, and worshipped Diana by day and Bacchus by night. Mr. O'Reilly, of Benison Lodge, seems to have been a shining light of those days, for he accepted a challenge from Colonel Lennox to a bibacious tournament, commencing on Monday morning, to hunt all day and drink all night for a week. Two bottles of French brandy and two ounces of 'baccy were to be the *after-dinner* allowance. The Colonel was rather sorry for himself by the following Sunday, but the local boozier was quite cheery, and when he was discovered in the pantry, dancing with the servant-maid, the Colonel "threw up the sponge."

This O'Reilly must have succeeded Anthony of that ilk, who was born just one hundred and fifty years ago, and murdered at Benison Lodge in 1803, said to have been shot by his own coachman, who was suspected of pilfering, and was watched by Mr. O'Reilly out of his bedroom window. The coachman, finding himself "spotted," went to the harness-room, took down a gun which was hanging there, came back, and deliberately shot his master dead as he stood at the window.

It was of the Benison hunt that the story is related of their following a fox into the lake near Knock Ion. On nearing the opposite shore (Knock Ross) their own notes deceived them, and turning to follow the echoes of their music, the hounds swam backwards and forwards till, exhausted, they were drowned within view of huntsman and field.

This very possibly true story is not unlike the legend told of the river and lake Finn in County Donegal. When Dairė Dorumhar, "the monarch of the world,"

landed at Ventry to subjugate Erin, Finn Mac Cumhail, the Irish giant, marched South to oppose him : on his return, after successfully defeating the enemy, Finn prepared a great feast in the Finn valley, and sent two of his warriors, Goll and Fergoman, to bring him a wild bull that grazed on the borders of the lake. On their way they fell in with a litter of young pigs, which they killed for the feast. Goll obeyed orders, and came back by a circuitous route ; but Fergoman, disregarding the chief's injunctions, was attacked by the wild sow, mother of the slaughtered bonhams : a furious fight ensued, the sow using her tusks, and the warrior his spear. Fergoman had a sister as warlike as himself, and, when he could fight no longer, he raised a mighty shout for his sister's help. She happened to be standing at the same side of the lake, but heard the echo of the shout from the cliffs on the opposite side ; she plunged in and swam across, but before reaching the shore the voice came from the side she had left, and when she returned, the echo came resounding again from the opposite cliffs, and so she crossed and recrossed, till the dying cries of her brother so overwhelmed her that she sank, and rose no more.



HUGH TUITE.

About 1802 the Sonna Harriers were started by Mr. Hugh Tuite (third son of Sir Henry), on leaving the army, shortly after the siege of Gibraltar, at which he served as a captain in the 39th regiment. He had originally joined the 14th Light Dragoons. The pack was made up of picked drafts from the best English kennels, including Mr. Coke's, the celebrated owner of Holkham, one of the finest seats in Norfolk.* Mr. Tuite was a sportsman of the true old type. Pea-green coat, with black collar, buff facings and vest, was the hunt uniform, and the hunt button was presented only to a select band of followers,

about twenty-five in all.

With kennels at Coolnahay, where a stream ran through the yard, everything, including horses and general turn out, was consistent with a smart establishment. The country hunted was all the best going in the county, stretching from Skeagh

* Mr. William Coke instituted at his shooting parties the hats now called "billycock," from his name Billy Coke.

Hill and Churchtown to Ledeston, and from Mullingar to Bunbrusna; in fact, the circuit of Lough Owel and to Ballynacargy and south of Sonna. There were no hounds belonging to the northern part of Westmeath, but Mr. Clibborn kept a trencher-fed pack at Moate. There was racing as well as hunting in the year 1809: a four days' meeting from 4th to 7th of April at Finea. This out-of-the-way little town lies partly in Cavan and partly in Westmeath, the river Inny being the boundary, spanned by the bridge famous in Irish history, when "Miles the Slasher" held it at the time of the battle of Granard.

The "Ballymacue Yeoman Stakes" was run at the above meeting, and Mr. Laghey was the fortunate yeoman who won it.

Then there was a Hunters' Plate of 30 sovs., run in three mile heats, and ridden by gentlemen. The horses were to have been hunted in Westmeath, Cavan, or Longford.

Mr. Shore's mare by "Plough-boy" won, and was hard pressed by Mr. O'Farrell's grey horse by "Kildare."

Mr. Hugh Morgan Tuite, whose elder brother had died, was M.P. for the county from 1826 to 1830, and again 1842 to 1847, succeeded his father, and took great pains in keeping up the efficiency of the Sonna hounds. He gave them up at the time of the Irish famine, and then it was that Mr. Henry Murray started his pack with five couple of the smallest of the Sonna hounds as a foundation. (Mr. Tuite had taken the pick of Sir R. Nagle's harriers that were kept at Jamestown; Sir J. Strong, of Tynon, got the remainder of the pack.) Sir Richard Nagle had succeeded to Jamestown by marriage with the Geoghegan family; he was created a baronet in 1813, and only lived fourteen years to enjoy the honours of his title.



HUGH MORGAN TUIE

Dillon Pollard (who died in 1803), grand uncle of the present owner of Kinturk, was either the owner or chief supporter of the curiously named "Beggars Benison Hunt." They were not ashamed of the name, for it was engraved on the hunt button. The kennels were situated at the foot of Bratty Hill, a mile outside of the town of Castlepollard, and the picturesque ivy-clad walls are still standing just at the corner of the old deer park of Kinturk: some of the inmates of the park were the quarry hunted when foxes and hares were scarce. Mr. Sam Reynell, when Master of the Westmeath hounds, made use of these park deer to break his hounds of riot, taking his pack to Kinturk in the summer months for that purpose. These same deer or their descendants were sent to Farnham, in Cavan, at the time of the famine; the procession of carts, each loaded with two deer, is still talked about by the old folks in the district. The high road from Castlepollard to Collinstown now runs through the centre of the deer park, and joins the old Dublin coach road about a mile further on.

In 1821, at the race meeting at Mullingar, there was a steeplechase for hunters, and the conditions were curiously worded thus, "for horses that have been fairly hunted, and to *qualify* by leaping a four-foot wall, a ten-foot drain, and a sporting ditch." It was to be "rode" by gentlemen, and came off in three mile heats. Mr. Will's chestnut gelding won, carrying 11 st. 11 lb. Forty years later, at the same course, the qualification for horses in the "Hunt Plate" was merely that they should have been hunted three times during the season with any hounds in Ireland. Mr. Murray, of Mount Murray, had a pack of hounds, and in the grass country west of Lough Owel, had some rare sport. Henry Murray was always a resident landlord. Ballinsellott was the name of his place in olden times. A consummate horseman, and the leading sportsman in the county, he was a conjuror over a country, and beautifully mounted. His great secret was not to work his horses too young, and, though schooled and exercised with hounds, they were never asked to do a hard day's work till the 1st of January, when they were six years old. Some of his best hunters were fresh and sound at twenty. Mr. Murray was not a steeplechasing man, but he won a few cross-country events. In 1852 a host of friends and admirers in Westmeath presented him with a piece of plate in recognition of his services in the cause of sport. Of him the following, possibly untrue, story was told:—

"It was no easy matter to puzzle Mr. Murray or his horses over the Westmeath country. A friendly altercation between him and a hard-riding neighbour led to a challenge, to be brought off in two days' time, from Frewen Hill to Slanemore and back. That evening, about nightfall, saw a man walking the fences carefully, and

marking a spot in each with a small piece of white paper. At day-break, Mr. Murray thought he would walk out and survey the scene of his that day's contest. One piece of paper did not surprise him, but when he saw the likeliest spot in the next fence similarly adorned, Mr. Murray began to ponder and to wonder and to think.—Yes! his opponent had been there, laying out a course for himself. It did not take long to change the papers from the smallest to the hairiest and highest parts of the ditches and banks. Mr. Murray chuckled to himself when the flag fell, and he soon saw “the biter bit,” and his opponent down. Mr. Murray caught his horse and brought it back to him, but got two fields of a start before the other had recovered his wind and was settled in the saddle, and, sailing along, came home an easy winner.”

Sport was not altogether confined to the western side of the county, for in the east, towards Killucan, early in the Thirties, Mr. Edward Briscoe (who had been left the estate of Grangemore by his uncle, Mr. John Fetherstonhaugh), could not bear to see his kennels empty, and took to hare-hunting. It must have been an establishment of some importance, for its members held their point-to-point races: a veritable “steeplechase,” starting from the church at Reynella, with the spire at Killucan as a winning-post, distance $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles, as the rook flies. This race was immortalized in song, for Knockerraville could always boast of a local bard.



HENRY MURRAY.

CHAPTER II

MR. RICHARD REYNELL OF KILLYNON, AND HIS HARRIERS.—HIS SONS, RICHARD, SAMUEL, AND WILLIAM.—ESTABLISHMENT OF WESTMEATH FOXHOUNDS, 1835.—KENNELS AT CLONDERLEVER AND THEN REMOVED TO ARCHERSTOWN.—LAMBERT AND BULGER, THE FIRST HUNT SERVANTS.—COOLAMBER MANOR AND CASTLE TAYLOR VISITED IN QUEST OF CUBS.—DISPERSAL OF THE HOUNDS IN 1841.—SOME OF THEM BOUGHT BY MR. CORBALLY.—MR. REYNELL AND HIS BROTHER-IN-LAW, MR. TRENCH NUGENT, IN MEATH.—MR. DEASE'S HOUNDS.—CLONDERLEVER HILL.—MR. BOND OF EDGEWORTHSTOWN, AND HIS HARRIERS.—THE EAST MEATHS OCCASIONALLY VISIT THE COUNTRY.—THE "LONGFORD SLASHERS."—CAROUSING ON HUNTING NIGHTS.

MR. RICHARD REYNELL, grandfather of the present worthy owner of Killynon, hunted hares in his own neighbourhood, with Doyle as huntsman, and kennels at Clonderlever. Mr. Reynell died on 1st November, 1834, in the hunting field near Taughmon, having left home in perfect health that morning. His sons, Richard, Samuel, and William, were all entered early to "currant jelly dogs." The former never kept hounds, but was very fond of hunting; he inherited Killynon, and his brothers continued to live there with him. William acted as secretary for, and looked after that part of the County Westmeath which was occasionally visited by the Meath hounds under Mr. Hopkins' mastership,* viz., from Donore and Clonhugh to Knockdrin and Gartlanstown. The Meath kennels were then at Athboy. Poor Willy Reynell died in 1856.

Sam was not content with Harriers. Two years before the Queen's accession he got together a scratch pack, and with kennels at Clonderlever, and Lambert (from the Kildares) as huntsman, he set to work hunting his natural enemy, but really his best friend, the fox. This was in the year 1835, and Sir C. Dillon was then Master of the Meaths, Mr. T. B. Thompson succeeding him in 1836 till 1839, when Mr. James N. Waller was the M.F.H., and changed the kennels to Allenstown.

* Mr. Hopkins, the first Master of the Meath hounds, was grandfather of Mr. Morgan Rotheram, the amateur whipper-in of the Ballymacads at the present time: an example of the force of heredity.

Thus "Sam" had good neighbours over the border, and about the second year of his mastership he moved to Archerstown, improved his pack, and fitted up kennels. Lambert was still huntsman, and Bulger remained on as whip. The Westmeath Master took up the part of the country that Mr. Hopkins had hunted, and added to it Lisnabin and some of the Killucan country, as well as Knock Ion and the hills south of Lough Sheelin, and portions of the County of Cavan, close to Mount-nugent. He occasionally took his hounds, when he was short of game in his own domain, to Major Blackhall's place, Cool-amber Manor, in County Longford, where foxes abounded in the bog woods. Early in the autumn he went to his cousin, Mr. Shaw Taylor's place in Galway, to worry the cubs.



MR. S. W. REYNELL.

The eldest son, Richard Winter Reynell, succeeded to Killynon in 1834, and lived there during his long and happy life, a grand old country squire, beloved by rich and poor. His classical friends dubbed him "Dico" for Dick, from his habit of beginning every sentence with "I say." He was a great fox preserver and supporter of hunting, and to the time of his death (which occurred on Feb. 3rd, 1887), nothing cheered him so much as the cry of hounds, as, sitting in his fishing-boat, he watched them hunting the hills round Derravaragh. Now, in 1897, there is yet another young Richard Reynell to be entered to the chase.

Mr. Sam Reynell showed good sport during his six years of Mastership in Westmeath, though there was grumbling on the part of some covert owners, who thought their particular country not sufficiently hunted, and this, coupled with the scarcity of foxes, compelled him to resign in 1841. He sold his pack under the hammer. Mr. Mathew Corbally, M.P. for Co. Meath, purchased several of the best lots, and these hounds formed the nucleus of the pack hunted ten years later by their former owner, and handed down through five successive Masterships in Meath to the present time: Messrs. S. Reynell, W. N. Waller, J. O. Trotter, The Earl of Fingall, and John Watson. Mr. Reynell had married, in June, 1836, Miss Trench Nugent; her brother served in the 59th Regiment, and then as Adjutant of the Westmeath

Militia, and when hunting in Meath, his brother-in-law Sam, probably persuaded him to take the Mastership of the Meath hounds, which were being worked by a committee. This he accordingly did in 1845.

During the years of famine and distress, which changed the whole aspect of the country, people thought not much of hunting or amusement, but of keeping themselves and their poorer neighbours alive.

Mr. Dease gave people an occasional gallop with his harriers after hares or carted deer; and in Co. Longford Mr. Thomas Bond's hare-hounds had a large scope of country, from his residence at Edgeworthstown to Granard and Abbeylara. Mr. Bond was lord of the manor, and exercised his authority as to all sporting rights; but he never included foxes among his beasts of chase. For some years Westmeath was almost without hounds, certainly without anything that could lay claim to the title of a county pack. The East Meath hunted three days a month part of the country by *arrangement*, that is the portion mentioned as being looked after by Mr. Willy Reynell.



ARCHERSTOWN HOUSE.

Mr. Trench Nugent (whose kennels were at Athboy) was also sometimes within reach of Westmeath fox-hunters, when he met at Rockview, Mitchelstown, Killua, Rosmead, or northwards to Farrenconnell.

In 1852 Mr. Reynell became Master of the Meaths, and continued these visits westward; thus Knockdrin, Sir Richard Levinge's place, was his scene of operations

on 19th October, 1853, when a fox was killed, and the brush taken by Prince Edward de Polignac—a relative of Sir Richard's—the prince remarking, that the sight of “*la queue du renard*” would astonish the Parisians. This was the last incursion of the Meaths into western territory, and “Sam” had to relinquish the bit of country that he had hunted, first with harriers, then with the Westmeath, and finally with the Meath hounds.

During all these changes of hounds and masterships the hill of Clonderlever appears to have been a sort of loadstone for huntsmen. Mr. Reynell's harriers and his foxhounds, Mr. Dease's harriers and staghounds, coursing meetings and point-to-point races, all had their venue at Clonderlever, whilst at the present time it is the prettiest gorse covert in the county. When the old Ballymacads journeyed up there to hunt Mr. Hope's pet deer, it was a rendezvous for local bruisers.

Messrs. Joe Tuite and Henry Murray rarely missed a meet, nor did the officers from Mullingar and Longford garrisons, with a contingent known as “The Longford Slashers,” headed by Mr. Richard Fox of Fox Hall, and Mr. Jessop of Mount Jessop.

There was hard riding by day, and hard drinking by night. Bunbrusna was the meeting-place on their return journey, where egg-flip and hot punch *out of stable buckets*, were the refreshments generally ordered by “The Slashers.” These entertainments invariably wound up with dancing, at one or other of the “Slashers'” residences, finishing towards morning with chicken hazard. Maria Edgeworth took orgies of this sort as her theme for a very severe lecture in some of her writings.

This carousing was not confined to Longford, for it is within the memory of man, that four members of the Westmeath Hunt were carried out by troopers of the Scots Greys, at a ball in Athlone, and laid on the kitchen table in the Inn; and in the same neighbourhood, at a very festive gathering, after a good day's fox-hunting, by twelve o'clock there were only three sober men out of sixteen. One of them, “Black” Jack Dennis, hearing a noise in the kitchen, went down and found the servants lying speechless, the cellar broken open, and the tap of a hogshead of whiskey left running. One gentleman of the party, having slipped out of the dining-room unobserved, locked his bedroom door, and at break of day, threw out his portmanteau, and let himself down from the window with a sheet, got on a passing car to Athlone, and took train for Mullingar, *en route* for Turbotston. But there is this to be said, that there was no drinking in the daytime in “the good old days.”

CHAPTER III.

RE-ESTABLISHMENT OF THE COUNTY HOUNDS, 1854.—THE ORIGINAL MEMBERS OF THE WESTMEATH HUNT CLUB.—LORD VAUX OF HARROWDEN AND THE ROSMEAD ESTATE.—SIR RICHARD LEVINGE, BART.—MR. ROCHFORD BOYD'S MASTERSHIP, 1856 TO 1858.—CAPTAIN RODON'S BLOODHOUNDS.

IN the year 1854 a notice was issued to landowners in Westmeath that a pack of foxhounds had been purchased by Sir Richard Levinge, Bart., and an establishment set up for the purpose of hunting the principal part of this county. A committee was formed, and a meeting held, with Lord Vaux of Harrowden in the chair, and Mr. Henry Murray, the sporting squire of Mountmurray, acting as hon. secretary. A subscription of £600 was raised, which was proof positive of the general wish to possess a pack of county hounds. Out of the forty-two original subscribers, only seventeen names now appear on the list of members of the Westmeath Hunt. They are—Kilmaine, Purdon, Nugent (Donore), Pollard-Urquhart, Greville, Boyd (of Middleton), Fetherstonhaugh (of Bracklyn), Fitzgerald, Murray (Mountmurray), Smythe, Levinge (2), Chapman, Reynell, Dease, Malone, Marlay, Magill. All these are at present, or have been till quite recently, represented not only on the list of subscribers, but in the hunting field. In six cases there were two members of the same family represented, and the following have either disappeared or left no hunting representatives—King-Harman, Vaux, Middleton-Berry, Gambell, Briscoe, Rynd, Ferguson, Conolly, Stokes, Mooney, Cronin, West, Joly, Atkinson, De Blaquiére, Duignan, Eivers. Though the great hunting family of Tuite is not now represented in the field, nevertheless the woods of Sonna are seldom without a fox. Thus the Westmeath Hunt Club was established, just forty-three years ago.

Lord Vaux of Harrowden was certainly the moving spirit in the new organization, as will be seen by the fact of his having been elected to take the chair at the first meeting. His lordship was then living at his Westmeath residence, Rosmead: he took a deep interest in hunting, was a supporter of the Meath as well as the Westmeath hounds, and spent what he often described as the twenty-seven happiest years of his life in this county. About the year 1840 his lordship's

rustees had lent £50,000 on mortgage to Admiral Robinson, father of the late Lord Rosmead, on his estates, which were valued at nearly double that amount. Rosmead came to Captain (afterwards Admiral) Robinson by his marriage with Miss Frances Wood, whose ancestor, Mr. Widman, took the name of Wood. Mr. Hans Widman-Wood had bought Rosmead from the Moors about the year 1605 : it was then called Rosmean. The potato blight (1845) and consequent famine came on, farmers were ruined, rents unpayable, the Encumbered Estates Act was passed, Lord Vaux forced on the sale of the Rosmead Estate, and became owner of the whole property for £2,000 *less* than his own mortgage. Then very soon, about 1850, an improvement set in, his lordship received about £4,000 per annum out of the property, and sold parts of it for three times what it cost, and left Ireland just as very troublesome times again set in.



LORD VAUX.

Rosmead has been practically uninhabited ever since. The neighbourhood in general, and fox-hunting in particular, have felt the loss of an open-hearted and open-handed resident proprietor. The late Lord Greville bought the estate and left it to his daughter, the Marquise de la Bédoyère, the present owner, who lives abroad, and pays little heed to foxes or fox-hunting. *Tempora mutantur, &c.*

From the hunt meeting in the year 1854 dates the establishment of the county pack, and the following is a resolution passed at the meeting referred to :—

“As certain coverts within the boundaries of the county—and which were formerly hunted by the Westmeath hounds—have been of late years drawn by the hounds of a neighbouring pack, who have in consequence set up a claim to them contrary to the admitted rules of fox-hunting, this Committee has endeavoured to come to an amicable and fair arrangement respecting them ; but, as the Committee of the Meath Hunt declines any negotiation on the subject, this Committee feels that their proper and only course now is to appeal to the owners

of these coverts, in whom alone any real right or power exists ; and they trust that the wishes of the county so significantly expressed by their subscriptions, may not be disregarded, and those coverts taken from them to suit the convenience of another hunt and the people of another county."

"Your reply, directed to Henry Murray, Esq., Mountmurray, will oblige.

"VAUX OF HARROWDEN (Chairman)."

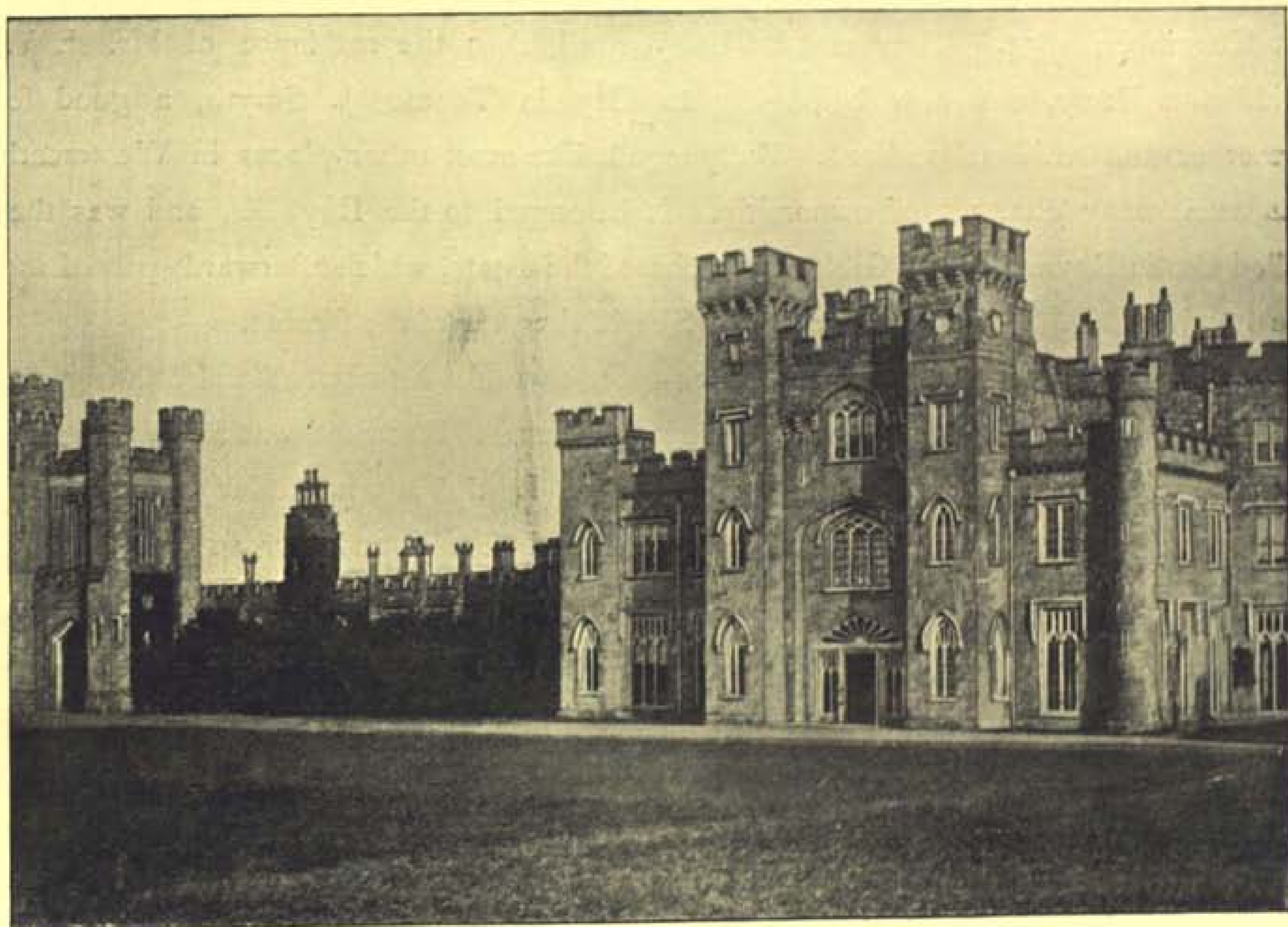
In answer to this Mr. James N. Waller, as Chairman of a Meath Hunt Meeting, held at Kells, on 19th September, 1854, forwarded the following conciliatory message to Western Meath, allowing them to draw, up to the 10th of March in each year, Clonyn, Moortown, and Rockview (with morning stops at Rosmead and Dunganstown, the latter was a gorse containing an earth and lying between Clonyn and Archerstown). They were also allowed to draw Windtown, Fore, Sallymount, Annagh, Crossdrum, Baltrasna, Ballinrink, Half-Carton, Bobs-grove, Ross, and the new coverts at Mullaghmeen, with morning stops at Grennan, and Rock of Corry,—but with power to resume these coverts at the end of any season. The Meath people, however, reserved Ballinlough, Killua, Rosmead, Mitchelstown (part of South Hill N. of Delvin-road), South Hill, Grennan, and Loughbawn, and morning stops at any of the conceded coverts. The Westmeath Committee were to pay for damages in the country thus lent to them.

Eleven days later, on the last day of September, 1854, Mr. Godfrey Levinge gave his place Culleen for a Hunt Meeting. Sir Percy Nugent, Bart., was moved to the chair, and the matter under consideration was the above proposal, relative to the coverts in dispute, and the only additional coverts now asked for were Mitchelstown, South Hill, and Rosmead, the owners of which desired them to go into Westmeath territory, and they asked that the Masters should have earths mutually stopped.

In August, 1855, the two hunts entered into the following agreement:—Westmeath hounds to have the right of drawing in the months of November, January, March, the coverts of Rosmead, Clonyn, Moortown, and Rockview, promising to whip off hounds should they run a fox from any of these coverts into Archerstown or Killallon, but Meath was to retain the exclusive right to South Hill, Mitchelstown, Ballinlough, and Killua. The next change left them as they now stand in 1897. Rosmead is the only "neutral" covert, and Ballinlough the only "morning stop" that Westmeath are entitled to outside of their own country. Happily the two hunts agree in true sportsmanlike way to help each

other in the matter of earth stopping. South Hill and Mitchelstown, Clonyn and Moortown, Dunganstown and Rockview, are all considered Westmeath coverts now, and the others formerly disputed, remain Meath country.

“Sam” Reynell was inclined to say “l’état c’est moi !” When in Westmeath the coverts belonged to him, and when, later on, he went to Meath, he expected the county to go with him ! hence the above-named difficulties arose.



KNOCKDRIN CASTLE.

The country to be hunted having then been decided upon, and covert owners implored to preserve foxes, the ball was set rolling.

Sir Richard Levinge, seventh Baronet, late of 43rd Regiment, kept his hounds at Knockdrin, one of the most charming seats in Westmeath, and a very central position for hunting.

Knockdrin was in 1656 called Monilea, or High Park ; it was then Tuite property, and was purchased by Sir Richard Levinge, the first Baronet.

Kennels were erected in the stable yard. Drafts from Sir Richard Sutton, the Oakley, and a few from Sir Watkin Wynn's and Lord Southampton's made up the

pack, thirty-six couple in all, and three couple of bitches from the "Surrey Union." Mr. Henry Murray was both Secretary and Treasurer to the Hunt, and greatly assisted Sir Richard. It was up-hill work at first, only £400 per annum guaranteed for two days a week, and country short of foxes.

With Jack Ransom as huntsman—he had come from the Duke of Rutland—Joel Dunmore, first whip, and the huntsman's son, John, junior, as second whip, the opening meet of the hounds took place under Sir Richard's mastership, on the 1st November, 1854. They met at Ballynegall, then the residence of Mr. J. W. Middleton Berry, and now belonging to Captain Thomas J. Smyth, a good fox preserver and resident landlord. Ballynegall, like most other places in Westmeath, has seen many changes of ownership. It belonged to the Reynells, and was then called Castle Reynell. Mr. Gibbons purchased the estate, which afterwards passed into the hands of Mr. Berry, who was High Sheriff the year of the famine.

The day was not productive of much sport beyond a lot of woodland hunting, and marking a fox to ground in the Master's own preserves. Rosmead was not unnaturally the next meeting-place, and on the 4th November, Lord Vaux had a large house-party to greet the field, as also a good fox that stood up before hounds for an hour and five minutes, running fast towards Killallon, turning past Kilrush plantations, skirting Killua for Drewstown, towards Triermore and Giltown, back into the bog covert at Drewstown, when Sir Richard Levinge ordered hounds to be stopped, wishing to treat the Meath Hunt with all due courtesy on account of their recent concession of country.

Sport continued fair when foxes were to be found. Clonhugh was the fixture the day after Valentine's Day in 1855, where Colonel Fulke Greville, M.P., was pleased to see so many of his constituents in pursuit of a gallant fox, found in his coverts, and running past Mount Murray to Sonna, back by Shandonagh to ground in Ledeston, a distance of about eleven miles, and some of it fast—a really good hunt.



HUNT BUTTON.

Mr. Richard Steele Fetherstonhaugh at this time kept a very nice pack of harriers at Rockview, his seat in Westmeath, and hunted all his neighbourhood from Sion Hill to Sheepstown. Mr. Merlehan of Martinstown was a useful amateur whip: the rising generation of Fetherstonhaugh, and a *clientèle* of the Masters enjoyed many a good spin with these hounds. Rockview coverts were drawn by the Meaths.

The general turn out of the Westmeath Hunt servants, horses, and hounds was

smart, and Sir Richard Levinge designed the hunt button, more patriotic than beautiful: it is rather a clumsy affair, being a large segment with the national emblem and the name of the Hunt emblazoned on a scroll. Sir R. Levinge only kept the hounds for two seasons. With the same staff, and a better show of game in his second year, sport continued satisfactory. Ransom was a very smart servant, but hated jumping, though fond of "jumping powder." Sir Richard was not keen enough to undertake the constant tie and responsibility of the mastership, and having started and organised the concern, he found a substitute in Mr. George Augustus Rochfort Boyd, who bought the pack and added to it a draft from Mr. Selby Lowndes' the Atherstone, and some Belvoir blood. Kennels were erected at Lilliput, a place belonging to Mr. Boyd, and lying on the south-west shore of Lough Ennell, and about two miles from Middleton. Hounds did not thrive well, and Ransom (who had been retained as huntsman), thought that the lake water disagreed with, and had a laxative effect upon them. Supposed symptoms of dumb madness showed themselves, and the Master decided to change the kennels to the farmyard at Middleton. Jack Mossum came over from England with a draft of hounds, and was kept as first whip. The huntsman's son acted as second whip.

Mr. Boyd, who was then only thirty-nine years of age, was a clever man, full of vigour and enterprise, and rich; he did things in good style, mounted himself and his men—for whom he kept twelve horses—on really good fresh hunters, bought from farmers in his country.

Middleton is a remarkably fine place, situated near Castletown, in the south-west of this county. The house is most comfortable, built on the style of Ballynegall and



SIR RICHARD LEVINGE, BART.

Loughcrew. The woods and bogs in the place afford fine lying for foxes. Mr. Boyd turned down eighteen cubs that he got from Killaloe, in the County Clare, in July, 1856.

In the year 1856 Captain John Rodon started a pack of bloodhounds for drag-hunting, and he really began at the beginning. The Adam and Eve of his pack came from Mr. Grantley Berkeley, and Lincolnshire. He kept them at first at Bracklyn, and afterwards at Newgrove, near Kells. It was marvellous the way these hounds could hunt the trail of a piece of raw meat three or four hours after the drag had been laid ; for, as Tickell says in his poem on hunting :—

" O'er all, the bloodhound boasts superior skill,
To scent, to view, to turn, to boldly kill."

The Captain tried an experiment once to test their scenting power, and found they could hunt the following morning a line that had been laid overnight, and, though picking it up slower than usual, they never lost the scent.

Some capital gallops were enjoyed near Reynella, in one of which Mr. James M'Cormick, of Bryanstown, distinguished himself on a white horse, that was so spur-marked at the end of the hunt, they were afraid the hounds would take it for the drag.



G. A. R. BOYD.

Round about Newgrove Captain Rodon hunted regularly. It is a splendid open country, and hounds invariably got the better of the field. People were rather

terrified at first at the sight of these splendid stately hounds, standing twenty-six inches high, possessing a commanding dignity of appearance; but fifteen years' experience proved them to be less pugnacious than the snapping curs of the country, and they never harmed anyone.

Captain Rodon eventually sent his hounds to Lord Wolverton, then Mr. G. Glyn, who hunted drags with them, and was greatly pleased with their style of hunting. When able to snatch a few hours from parliamentary duties,



MIDDLETON

Mr. Glyn thoroughly enjoyed a gallop with his bloodhounds. He tried them to run five and a-half miles on the flat in twenty minutes, and said that horses could hardly live with them over fences, unless by giving the drag three or four hours' law. Later on, in 1872, he hunted deer, and found the farmers took more keenly to this legitimate hunting; the bloodhounds hunted beautifully, and, curious to say, did not try to kill the deer when once they got up to them. The pack consisted of seventeen and a-half couple at one time, and in the year 1878 his lordship exhibited, at the Bristol Dog Show, his grand old dog "Harold," and a beautiful bitch named "Freedom."

Captain Rodon only hunted nine or ten couple in his pack; the captain was also a great coursing-man, and at Diamor, Mountainstown, and Herbertstown, his longtails were well known.

Mr. Boyd entered on his second season with the same hunt servants, till

Ransom got a knock-down blow from his enemy "John Barleycorn," and Jack Mossum was promoted to carry the horn. The final catastrophe occurred as follows:—One day Mr. Boyd was returning from the Delvin country with the hounds and one whipper-in. Ransom had been left behind, and the Master waited a short time at Culleen gate, expecting him to come on; but as he did not turn up, the Master and hounds trotted briskly on to catch the train at Mullingar. It must be known that, on coming to Ireland, Ransom had taken to whiskey as a duck to water, and on this occasion he was just sufficiently sober to blow his horn; this he did so loudly, and with such effect, that the entire pack left Mr. Boyd, and came galloping back to their intoxicated huntsman. Eventually the whole party had to take the road to Middleton.

Mr. Boyd calculated that £500 subscription and £100 field-money would cover the cost of hunting the country two days a week. Mr. Boyd was never a bruiser over a country, and used to go home very early. He was a first-rate judge of both horse and hound. Nothing very brilliant, but average sport was enjoyed; and when Mr. S. Reynell extended the Meath country towards Dublin, the Westmeaths were allowed to draw Rockview and some coverts belonging to Meath.

Mr. Boyd's sporting proclivities have been inherited by the present generation of the family. For some years the hounds did not draw Middleton; but latterly the coverts have been holding well. The black collar to hunt coat was introduced in Mr. Boyd's reign, several different colours and facings having first been suggested and put aside at a meeting convened at Middleton, for the purpose of testing the artistic tastes of the members of the Hunt. The management again changed after this season; and when Mr. Boyd resolved on retiring, a Westmeath man was looked to, as it was not the custom in those days to go outside the county for a Master. Mr. Briscoe's name was mentioned.

CHAPTER IV.

MR. BRISCOE OF GRANGEMORE.—HIS MASTERSHIP FROM 1858 TO 1860.—MITCHELL AND BURTON THE NEW HUNT SERVANTS.—INCIDENTS OF THE CHASE.—A COMMITTEE FORMED IN APRIL, 1860, AND THE HOUNDS BOUGHT BY EIGHT MEMBERS OF THE HUNT.—GOSSIP AND POLITICS IN MR. MAGAN'S TIME.—RACING AT MULLINGAR IN THE SIXTIES.—PROPOSAL FROM MESSRS. NAPER, NUGENT, AND FETHERSTONHAUGH TO HUNT THE COUNTRY IN 1861.

JOHN FETHERSTONHAUGH BRISCOE succeeded his father (Edward) in 1842. He lived at Grangemore, near Killucan, and was passionately fond of hunting. In the summer of 1858 Westmeath elected him Master of the Hounds, which he bought from his friend Mr. Boyd. Mr. Briscoe was only eight-and-twenty years of age, but a welter weight and hard rider: he was called "the big man," and a famous jump which he once took is pointed out near Grangemore. He built kennels and got together a stud of hunters, and set about his new undertaking in a business-like way. Nowadays, Grangemore, which is in the extreme east of the county, is looked upon as quite out of the hunting world, and so is Griffinstown, which was also a fixture and a good fox-holding covert in the fifties. Mr. Daly of Mornington, acted as Hunt Secretary for a short time. Jack Mitchell, late first whip in Kildare, was engaged as huntsman (he had been K. H. and First Whip to Lord Gifford), and Joseph Burton was the Whipper-in. Hunting at first twice a week, Tuesdays and



J. F. BRISCOE.

THE
HUNT
AGENTS

Saturdays, Mr. Briscoe afterwards increased it to five days a fortnight, which he worked with ten horses. £5 was put down as an unusually good 2s. 6d. 'cap' in those days, much the same as at present time.

On the 18th September, 1858, he went forth full of keenness and anxiety for his first day's cubbing, and met not unreasonably at his own place. He had a few ardent followers, Sir John Power, Mr. Wade, the Master of the Rockview Harriers, and some English friends of his own. Captain Sheddon, from Kildare, used to hunt a good deal in Westmeath. The critical eye of Sam Reynell was upon him that morning, and four foxes were moved; two were allowed to make their way to Bracklyn unmolested; one was chopped in the wood at the corner of the pond, and the fourth marked to ground.

Griffinstown was blank on the 24th. A Lowlown fox was marked to ground, smoked out, and run into. This was first blood of the season, for seventeen and a-half couple, the dog pack with a couple of bitches. Rochfort, Knockdrin, Middleton, Reynella, Gillardstown, Knockcross, Ballynegall, Bracklyn, and Newforest, were the only woods cubbed. Thirteen days out and eight foxes killed (one of which was a marked vixen, turned up the previous year by Mr. Boyd). Mr. Briscoe was very wroth at the poisoning of a fox at Rochfort.

On the 13th October the second whip was sent to bring on some tail hounds left in Knockdrin. The Master thus described how he did it: "The blackguard never came home till eight o'clock, and was then drunk. I dismissed him next day."

Having sent hounds and horses overnight to Middleton, Mr. Briscoe made an early start on the morning of 19th October by a short cut, but missed the path on his way to Newforest. "Parker got into a bog drain with Jack on top of him," he wrote in his diary; "both rolled over, Jack underneath, and horse, feet uppermost; pulled out the lot, and went to draw the 'Slangs;' the people holloaed all round; one lot or rascals would have allowed me to ride down a quarry, had I not seen it in time."

Later on in the season, after killing a fox from Ballinwyre, he found in the Slangs, and eventually marked that fox to ground and dug him, winding up the day with "a row with the country people."

The first regular meet was at Lisnabin on 26th October; it then, as now, provided the needful and blood. It is interesting to know that Rodney Purdon's horse, this day, lay down dead beat! Poor Rodney, his conduct was such so long ago as the year of the Crimea; he over-rode hounds, holloaed, and generally misbehaved himself, but all from over zeal. History does not relate how often Rodney has done it since.

Mr. Briscoe went to Meath to return "Sam" Reynell's visit. Jones was huntsman; Mr. Briscoe was much struck (not in the material sense) by Jones' racing whip, which he carried instead of a hunting crop. Matthews sometimes does the same now in Westmeath; it looks ridiculous, and is no use for pushing a gate or such like purposes. The 6th November has to be recorded as the first blank day, the country drawn being Glencarra, Mearescourt, Irishtown, Lunestown, and Streamstown, *verb. sap.*



GRANGEMORE HOUSE.

Three days later an amusing incident occurred after running a fox from Belvedere, a smart twenty-five minutes, to ground near Gaybrook. Leech, the earth-stopper, informed the Master that Mr. Parnell's steward had dug out their hunted fox: off go Mr. Briscoe and Jack in a dog-cart, and dig out Mr. Little from his bed, and make him give up the fox from out a barrel in the yard. It was said that Mr. Little gave up reynard as a sort of hostage, to save any further incursions on his cellar of old Scotch whiskey! Mr. Briscoe ear-marked the fox, turned it up in Gaybrook, and drove home.

On December 20th the Meath hounds met at Delvin, and drew Rockview. Westmeath used to draw Rosmead, so hounds actually crossed on their way to hunt, and one day got mixed. Though Rockview was Meath country, Williamstown adjoining it was Mr. Briscoe's own property; there was no covert on it in those days, nor anything to hold a fox at Killulagh.

Christmas eve, 1853, Mr. Briscoe described as his best day's sport, and Henry Murray and Mr. Longworth as the best men in it. In those days no man could touch Henry Murray over a country. Meeting this day at Middleton, a fox was on foot, hounds getting fairly away with him, heading for Newforest, turned back through Middleton and Lilliput, crossing the rails at Castletown station into Redmondstown; passing Lunestown, over the hill for Crieve, and, skirting this covert, on by Jamestown, to Middleton, and to ground in Newforest. Mr. Longworth declared it to be the best hunt he had ever ridden, bar one fifteen years previously in Kildare.

January 6th being a holiday, the Master gave the country people a bye-day at Grangemore for their diversion; hounds ran a fox to Raharney and crossed the river to Joristown, back by Killough, to ground in Bracklyn, where he was dug out for the amusement of the natives.

There were only two blank days during the season, and hounds hunted fifty-four; the Master missed but one day. He was rather fond of the spade! On his little 15.2 mare, "Columbine," he was wonderfully carried. This excellent little huntress made a big price at the hammer at the sale of his horses.

Mr. Briscoe, unfortunately, followed the example of his two predecessors, and held the Mastership for two years only. He took a great interest in hound-breeding, but was unfortunate; for, out of twenty-nine home-bred puppies sent out to walk, only six-and-a-half couple survived.

Mr. Richard Coffy of Newcastle, kept harriers this year, and for some years after. Many a good steeplechaser made his *début* with this pack. Mr. Coffy on one occasion drew as far as Rochfort, to look for a deer which had taken up its abode in Sir Francis Hopkins' demesne.

On the 19th March, 1860, an influential meeting was held in Mullingar, and a resolution passed expressing regret that Mr. Briscoe could not see his way to retaining the mastership, and stating their high approval of the manner in which he had hitherto hunted the country. A committee was named, consisting of the late and the now retiring Masters—Lord Vaux, Messrs. J. Tuite, Ralph Smyth, J. J. Nugent, and

Henry Murray—who were entrusted with the management of affairs. Mr. Tuite alone survives. On the last day of April, at another Hunt meeting, the first three of the above-named committee—viz., Lord Vaux, Mr. G. A. R. Boyd, and Mr. Briscoe, were elected as a triumvirate, with Mr. Richard Reynell, jun., as their secretary, and a guarantee of £800 by twelve members, to hunt the country five days a fortnight.

Mr. Briscoe sold his hounds nominally to Lord Vaux and Mr. Boyd, but the following seven members of the Hunt each purchased a £50 share, and Mr. Briscoe retained the eighth share himself:—Sir Benjamin Chapman, Bart.; Messrs. Hugh Morgan Tuite, George Augustus Boyd, William Pollard-Urquhart, Lord Vaux, and, a little later on, Henry Murray and Colonel Greville. The pack consisted of thirty-six and a-half couple of working hounds and nine brood bitches. Mr. Reynell carried out the transaction, and forwarded £350 to Mr. Briscoe.

Under this arrangement the hounds have been passed on as a pack from one Master to the next, down to the present time, each keeping it up to its normal standard.

The hounds were still kennelled at Grangemore. Mr. Briscoe did not sell the place till ten years later, when it was purchased by Mrs. Magan, a name well known in Westmeath. Her son, William Henry, represented the county in several parliaments, and many amusing tales are told of the contested elections and queer goings-on in those days. Mr. Magan served as a Captain in the 4th Light Dragoons, and was quartered in Ireland. A wild young man, and clever, he had a party of boon companions at his country seat, Clonearl.—(the fine mansion of Clonearl in the King's County was afterwards accidentally destroyed by fire),—and being anxious to show them some sport, not fox-hunting this time, invited his agent to dinner, and arranged to make him drunk, then to drug him, and draw all his teeth. The butler overheard the conversation, and when the old gentleman arrived, told him privately what was in store for him. Mr. C——was more abstemious than usual at dinner, and as soon as the cloth was removed, he ordered his trap on pretext of important business, and drove himself home. Being deprived of their amusement, a messenger was sent down to Philipstown for a poor creature called “Dick the Fool,” an idiot who used to ramble about the streets making a living by his imbecility. Being introduced into the parlour, the wretched idiot was filled with drink, stripped of his rags, tarred, feathered, and set fire to for the amusement of the M.P. and his party; he danced about to their great delight, but before the flames could be extinguished, harm was done, and some days afterwards the idiot died. This was in



the Captain's bachelor days. Later on he selected as his wife, Lady Georgina Hill, fourth daughter of the Earl of Albemarle, and wife of Mr. Hill, R.M. of Longford, who obtained a divorce. The M.P. and his bride lived happily together at Clonearl. He was again selected to represent the county: his colleague, Sir Percy Nugent, whose name and family will be found closely connected with hunting in Westmeath, was set aside; and being asked how it was that although a Catholic and resident he was not selected by the bishop and clergy, the worthy baronet replied, "I suppose it is because I am neither a murderer nor an adulterer." How different things are now when candidates



RICHARD REYNELL.

are rejected, not for any faults of their own, but because they hold by the *political* principles of a man who had fallen over the same "fence" as Magan fell. Mr. Magan never succeeded to Grangemore; it is now one of the empty houses of Westmeath, and the coverts are seldom drawn.

The Mullingar Steeplechases in June, 1860, included in the programme a Hunters' Plate of five sovereigns each, and fifty added.

Mr. Fitzgerald's chestnut mare by "Yellow Jack" was the winner.

In the Farmers' Race (also run in heats) Mr. Hoare's mare was first, and Mr. Carney's second. "Cabbage Street Rake" was her name, so she must have been a high-bred one !

Mr. Briscoe looked after the kennel management during the season 1860-61 ; Mitchell and Burton were retained in their respective posts ; Mr. Boyd attended to the lower country, and Lord Vaux undertook the remainder. It was not altogether a satisfactory arrangement. Sport was very moderate, and a change was looked for. In March, 1861, a Hunt meeting was held at Mullingar. The whole circumstances of the Hunt were gone into, and Mr. Richard Reynell, the Secretary, had a hard task enough in trying to please all parties. Finally, Mr. R. S. Fetherstonhaugh, Mr. J. L. Naper and Major Nugent undertook to hunt the country for three years, at least five days a fortnight, on condition that £800 per annum (exclusive of their own subscriptions) be guaranteed to them. This all fell to the ground ; the hunting-men and county people would not come forward to support what Mr. Hugh Morgan Tuite described seven years later thus :—" It is a pity that this county will not or does not support its *only* surviving society or club, for all its other social meetings and societies have been let to die off for want of proper spirit and funds." It is sometimes much the same now in the Jubilee year !



CHAPTER V.

MR. GERALD DEASE, M.F.H., 1861. — KENNELS AT TURBOTSTON. — BOB THOMPSON, WHIPPER-IN. — GOOD RUNS. — LOAN OF PART OF THE MEATH COUNTRY. — THE MASTER LAID UP BY AN ACCIDENT, AND HIS PLACE TAKEN BY SIR W. THROCKMORTON. — DEATH OF SMITH, THE HUNTSMAN, WHO HAD SUCCEEDED BURTON. — IMPROVEMENT IN THE COVERTS, AND FOXES IMPORTED FROM SCOTLAND. — MR. DEASE REQUESTED TO CARRY THE HORN. — SOME EXCELLENT SPORT. — KENNELS AT CLONLUST IN 1864. — FISHER REMAINS ON AS K.H. — THE MASTER ENTERTAINED AT A PUBLIC DINNER. — WIND-UP OF THE SEASON 1865-6. A SPORTING ENGINE-DRIVER ON THE M.G.W.R.

MR. GERALD RICHARD DEASE was always fond of hunting, and had gained some experience with his own beagles and with the Ballymacad Harriers. A county man born and bred, and then living at Turbotston with his brother, no better selection could have been made for mastership of the county hounds. He was approached on the subject, and finally consented to act. When all matters were apparently settled between the committee and Mr. Dease, he wrote Mr. Briscoe, asking him to send over the hounds by road to Turbotston. Mr. Briscoe was either deputed or took on himself to carry out the transfer of the pack to the new Master, and wrote the following proposals, dated 24th June, 1861, giving Mr. Dease a choice :—“(1) To become a shareholder in the hounds, take the management of them, and we (*i.e.*, the shareholders) will buy the drafts between us ; (2) to take a loan of hounds and puppies under certain conditions ; (3) we hand over to you thirty-five couples of hounds and their puppies, we draft and pay for all entries, run all risks, and have the right to draw four couple of bitches for breeding after Christmas, according as necessary ; if you require more than thirty-five couple we will find them for you.” The second proposition was agreed to at once, and Mr. Dease signed and attached to the hound list the following agreement, which is the basis on which the pack has since been handed down from one Master to another. Lord Greville’s letter, written eleven years later, appears to be the



TURBOTSTON HOUSE.

true construction of the matter, and it would be hard for the successors of the eight original purchasers—all of whom are, alas! dead—to claim the hounds as private property :—

“ AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE PROPRIETORS OF THE WESTMEATH HOUNDS AND GERALD R. DEASE
RELATIVE TO HIS HAVING THE USE OF THE HOUNDS WHILE HUNTING THE COUNTRY.

“ I have received the above hounds from J. Fetherstonhaugh Briscoe, and agree to keep up this pack, restoring to the proprietors of these hounds, when I give up hunting the Westmeath country, thirty-five couple of hounds. The proprietors of the Westmeath Fox-hounds to have the right to select that number from any hounds I may have, and also to give them their choice of eight litters of puppies or bitches in whelp. I further agree to purchase at my own expense all drafts which may be necessary for keeping this pack in an efficient state.

“ (Signed), GERALD R. DEASE.

“ TURBOTSTON, COOLE, 29th June, 1861.”

A copy of above was kept by Mr. Boyd, he and Mr. Briscoe having quite taken the matter into their own hands. It will thus be seen that Mr. Dease did not guard against risks of rabies, dumb-madness, or poison; but happily his hounds,

during seven years of his mastership, escaped from all, with the exception of what is noted in the season 1862. In after years masters and committeemen both rather dreaded these possible casualties.

There was at Grangemore a famous breed of ponies, one of which Mr. Dease bought from Mr. Briscoe as a four-year-old in 1860. It taught eleven members of the family at Turbotston to ride; it could jump or creep over any ordinary fence; was as clever as a monkey, and died at the age of forty, having been ridden by four generations of the same family. It pulled a lawn-mower, and was fit and well to within a few days of its death. In winter time it used to open the gates of any field it was put in, and find its way to the yard, where, watching its opportunity, it would slip into the stables, and eat out of the manger with the other horses, who never seemed to object to the intrusion. The present Lord Kilmaine will remember having used this pony as a hack one day that his horse had not arrived at the meet at Turbotston.

Hounds left Grangemore for Turbotston on 27th June, 1861, and were kennelled in some out-lying farm buildings, with huntsman's house adjoining; though all thatched and primitive in appearance, they were wonderfully healthy.



AN OLD PONY.

Joe Burton was promoted to be huntsman, and Robert Thompson came from Lord Middleton's as First Whip. Mr. Reynell, the Hon. Sec., worked most

harmoniously with his friend the Master, and everything went swimmingly. Mr. Reynell sets great value on a presentation whip, presented to him by Mr. Dease when the latter gave up the hounds. September 11th saw Mr. Dease's first morning's cubbing. 6 a.m., at Knockdrin, when thirty-three couple of hounds were out, and killed a cub at Ballynegall. Bracklyn was the fixture one morning, and Ross the next at 8 a.m. From the last-named place, which lies on the edge of Lough Sheelin, an old fox led hounds a merry spin to Ballinrink, and the afternoon was spent between Turbotston and Pakenham Hall, up to 4 o'clock. Grennan, Bobsgrove (Farren Connell), Crossdrum, and Middleton Park (this latter was neutral with Mr. Longworths') were also fixtures. In seventeen days' cubbing only four brace of foxes were brought to hand, and four and a-half brace marked to ground. Ballynegall, on 22nd October, was the opening day, and the size of the field can be gauged by the field-money, 45s. It did not average £2 during the season, but the collecting was not over strict.

Besides hunting Westmeath proper, Mr. Dease undertook to extend his campaign to that portion of the Meath country vested in Messrs. Naper, Fetherstonhaugh, and Kearney, who guaranteed £100 towards the £820 total subscription.

On November 28th, Loughbawn was without a fox, but Loughcrew provided a fair day's sport. Met there again on 10th December, with Sir William Throckmorton in charge, the Master having met with an accident a few days previously when jumping the mearing fence between Galmoylestown and Poolnagorth. A broken leg kept him *hors de combat* till the 13th March, but he saw a lot of hunting on wheels, going through fields and gaps in a cart built for the purpose.

Sir William and Mr. James Arthur Dease acted as Field Masters during the convalescence of the M.F.H. It was a great blow to the Master losing so much hunting, just as he entered on his new undertaking.

The country was in mourning for



GERALD R. DEASE.

Prince Albert on 14th Dec., 1861. That week became famous in the annals of the Westmeath Hunt for two splendid runs: one from Reynella crossing Williamstown, sharp to the right past Killough, over Sion Hill, by the school-house, where the fox had lain down in a clump of furze; then ran him in view through Clonlost, passing Scally's grove, and marked to ground in Rockview after two hours hunting. It was a magnificent run. A few days before Christmas, hounds met at Ballynegall, and from Tullaghan (a gorse covert on Mr. Wier's farm and on Mr. J. R. Talbot's property) the fox picked the best country in Westmeath, viz., Ballyote, Slanemore, to Sonna Chapel; back right-handed over Frewen Hill, into Mountmurray; sharp to the left past Tristernagh, where hounds viewed him, and ran into their fox after sixty-five minutes of the very best and only two slight checks. There was nothing very brilliant for some time, as the few little gallops palled after such wonderful sport. A blank day at Castletown and another at Grangemore were not the fault of Master, huntsman, or hounds.

The next good thing was a sporting hunt from the hills. Ballymanus was the meet, and from Mr. Naper's wood of Half-Carton an old fox ran towards Tubrid and along the river Inny, by the deer-park of Ballinrink (Mr. Rotheram's), leaving Moate Church to the right; hounds lost their fox in Mount Pallas in the County Cavan. Half-Carton is a very sure find. The name Carton, or Cartron, is "a quarter of land," a measurement derived from the French *quarteron*. This covert consists of laurel under spruce and Scotch timber, backed by wild hills on one side, a vale fenced with walls on the other.

On the 14th March Mr. Dease was again in the saddle after his accident. At Gaybrook a bagman was produced by the keeper, but, of course not hunted. Plenty of foxes at Galston; got away with one towards Larkfield, and eventually into Rochfort, where they changed to a fresh fox on the islands, and while hunting him through Carrick the tail hounds came at the hunted one, and killed him; all went on again at once, and marked the Rochfort fox to ground in the bog wood of Gaybrook: twenty-five minutes from Carrick, the whip carried the dead fox on his saddle and he was broken up where the other went to ground.

The hunt servants were often given a day in Meath, towards the end of the season; they enjoyed the holiday, and gained experience.

Late in March a ringing brute of a fox at Donore took refuge in a cattle shed. Burton got down amongst Sir Percy Nugent's fat bullocks, and was badly trampled trying to save his hounds. They killed the fox, which proved to be a

mangy old vixen. The Master had to carry the horn for some days while Burton was rubbing his bruises with Elliman's Embrocation.

A very satisfactory season was brought to a close on the 5th April—seventy-five days' hunting; four blank, thirteen and a-half brace of foxes killed, and eighteen brace to ground.

At the end of the season, 1861-2, Burton was dismissed and went to Captain Peyton as huntsman to the Bicester. Robert Smith from the Bedale took his place, a very smart man, quiet rider, and an excellent servant. The poor fellow died on the 10th January, and Mr. Dease hunted the hounds for the remainder of the season, Thompson first and N. Mulvey second whip.

Smith's ghost is still believed by the country people to haunt the old kennels, and at stated periods, chiefly after wakes and parties, his "spirit" mingles with the others, his horn is heard, and the crack of his whip rating hounds!

Short as was his time Smith was much liked, and Mr. Dease collected £140 to start his widow and family in business at Taplow.

Mr. Dease, when hunting his hounds, wore a tall hat as did also his neighbour Sam Reynell in Meath. This season of 1862-3 did not realize expectations. The country was very short of game, and coverts were rather neglected. The whole of the home-bred draft were lost from fear of dumb madness, one puppy showing symptoms of the disease on coming in from walk. Cubbing was late, and the first blood was on their third outing, 10th October, when hounds—25 couple—rattled the laurels at Bracklyn for forty minutes. Mange had unfortunately broken out there, and five foxes had been found dead within a week.

Meath retook possession of their northern country this season, so Mr. Dease only hunted two days a week. Rosmead was his fixture on 28th November, although ground was only half-thawed after a week's frost. No fox at Rosmead or Moortown; Mullacrew held a good one that ran fast by Scurlockstown Castle and Gleniden to ground in Grennan—1 hour and 15 minutes. The Master kept a good deal to the roads on account of the hard state of the ground, but Captain R. Donaldson never left hounds from start to finish: 27th January of 1863 was a day of blood, three masks coming home on Bob's saddle; one from Donore, another from Poolnagorth, and a third from Mornington, after a fast twenty minutes. Blank days at Rochfort on the 16th, and at Ballynacloon on 30th December, Killucan, Castletown, and Mearescourt in January. Ballinagore was the fixture towards the end of February. After a sharp burst of twelve minutes from Ballinwyre to the Split hill and back, got on a moving fox

at Newcastle, ran about six fields, where he was headed and lay down; got at him again after a long check; hunted prettily through Moroe into Carrick and Rochfort, where hounds divided, each lot killing their own fox. There is little or no covert at Newcastle, but hounds were always welcome, and Mr. Coffy rather enjoyed than otherwise, seeing his bloodstock galloping about when hounds ran through the place. In 1862 Captain Machell's "Yaller Girl," bred by Mr. Coffy, by "Shawn Buidhe," won the Mullingar Handicap. The Captain has since then flown at higher game.

The Greville Plate, presented by Colonel Greville, M.P., at the same meeting, was captured by Mr. Graney's "Post Horn," by "Windfall." This plate was an annual presentation, from Colonel Greville, and it was won in 1867 by Mr. P. N. Fitzgerald's "Souvenir"; she ran and won again on the second day of the meeting.

To return to our hounds: they met at Ballinlough gate on the 13th March, 1863, a big field out. The Prince of Wales' wedding was the topic of conversation; some coffee housing and comparing notes with the Meath men, whose domains were this day entrenched upon. Found at Ballinlough, and ran to Rosmead where the fox was let in to the main earth (good old Sam!) Then drew Killua blank, but found in some outlying furze, ran through Rosmead, skirting Mitchelstown to Ballinlough, turned to the left very fast into Killallon to ground, thirty-five minutes over a lot of country. Mr. Dease finished the season 1862-3 after ten days' cubbing, and forty-eight days' regular hunting; twenty-three foxes killed, twelve brace to ground, and terrible to relate, ten blank days. The Master was not idle during the summer; he visited every locality where foxes wanted looking after, and paid herds and gamekeepers on whose beats they were brought out. The cub-hunting in 1863 consisted of eleven days only, but three foxes were killed. Then in November twenty-five brace of Scotch foxes were turned down, obtained mostly through Mr. C. M. Moreton, who presented some and got others at a cost of about 7*s.* 6*d.* per head delivered. These foxes did well; they had been kept in an enclosure all the summer, clean and healthy, and were all ear-marked before being let out in the different localities. They were mostly accounted for in this and the following season, and ran well.

William Fisher from the H. H. now took the horn, R. Thompson remaining on as First Whip. Bob was a "rum un to look at, and rum un to go." Short and square built, with a home-made-looking face, and pug-dog features which had been walked upon by a horse, iron nerve and constitution. He was the proud owner of a brindle bull terrier, yclept "Ben," that bore an extraordinary resemblance to its master: a badger did for Ben what the horse's hoofs had done for Bob. With thirty

couple of hounds, and a stud dog from A. A. Smith, "Bluster," *ex* Lord Fitzwilliam's "Fallacy," the pack was in good working order. The coverts were now given a little more attention. Cullen's gorse was rented and enclosed by the master. Two acres of gorse sown at Glananea, same at Killynon, and Jeffrystown was fenced. On 8th October, hounds met at Coolamber Manor for cub-hunting. The opening day was fixed for the last of that month at Knockdrin. Killed a cub after a lot of woodland hunting.

The M.F.H. was married in November, 1863, and during his absence Mr. Murray took charge of the hunt. Sir William Throckmorton, the Master's brother-in-law, helped him in every possible way with the hounds, and shared the rather heavy cost of hunting the country, as the subscription £700 per annum was quite inadequate.



SIR W. THROCKMORTON, BART.

In March, 1864, at the wind-up of a fair season's sport, the Master was entertained at dinner. Mr. William Pollard-Urquhart, M.P., the chairman, proposed the health of the "Westmeath hounds and their gallant Master." Another toast, "The Tenant farmers of the county, men without whose support and good-will no pack of fox-hounds could have sport, and who in Westmeath were eminently good sportsmen," was duly honoured, and responded to by Mr. Delamer. Captain A. W. F. Greville, who little thought that he would some day succeed Mr. Dease as M. F. H., proposed the health of the Master's bride. The Hon. F. Browne, now Lord Kilmaine, returned thanks for "all the other ladies in creation." "He would have a great deal to say had time permitted: he trusted the ladies would always do their duty as fox-hunters, both at home and in the field, in the field by giving the gentlemen the light of their frequent presence, at home by attending to the comforts, actual and prospective, of the present and future generation of fox-hunters."

Sir William Throckmorton, in a most effective speech, returned thanks for the strangers, and a very pleasant evening was brought to a close.

In the summer of 1864, Mr. Dease moved to Clonlost, where he put up some fair accommodation for his thirty-three and a-half couple of hounds, the new entry consisting of nine couple of dogs, and six and a-half couple of bitches. Clonlost, at one time called Newbridge, was closely connected with fox-hunting in Westmeath. Colonel John Nugent always had foxes in his coverts, and Mr. Palmer keeps up the family traditions at the present time.

Fisher, Thompson, and Mulvey remained on, but the former had got painfully slow, better suited *to his own name* than hunting a fox. 24th November was about the first really good day, when from Reynella a fox took them up Sion Hill, through a thick fog, with a holding scent, turned right-handed, threaded Clonlost, Clondrisse, and Edmonton, and pointing for Williamstown; hounds had to be stopped as men and horses were dead beat. Rockview was drawn by Meath and Westmeath and though a very small covert, it was always a source of dissention.

Mr. Fetherstonhaugh and Mr. Dease were good friends, and on giving up his harriers the former took more interest in the county hounds.



CLONLOST.

On January 28th, 1864, after a nice hunt from Middleton by Lilliput to Belmont, Mr. Dease's horse fell and broke its two fore legs, and a few days later the Whip's horse broke both hind pasterns, so there was plenty of flesh in kennels that week. For

a Glencarra meet, to reach which hounds used always to rail from Killucan, no horse-box had been sent down one morning (good old M. G. W. R.), so the Master went on with hounds in a waggon, and got a mount from Mr. A. Connolly, the hunt horses going on by road to Glencarra.

February 15th may be chronicled as a red-letter day ; for having killed a fox in Tullaghan, they drew Clonhugh, getting away on good terms through Mountmurray Bog, straight to Sonna, pushing the fox without a check to the canal at Coolnahay, turned to Balgarret through Walshestown, over Glenamore Hill to Shandona, crossing canal and rails to Belmont, hounds still running hard lost their well-deserved prey in an earth at Ledeston, after one hour and forty minutes fine hunting, the first twenty minutes racing pace, the distance close on sixteen miles. The Master handled the hounds most artistically, and was with them from find to finish. Fisher was laid up. The fastest thing of the season was two days after Lady Day ; late in afternoon, it was 4.30 p.m., when a fox broke from Tullaghan, and ran best pace past Greenpark right-handed into Sonna to ground, hunting forty-five minutes, but only thirty-five from covert to covert, a regular scorcher. Mr. Ralph Smyth of Gaybrook, who was shooting snipe on his property near Sonna, used to describe how he saw the panorama of the hunt pass the field he was standing in, hounds about five minutes behind their fox, then came Mr. Dease, and in his tracks Miss E. Throckmorton (now the Hon. Mrs. A. Stourton), conspicuous on a big grey horse. This horse was a fine bold fencer and could gallop, was up to fourteen stone, but was an anomaly, for though lame he was sound ! One foreleg was shorter than the other ; it never affected him in his work. When the first flight had passed the field came rolling by for twenty minutes.

“ Waken Lords and Ladies gay, on the mountain dawns the day,
 All the jolly chase is here, with horse, and hawk and hunting spear,
 Hounds are in their couples yelling, hawks are whistling, horns are knelling,
 Merrily, merrily mingle they, waken Lords and Ladies gay ”

The Hunt Ball was held at Ballinlough Castle on 24th February, and was a very smart affair ; hounds met there next day at noon, a large field out to join them, and by permission of the Meath Hunt, a lot of their country was drawn, which resulted in a fast twenty-seven minutes from Drewstown to Milltown through Killua. Then they hunted another of Mr. M'Veagh's foxes for an hour and a-quarter and killed.

A blank day on 11th April, at Gillardstown, finished up a fair season of sixty-one days, but only eleven foxes were killed and twenty-three marked to ground—five blank days.

Westmeath always was a difficult killing country, hence the temptation to digging, which no huntsman and few Masters can resist. Various time-honoured excuses are given:—Hounds must be blooded; makes them keen; they mark to ground better next time; “make the fox run better another day” (as the Westmeath huntsman once said after digging and eating him), and so on. The season 1865-6 found the kennels still at Clonlost. At a largely attended meeting of Members, with Sir Benjamin Chapman in the chair, it was proposed by Mr. Henry Murray, the oldest member of the Hunt, and seconded by Mr. Joseph Tuite, that Captain Dease be requested to carry the horn this season, retaining Fisher as K. H. and first whip, but most of the work in the field fell to Bob Thompson. Nicholas Mulvey rode second horse for the Master. Sport improved, and it turned out to be the best season enjoyed for many years. A smart entry of fourteen couple, including two couple by Lord Portsmouth’s “Larkspur” were added to the pack. One couple of seven, and one couple of six year old hounds, were the oldest in the kennel, but all were fresh and sound. As the Master carried the horn, the duties of field Master devolved on his brother, Mr. James Arthur Dease, and on his brother-in-law, Sir William Throckmorton, who now lived in the country, and besides helping the Master with a liberal subscription, endeared himself by his genial sportsmanlike manner and true love of hunting, to farmers and gentry alike. Sir William kept a fine stud of weight-carriers, and rarely missed a day in Meath when Mr. Reynell was in reach, in addition to his steady support of the Westmeath pack. He afterwards took “The Vale of White Horse,” where his popularity and good sport are still by-words.

On October 29th, 1865, a goodly number of new coats and old faces mustered at Knockdrin to meet the Master as their new huntsman. Sharp to time, 11 a.m., Captain Dease and his three men in pink, all well turned out—by a local tailor—and hounds looking blooming, jogged up to the Castle. In the morning they had a merry spin to ground in a sewer near Lough Sheevor, having passed through Mr. Tuite’s place at Culleen, so soon to be the permanent home of the hounds. In the course of the day, when running a fox from Ballynegall towards Tullaghan, hounds crossed the railway, and the pack narrowly escaped annihilation; one hound was killed and another injured. There was a very sporting engine driver on the

M.G.W.R. in those days, and he had a worthy associate in the guard. The wild-fowl on Lough Owel had grown careless about the noise of the train and offered tempting shots to the driver, who often pulled up and let fly into the "brown," leaving the guard and his water dog to do the rest. He clapped on the brake one day, on seeing a fox across the rails, holloed on the hounds, and taking a good look at the vanishing hunt, wended his weary way to Connaught!

On the 23rd November, 1865, they had a real good old-fashioned fox-hunt from Mr. Evans' hill covert at Gillardstown, past Cullen's gorse to Loughpark, thence through Windtown, a Meath covert north of Lough Lene; the pace fair, and hounds hunting well; over the Down of Fore and up the historic "Ben," through Ballinwin into Loughbawn: disdaining another Meath earth this good fox held on for Galmoilestown, crossing the big pastures till exhausted he lay down in a turnip field and brought hounds to their first check. They had now got into one of the most open and best scenting parts of Northern Meath, the scene of many a good contest amongst the "long tails," when the Diamor and Herbertstown coursing meetings were held from about 1850 to 1864. The fox slipped back, but hounds ably handled by the Master, soon hit it off and burst him up in the open on Mr. Robert Battersby's farm at Herbertstown, one hour and ten minutes. Mr. Dease, in spite of a fall, never let hounds out of sight, but nicked in with his second horse between Fore and Loughbawn. Ballinlough was on the hunt card for 24th of November, and thirty-eight minutes at best pace from Rosmead to Boltown to ground, was the result. As straight and good a line as fox could select or hounds could run. It was very satisfactory, as there were many strangers out.

The hunt ball was held at Knockdrin on January 29th, and the next day a Clonlost fox yielded up his life to give pleasure to the hunt and their guests. This fox threaded the plantations of Edmonton and Killulagh, and was killed in the covert at Moortown. Captain Candy was then quartered in Ireland, and used to ride very hard, though, of course, the country was new to him. He was by himself with hounds as they dashed into Moortown, and hearing the worry in covert, jumped off his horse, thinking there was no one else near. He was rather astonished to find the Master there before him, holding the fox over his baying pack.

Only three blank days this season, twenty-three foxes killed (more than double the number of last season) and thirty-two marked to ground.

CHAPTER VI.

CAPTAIN DEASE'S SIXTH AND SEVENTH YEARS OF MASTERSHIP.—COUNTY KENNELS BUILT AT CULLEEN IN 1866.—LIST OF SUBSCRIBERS TO SAME.—FISHER LEAVES, AND THOMPSON TAKES HIS PLACE AS K.H.—SPORT CONTINUES GOOD.—THE TURBOTSTON HOUNDS.—REMINISCENCES OF THE BALLYMACADS UNDER CHARLIE BOWLES.—A HALF-HEARTED ATTEMPT TO STOP HUNTING IN 1833.—MR. POLLARD URQUHART.—COLONEL CONOLLY. — CAPTAIN WALKER. — PRESENTATION TO CAPTAIN DEASE AT THE END OF HIS SEVENTH SEASON.

CAPTAIN DEASE thought of resigning the Mastership, but was pressed to remain on. An additional £100 was subscribed, and county kennels were built in 1866, at *Culleen*,—sometimes called Cullion, or the Holly Well. It was Tuite property in the last century, and was inherited by Godfrey Levinge, grandson of the fourth baronet, through his grandmother, Mary Tuite, second wife of Sir Richard Levinge. Godfrey subsequently sold the property to his kinsman William, and Hugh Morgan Tuite purchased it in 1857 for his son Joseph, who left County Kildare and came to reside at Culleen. It was sold by him in 1877 to Mr. Reddy.

Culleen is very central; in fact, before Mr. Longworth's country was taken over, the kennels made the centre of a nine mile radius; and no better site could have been selected. Mr. J. Tuite gave a long lease of the ground, with exercise paddock, and free grazing for huntsman's cow. A subscription list was set on foot, and a good number of people put their names down for a three years' guarantee. Mr. Longworth's hunt was not included, so that the present Westmeath hunt kennels were built solely at the expense of the northern end of the county, as the following list shows:—Mr. Pollard Urquhart and Mr. Boyd gave £10 each for three years, Sir W. Throckmorton, Sir B. Chapman, and Mr. J. A. Dease, £5 for a like term. Then came a large number at £3 10s.: Messrs. Tuite, *père et fils*;

R. Reynell, junr.; W. E. Smythe, H. Murray, B. Thompson, Ennis, W. and H. Fetherstonhaugh, P. O'Reilly, Honble. F. Browne, Honble. A. W. F. Greville-Nugent, M.P.; A. Adams-Reilly, W. Hussey Walsh, Major Nugent, and Captain Ralph Smyth. Mr. Digby guaranteed £2, and Mr. Purdon £1, also for three years. Add to this a donation of £10 from Mr. Marlay, £5 each from Colonel Curzon Smyth, Captain Connolly, Messrs. Winter, Daniell, and smaller sums from Messrs. Meares, Henry, Eivers, C. Levinge, and W. Evans. About £330 was made up.



CULLEEN HOUSE.

Fisher went as huntsman to the Bedale, and Thompson was promoted to K.H., with Will Brice as second Whip; a good lad, who afterwards went to the V.W.H. Ardent spirits and hard work, innumerable falls and broken bones, had not shaken Bob's nerves. On one occasion he landed clatter over a fence on top of an iron sheep-rack! Quick as thought, hard as nails, he was an ideal whip; but the poor fellow fell ill with fever on 2nd November, and was laid up for four months. Brice took his place, and George Press was engaged temporarily as second Whip.

Hunting three days a week—Monday, Wednesday and Friday—with an entry of ten and a half couple, things went on rosily.

One of the first good things of the season 1866-7 was on October 2nd, with five foxes on foot at Turbotston; hounds selected one, which ran through Gaulstown to Pakenham Hall and back, changed foxes at Turbotston, and crossed Mullagh to the Rock of Corry, where a group of excited natives turned him to Carlanstown, by Clonsura, over the River Glore, to Newcastle, through Turbotston, to ground at Trumroe, after one hour and eight minutes, a really excellent hunt, though not straight. The Master had the misfortune to break his horse's back early in December, he himself having to go home on a gate.

This was a very severe winter. Hounds were stopped for a fortnight in January, and the same in March, and a good many members of the Hunt were seen skating on Lough Owel, which was frozen over.

When riding to the meet at Gillardstown one morning, the Master espied Reynard sitting on the bank of the gorse covert, and lost no time in getting at him. Running past Collinstown, they put up another fox *en route*, but stuck to the hunted one, and marked him to ground in a shore at Glananea, after thirty-five minutes' gallop; bolted by a terrier, and killed. Another fox left the drain, and took them with catchy scent to Clonyn; a third fox subsequently left the same shore before the terrier could be got out.

This 1866-7 season may be written down as good—seventy-three days' hunting, twenty-three foxes fairly killed and three dug out, two blank days. After Christmas the weather was rough and windy, and much against sport. A mangy fox was killed at Gartlandstown on the last day of the season, 12th April.

Captain Dease now entered on his seventh and last season (1867-8). An early harvest enabled him to get at the cubs a day after the partridges, and though Thompson was laid up with rheumatism the whole cubbing season, Will Brice did his work, and cheered him up on their return to the kennels with the first pate of the season; it pleased Bob better than a brace of partridges would have done. Bill Hemming, an old second horseman of the Hon. W. North's, was taken on as second Whip. He had been in Warwickshire in Mr. Greaves' time, and had turned hounds to Tom Matthews, under the Hon. W. North, in 1864. Hemming was a rum old card, one of those who tumbled into brooks for the sake of getting a pull at flasks, proffered to him in his watery predicaments.

Cub-hunting, Captain Dease generally had out twenty couple of hounds, and

seventeen and a-half or eighteen couple later on in the season. There were now forty-two couple of hounds in kennel. The following is a list of cub-hunting fixtures :—

Turbotston	Galston	Clonlost
Knockdrin	Rochfort	Baronston
Donore	Gillardstown	Clonhugh
Newforest	Middleton	Mornington
Knock Ion		

Seventeen days out, and fourteen foxes fairly killed.

The first advertised meet was on 28th October, at Gartlandstown Bridge ; blood after little sport. Rochfort, on the 4th November ; found at Carrick ; ran by Moroe to Newcastle, back to Carrick, and killed in the open near Mr. Quinn's house—fifty-five minutes. Then got at another fox ; hunted him for forty minutes, and killed in the wood at Rochfort. Drew Gaybrook, and found four foxes ; ran one to Galston, but did not persevere, as scent failed. On November 12th there was a very brilliant day from Sonna, straight up Frewen Hill, down to the lake at Piercefield, then right-handed to Mount Murray, past Ballard, to ground in Tullaghan—forty-one minutes, with only one check, and every hound up. On 25th the Master was indisposed, for the first time in four years, and Thompson handled the hounds, with Sir William Throckmorton acting Master. After ten days' frost and snow the ball was again set rolling. There was a lawn meet at Clonlost, after a ball given by the Master and Mrs. Dease, and a splendid day's sport. The first fox found at Clonlost ran across Thornton Farm to Killynon, Edmonton, and Fennor, and got to ground in Moortown Bog covert. Next found at Edmonton, and this time the line was by Jeffrystown to Clonderlever, over Tuitestown, and killed in Knock Ion. A six-mile hunt ; it was 7 p.m. on a lovely spring evening, and those who were out thought life worth living. Captain Dease wound up the season and his seven years' Mastership on 7th April, 1868 ; in eighty days' hunting forty-three foxes were killed, and thirty-nine to ground ; thus accounting for a fox each day he was out.

Captain Dease's success was probably due to his experience with hounds as a young man. A few years before the re-establishment of the county pack at Knockdrin, he kept eight or ten couple of hounds at Turbotston. He and his brother hunted hares in the neighbourhood of Ballynameagh, Newcastle, Lickbla, and Castlepollard, and occasionally a deer was uncartered near Clonderlever. Mr. Dease also saw a lot of hunting with the Ballymacads. This was a very sporting local pack, started

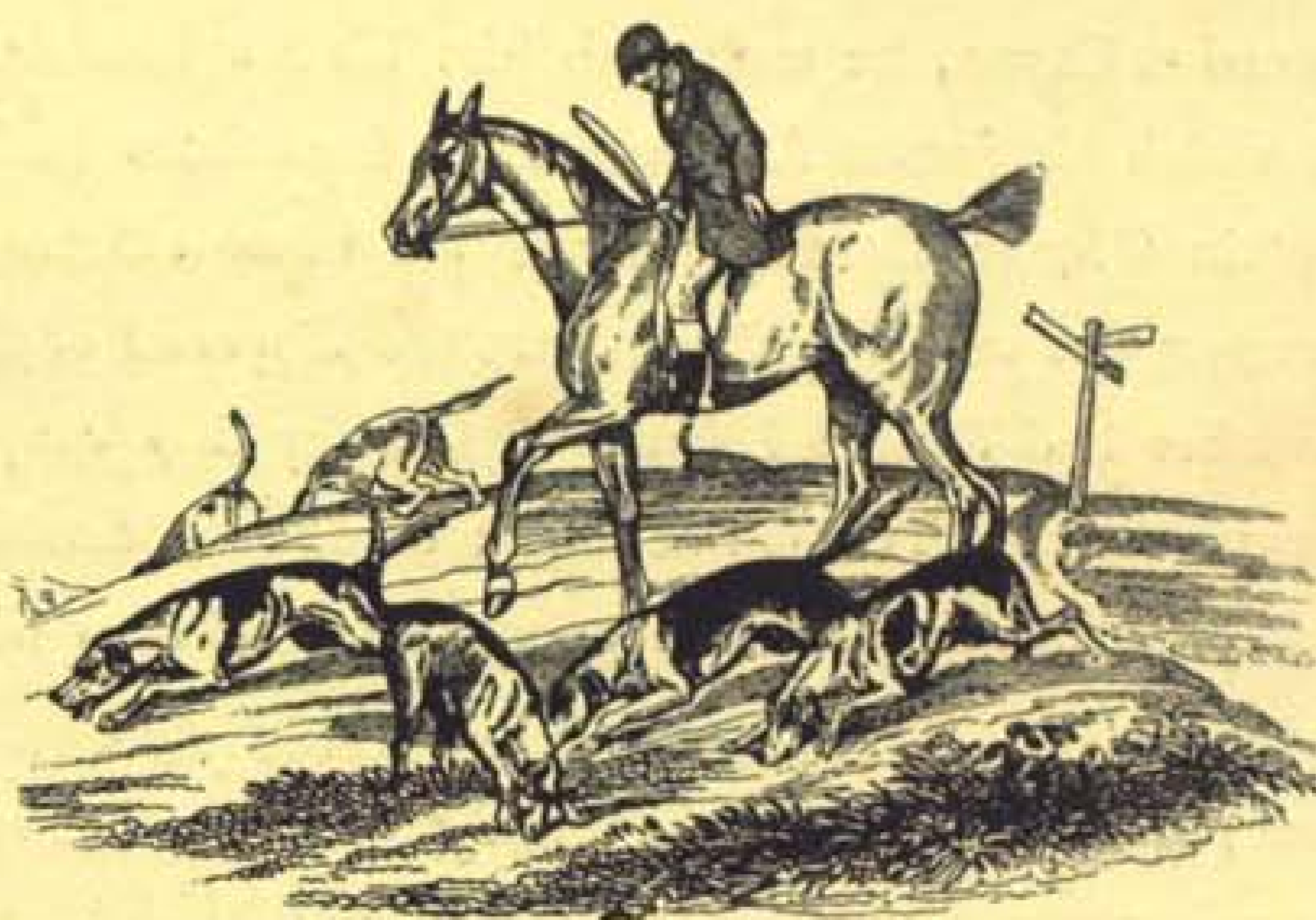
originally in the last century by a few gentlemen living on the borders of County Cavan. The Rev. Mr. Maxwell, grandfather of the present Lord Farnham, was one of the originators ; he always kept good horses, and probably initiated these hounds for the purpose of training the colts over a country ; Mr. Morton, the then owner of Kilnacrott, and some other sportsmen, managed the affairs of the hunt. Mr. Naper, of Loughcrew, then took to hunting with these hounds, and coaxed them over the borders, probably in hopes of getting nearer his own well preserved lands where hares abounded. This was in 1825, Charley Bowles was the huntsman for fifty years. The kennels were fitted up at Ballymacad, at an old mill with beautiful fresh water supply.



CHARLEY BOWLES.

There was a fine scope of harrier country, and a stock of wonderful stout hares. In 1830 a committee, with Mr. Anthony O'Reilly, Mr. Harman, and other local magnates managed the hunt. Mr. Naper, of Loughcrew, and his father, the late squire, Mr. Webb of Hilltown, Mr. Garrett Dease (later on accompanied by his three sons on ponies), were consistent followers of these hounds. Captain Walker and his sons, one of whom has been Lord Chancellor of Ireland, and another

is Sir Mark Walker, a General in the Army. The late Colonel John Conolly, V.C., began his hunting with these hounds, also his brother Edward, and Arthur who was killed at Inkerman; three splendid fellows. Mr. Pollard was another well-known figure in the hunt. Perhaps some of these owe their distinguished careers to the healthy invigorating exercise they enjoyed in following this



*These are our meets, so come out my gay lads,
With Old Charley Bowles and the Bullmacoads.*

July 1845

At

Friday	3 rd	Ballinacorney
Tuesday	7 th	Pellaton
Friday	10	The Runnel
Tuesday	14 th	Leamurston
Friday	17 th	Subridabridge
Tuesday	21 st	Ballifore
Friday	24	Rathmay
Tuesday	28 th	Hilltown
Friday	31 st	Blondeliver

Should the weather on that day be unfavorable, the Hounds will meet at same place on the following day, at

OLD HUNT LIST.

sporting old pack. When Charley Bowles retired from active service at the age of 85, his son Tommy carried the horn, and wore the green coat. When Charley died he was buried near Ballymacad, by his previously expressed wish, so "that hounds might run over his grave twice a week."

This original Ballymacad pack came to an end as follows :—

When the Militia was embodied at the time of the Crimea War, and Mr. Gerald Dease was stationed at Cavan, he took with him his few hounds and the remnants of the Ballymacads which Mr. James A. Dease and a few others had tried to keep going. Assisted by Captain George Beresford and some other officers in the regiment, he showed very fair sport one winter in Cavan, but the dispersal of the pack was certainly unique; their number had dwindled down to four or five couple, and not finding anyone to take over the hounds when he was ordered to Aldershot in 1856, Mr. Dease instructed a local corner-boy in Cavan to open the kennel door when the regiment had marched to the station!

The present pack was started in 1885, and now shows fine sport over the country hunted by their predecessors fifty years ago.

In 1833 the first attempt at stopping hunting took place. Party spirit had reached an extreme height in consequence of the Anti-Tithe Agitation. It was arranged by some of the "leaders in the district" that Mr. Garrett Dease of Turbotston, and Mr. William Pollard should be stopped; this was to punish the former for having gone hunting instead of attending Petty Sessions, when some "party" case was to come up for hearing, and to punish the latter because his father had been absent from the same bench. The people, perhaps, expected leniency, or justice tempered with mercy on their parts. The Pollards were always liberal, and it was well known that Mr. Dease's father, James, was the first Catholic magistrate ever appointed in Ireland (1793). His brother-in-law, Lord Fingall was the second, but only received his commission in 1802—their descendants became, in turn, Masters of the Westmeath and of the Meath hounds, and thus their names enter in to these pages. Mr. Dease was told of the intention to insult him, and was advised to stay at home. Not only did he go, but his wife insisted on accompanying him. On nearing Ballymanus Cross Roads they saw a great crowd assembled. A man came forward—he was the local schoolmaster—and removing his hat, said: "I beg your pardon, Mr. Dease, but we have assembled here to prevent you hunting to-day." "What harm can my hunting do to any man?" said he. "Oh, I don't know, but we have been instructed to prevent you following the hounds." "Well," said Mr. Dease, "I suppose you won't prevent

the lady from hunting?" "Oh, no, your honour; her ladyship may go where she pleases." "I never knew an Irishman who would prevent a husband from accompanying his wife." The answer came from the crowd, "Your honour may go where you wish, without let or hindrance." Just at that moment young Mr. Pollard came up, and Mr. Dease said to the mob, "I beg of you, whatever you may do to me, not to interfere with this young gentleman, and turn his mind against the people amongst whom he in due time must live. He has never harmed anyone; why then annoy and insult him?" A little knowledge is a dangerous thing. The schoolmaster came forward, and remarked, that "Holy Scripture tells us to visit the sins of parents on their children to the third and fourth generation!" Mr. Dease, however, successfully urged them to leave Mr. Pollard alone, and all parted good friends; a hare was found on the hill near the old churchyard of Wheran, and a pleasant day's sport ensued. This Mr. Pollard, years afterwards, assumed the name of Urquhart, in addition to his own family name: was the popular M.P. for Westmeath for nineteen years, till the time of his lamented death, which took place at Brighton, in 1871, only three years before that of Mr. James Arthur Dease, whose father befriended him that day at Ballymanus.

A great friendship always existed between the houses of Kinturk and Turbotston, and it is an interesting page in the family history that the property of the Deases was preserved to the family through the penal times by the noble and generous conduct of the Pollards. If for nothing else, it would have been a pity to lose a family which gave the county Captain Gerald R. Dease's seven years' Mastership and good hunting!

There is no denying that Captain Dease did marvels for the Westmeath country; by his tact and good taste he got all classes to join in the common good cause of fox-hunting. Patient but determined as a huntsman, courteous and liberal to all, Captain Gerald Richard Dease's name will always be looked up to by Westmeath fox-hunters. He was a good Master to his men, and a good servant to the hunt. His stud was sold at Culleen, on 14th April, 1868, Punchestown week, and Sir W. Throckmorton also disposed of his lot of eight weight-carriers at the same time. In November, 1868, the members of the hunt presented their outgoing Master with a magnificent testimonial, consisting of three massive silver salvers, four goblets, and a silver cup, antique Irish style, and resting on an ebony stand, bearing the following inscription:—"Presented by the members of the Westmeath Hunt, to G. R. Dease, Esq., on his resigning the Mastership of the Westmeath Hunt Fox-Hounds, as a small mark of their high appreciation of the liberal and sportsmanlike manner in which he

has hunted the country in the last seven years, and of the urbanity and courtesy he has invariably shown."

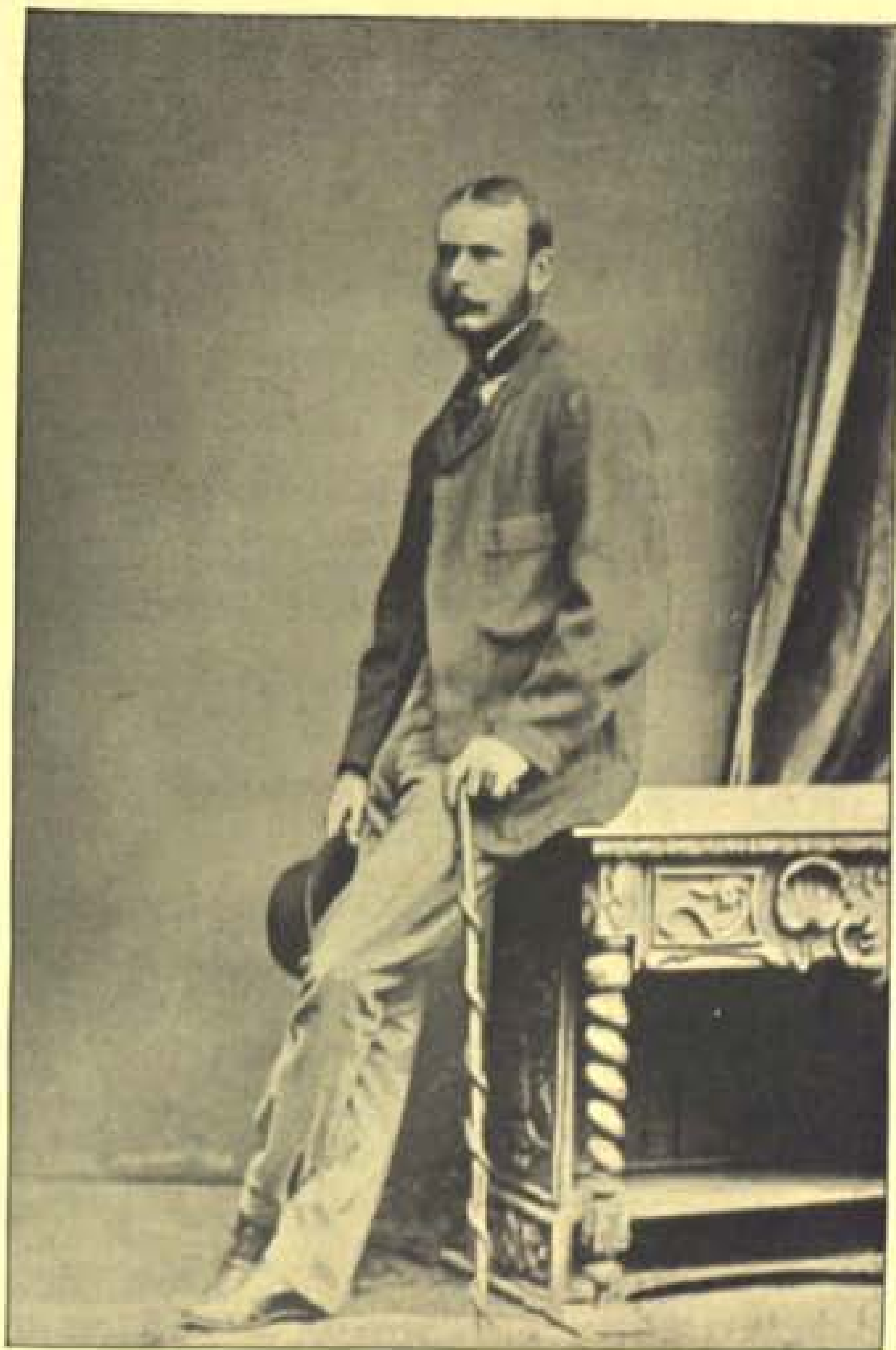
The value of the presentation amounted to more than half the present annual subscription to the hunt. People must have been either better off or more generous, or perhaps both, than they are nowadays. The ladies of Westmeath subscribed for and presented to Mrs. Dease at the same time, a valuable gold locket. After luncheon several toasts were proposed, and Captain Dease was most warmly received; he concluded the proceedings by proposing the health of the new M.F.H., Mr. Charles Macdonald Moreton.



CHAPTER VII.

SEASONS 1868-71, UNDER MASTERSHIP OF MR. MORETON.—MR. R. REYNELL STILL HON. SEC.—APPEALS FOR FUNDS.—GOOD SPORT, THE M.F.H. CARRIES THE HORN WITH TOCOCK AS K.H., AND THOMPSON FIRST WHIP.—MR. MORETON CHANGES HIS RESIDENCE FROM MULLINGAR TO CLONDRISSE.—A BRILLIANT RUN DESCRIBED IN VERSE.—MR. S. WINTER, A GOOD FRIEND TO FOX-HUNTING.—MR. LONGWORTH'S HOUNDS AND COUNTRY CO-OPTED.—A HUNT DINNER THIRTY YEARS AGO.—PRESENTATION TO THE MASTER.

THIS time, 1868, Caledonia provided a master, kind-hearted and genial, full of fun and life, and a really sound sportsman ; there was no more popular man in Ireland than Charlie Moreton. He had been hunting in Meath for three seasons, and had been for years a friend of Mr. Reynell's, often stayed at Archers-town, and even brought over his otter-hounds (The Largie) to hunt the amphibious quarry along the streams in that part of Meath. Mr. Moreton's sister was married to Mr. Nicholson of Balrath, so that 'Charlie,' as he was always called, was no stranger in the land. The new Master succeeded Captain Dease at Culleen House. Toccock, late of the Vale of White Horse and Brocklesby, was Kennel Huntsman, and Thompson remained on as Whip. The Master carried the horn. Mr. Richard Reynell, jun., still acting as Secretary, wrote to Mr. Briscoe informing him that a committee consisting of Hon. F. Browne (now Lord Kilmaine), James A. Dease, and Lord Vaux, had been appointed to



MR. C. MACDONALD MORETON

carry out all arrangements between the outgoing and incoming masters and the shareholders of the hounds. With thirty-six and a-half couples in kennel, hunting began on the 30th October at Knockdrin, with a nice run of half-an-hour to ground



WITCHES IN MACBETH.

at Edmonton. Another good day followed on 9th November from Mornington to Donore, and on to Clonhugh, killing after one hour and ten minutes. On 22nd January Middleton provided a good fox, which died a "natural death," after an hour's chase,

and a second ran a ring to Jamestown and back, getting to ground close to where he was found, after two hours' hunting.

Parts of the country were short of foxes, and subscriptions and bazaars were got up to provide funds to pay for damages. The following lines, with appropriate sketch were sent to members of the hunt :—

“ The witches in Macbeth declare ‘ That fair is foul, and foul is fair !’
The truth of this is plain to show, for foxes’ fare is fowl we know ;
So sportsmen all should be agreed, to pay for fowl is fair indeed ! ”

They were composed by Mr. James A. Dease, of Turbotston, in 1868, and have often been purloined in sporting papers and elsewhere during the last thirty years, There was another appeal for funds, and an original sketch, entitled “ The Master ready for the *meet*, and the *meat* ready for the Master ; ” the subject being an old woman producing the corpse of her best laying hen, as the M.F.H. steps out of his dog-cart ; and yet another, which could not fail to touch the heart of a fox-hunter. The lines were as follows :—

TO THE MEMBERS OF THE WESTMEATH HUNT.

“ The dying swan, that living has no note,
At death’s approach unlocks her silent throat ;
So we, though harsh our voice while breathing breath,
Speaking as thus are eloquent in death.
When to the hungry fox our lives we give.
We die most cheerfully that *he* may live.
You owe us many a run—that all must say for us,
Show yourselves practically grateful—PAY FOR US !
In a good cause we die—true martyrs we,
Write our best epitaphs in £ s. d.”

A sporting poet of the day gives a graphic description of ten miles in fifty-two minutes :—

“ ’Twas after the ball at Athboy, in the year of Our Lord, sixty-eight,
Three days before Christmas I went to hunt in Westmeath for a treat ;
The Meath men went up to Drumree, from Culmullen, full sure of a tally,
But who such a run e’er did see as ‘ Charlie ’ had at Loughnavalley ?
King’s County and Ward men were out, who with hunting can ne’er be appeased,
And ‘ Longworths ’ the boys that can shout, but they all got as much as they pleased :
A field of a hundred and more, each and all full determined to ride ;
Priests, parsons, and ladies galore, horse-breakers and jockeys beside.
In the carriage, and on the hack-car, the gig and old shandridan,
Some saying : ‘ We’ve come very far, but we’ll see a good run if we can.’ ”

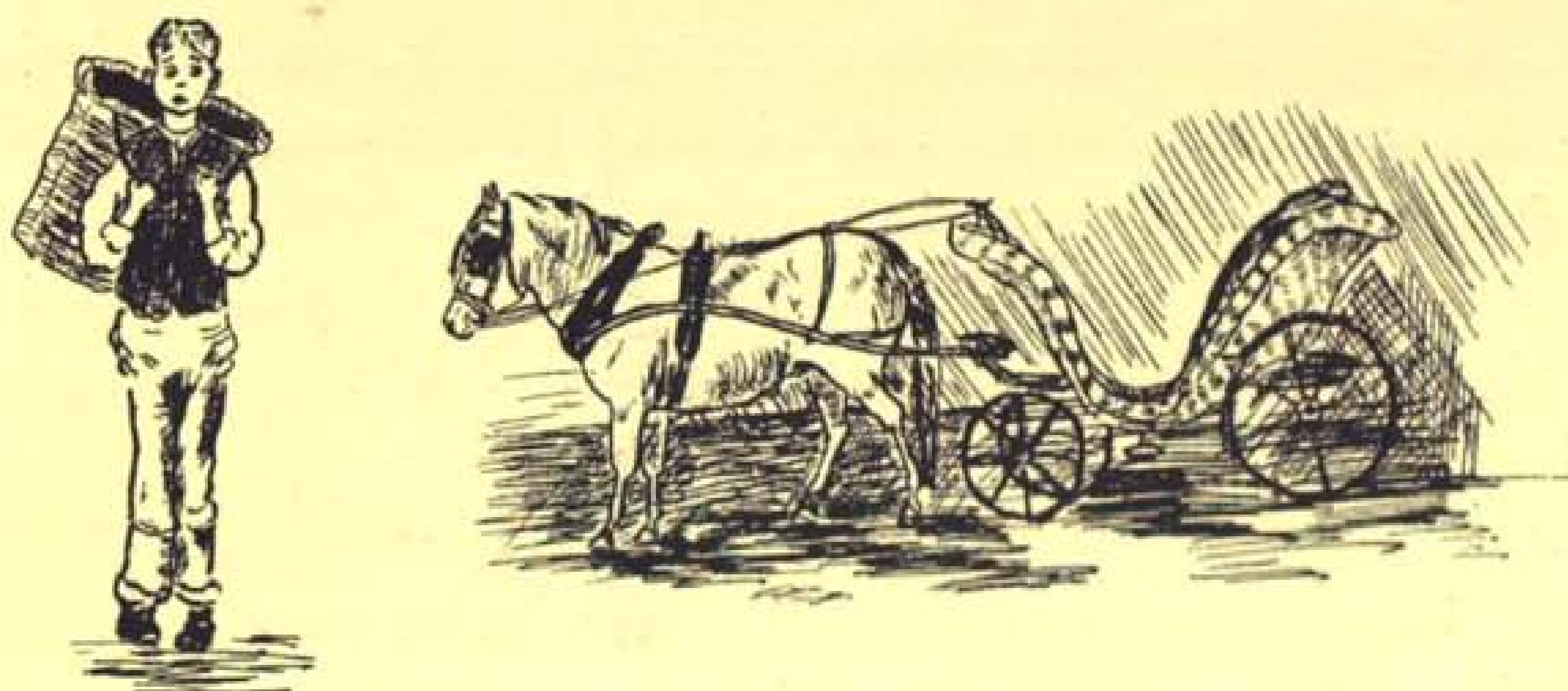
But some valued friends were away, for 'Dick' was at home with the sheep,
 And many a crown went astray—Sam Winter ! why were you asleep ?
 Father Richard now quickly came up, " If all of you wish for a run,
 Come off to famed Crissauns with me, I've a fox that will show you some fun.
 The truth our old friend then spoke, for hounds scarce the covert could reach,
 When a real old warrior broke, his pastor's words not to impeach,
 With a whisk of his head and his brush, that said, ' Catch me, my boys, if you can.'
 He went off from the grove with a rush ; 'twas here the hard riding began.
 For a mile he got on pretty well, till to a big mearing he came,
 And some of the crashers soon fell, and went home (for their horses were lame).
 But the hounds were not thinking of that, they were crossing McCormick's big field,
 And many a man pressed his hat, and wished that poor Reynard would yield.
 To Churchtown we now quickly go, but bending away to the right,
 The country not seeming to know, but for life determined to fight.
 Pug went over the Mullingar Road, into which was a very big drop,
 And many a tale will be told by riders who here had to stop.
 But their troubles gave him little thought, as he crossed some grand lane I don't know ;
 Some men were not there, sir, that ought—oh, good men ! why didn't you show ?
 Of fifty-two minutes a run—no check from beginning to end :
 When I hunt in Westmeath again, may the fates such another day send.
 The Master and hounds, as if one, for a moment were never apart,
 I'm sure he is Diana's son, for certainly he has the art.
 Of falls there were fully a score, the field too was very unruly,
 But I hope more such days are in store for ' Charlie,' Westmeath, and yours truly."

Mr. Moreton liked a joke. On one occasion, when entertaining a suspected vulpicide at dinner, part of the table decorations consisted of a steel trap, with its cruel teeth closed on a fox's pad, a trophy of that day's chase. Let us hope that the dinner disagreed with the fox-destroyer.

The Hunt Ball took place at Knockdrin, kindly lent by Sir Richard Levinge. There were said to have been three hundred people at the dance. The whole length of the avenue was picturesquely lighted with Chinese lanterns, from the castellated entrance to the portals of the mansion.

Mr. Longworth's country was taken over in 1870, and has since formed part of Westmeath, though Lord Vaux and some others held that it was only lent, and could be claimed back. His lordship wrote at the time, " they, on their side of Westmeath, would not allow of the hounds being taken off to accommodate people upon the Athlone side." Many a time his lordship's sentiments have been reiterated since then ! The natural division of the countries would limit Meath in their Saturday country, still leaving them ample scope for nine days a fortnight. Westmeath could do justice to the district from Athboy to Crossakiel and Oldcastle, including the Ballymacad

country in County Cavan. By giving over the Moate country to the South Westmeaths, Mr. Longworth's old hunting grounds, supplemented by the Kilbeggan and King's County ends and including part of County Longford, would make, perhaps, as sporting a country for five days a fortnight as any in Ireland. With a few more gorse coverts and careful fox preservation what much better fun it would be than hunting the carted deer. The light turf and stonewall country free from wire, is a treat to ride over. This would do away with the strip of unpreserved "no man's land" which now makes a fringe all round the Westmeath Hunt, where foxes do damage, and pay the penalty. Westmeath is like a game-preserved living in the midst of poaching neighbours—what goes over the boundary never comes back, and there is nothing left outside to return. Since 1888 the Meath Hunt has, without dis-



PAT AND THE BASKET.

advantage, lent portion of its northern country and fox coverts to the Ballymacads, as it could not get round its enormous territory, though hunting five days a week; and, even now, there are coverts only visited two or three times in a season.

Who has not owned a pony called Pat? And, again, who in Ireland has not had in his employ a boy of the same name? It so happened that the stable order one day was, "Send round Pat and the basket" (*viz.*, a wicker pony-trap), when, lo! and behold, at 3 p.m., at the hall-door, appeared a dirty pantry-boy with turf creel on his back. This absolutely occurred in Westmeath some years ago.

In the Thirties Mr. Cuthbert Clibborn of Moate Castle, turned his father's pack into foxhounds. Old Mr. Clibborn had taken over the harriers from Mr. Theobald Fetherston, of Mosstown.

The new M.F.H. had a fine extent of country, with Newforest as his eastern

limit, and Moyvore on the north. Foxes were not numerous at first, but what there were excelled in stoutness. They were supplemented by imported bog foxes from the King's County.

Good old sportsmen were the Quakers, *père et fils*, and kept the sport alive almost entirely at their own expense. Quakers should be fox-hunters, for was not the sect organized by one Fox in the year 1624, and for many years they were called *Foxites*. Messrs. Joseph Tuite and Henry Murray were the only two men from the then Westmeath country who patronized Mr. Clibborn's pack, but he had a good following of local sportsmen and hard riders.

After Mr. Clibborn's time, about 1847, an enterprising lieutenant in the Scots Greys (then quartered at Athlone) took over the establishment, and kept things going for a couple of seasons. Then came Mr. John Longworth, of Glynwood, who changed the kennels to Creggan. He improved the pack first by purchase and then by judicious breeding. He was an advocate for a mixed pack, and kept twenty-six couple in all. He thought that *dames seules* were inclined to be flighty!

The Master spared neither time nor money in improving hounds and country to a very high state of perfection, and hunted two days a week. Coverts were planted and earth-stopping attended to by an old character who travelled the district with his terrier and lantern, and attired in "as many coats as an onion." This old earthstopper invariably saw to the stopping of earths in the first covert to be drawn, and with a careful study of wind and rain, fair weather or rough, and selecting the hour when his "instinct" told him reynard was out foraging, the old boy was never wrong in his prognostication of a "find."

Mr. Nugent of Rosemount was the Master's right-hand man. He and his brother Gilbert were "bad to beat." The latter name lives still in the person of his son, who has followed in his father's footsteps.

John Bond of Castlecorr, Russell of Lissanode, Armstrong of Kilclare with his two sons Graves and Lowry, Potts of Correen, Tom Naughton of Thomastown, Hedger near Athlone, the Fetherstons of Ballintubber (Albany and Cuthbert), William of Grouse Lodge, John King of Ballylin, the Tarletons of King's County, George Adamson of Auburn, and Thomas Murray of Kilcornan, were some of the best men of the hunt. His reverence Canon Kearney, and Mr. Maher of Moyvoughley, were hunting then and are hunting still.

On moving the kennels to Glynwood Mr. Longworth had them under his eye. He used to journey to Rosemount overnight for his up-country meets, and

he hunted parts of Roscommon, Thomastown, Newpark, Correen, Ballybroder (his own property) in King's County, and paid an annual visit to Roscrea, for a week or ten days.

Reilly was huntsman for some years, and Hogan turned hounds to him. Reilly emigrated to Australia, and his place was taken by Richard Conry, whose reign was cut short by death. The first Whip, Hugh M'Keon (who had graduated in Roscommon), was promoted to carry the horn, which he did till Mr. Longworth resigned in 1870. Michael Boyle also served Mr. Longworth from 1853, when he came from Galway for some few years, and was an efficient huntsman.

When Mr. John Nugent collected "field-money" it was the custom to pass pennies whitened with lead pencil in place of half-crowns—this was parsimony thinly cloaked with wit! Loughnavally was then, as now, a favourite Westmeath meet, and there being then no covert at Lunestown, Glencarra was the only Westmeath draw on the W. of the road. Crissauns was not planted till Captain Dease's time in the sixties.

When Mr. Moreton gave up Culleen, he took rooms at Carroll's Hotel, Mullingar, keeping his horses at Cumming's livery stables. His brother, Mr. G. Moreton, and their cousin, Sir Simon Lockhart, now commanding the 1st Life Guards, spent the greater part of the season hunting with these hounds from Mullingar. November 2nd was a blank day; the meet was at Glencarra; but on 22nd a nice fifty-five minutes with a Newcastle fox to Newforest and back and a kill. Two days after this Mr. Moreton handled another, after a smart fifty minutes from Williamstown to Corbetstown. On March 7th, Crissauns, Crieve, and Lunestown were all blank, but Middleton made up for it by a brisk forty minutes to ground near Kilbeggan. It was during this Mastership that Kilmaglish was enclosed, a sunny spot on the slope of a



JOHN LONGWORTH.

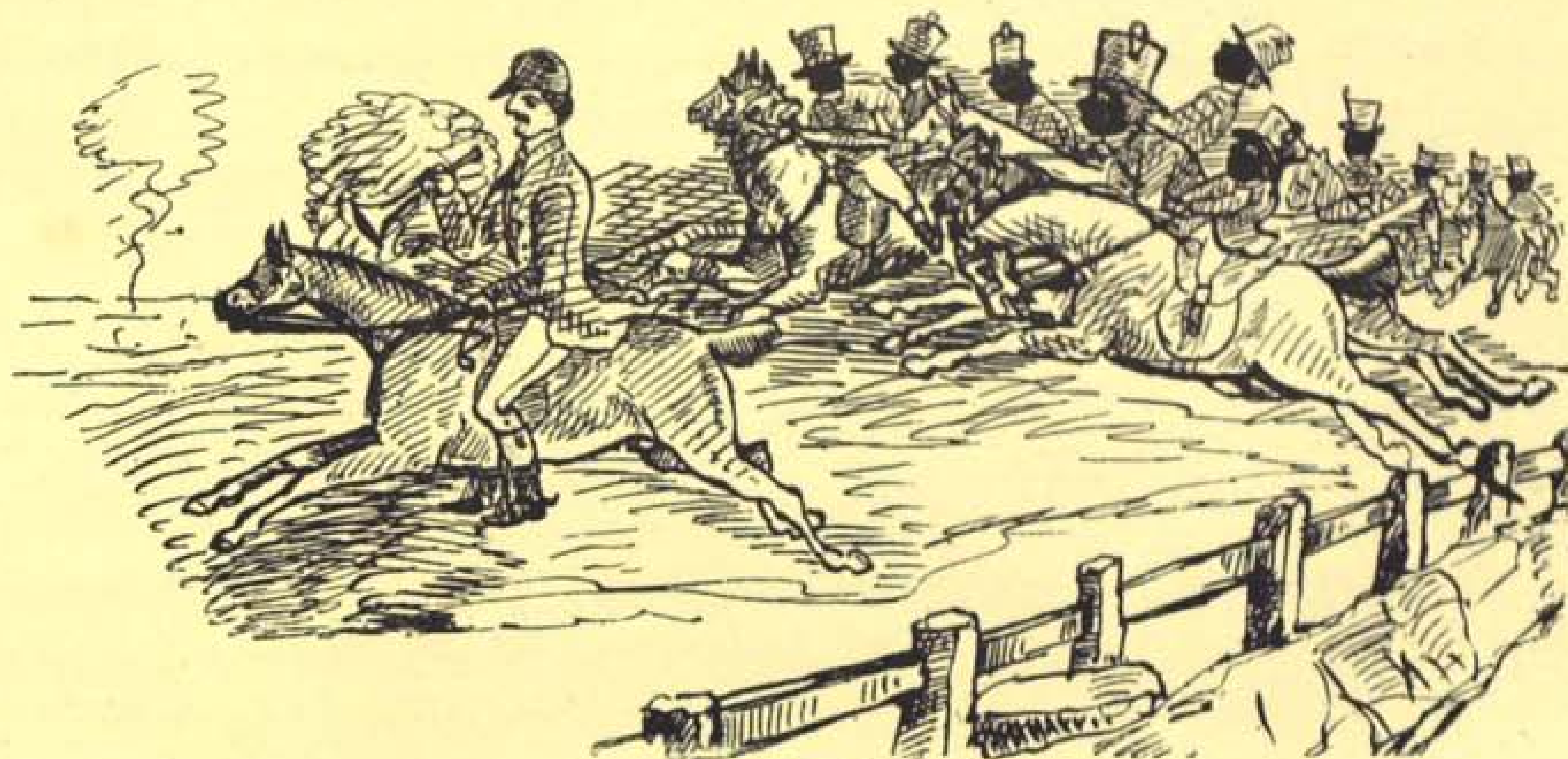
hill, always a handy place to find an evening fox, after hunting the woodlands of Ballynegall and Knockdrin. It is Knockdrin property, and the father of the present baronet lived at Kilmaglish for many years, and was succeeded by Mr. Merlehan. The farm now has changed hands, and belongs to one for whom fox-hunting has no charms; the gorse has been cut down, and the earth dug in.

Mr. Moreton bought a wonderfully good chestnut mare at Mr. Longworth's sale, "Marchioness" by name. She used to carry Toccock A 1, and eventually went to Lord Waterford for £88. A horse called "Plum," out of Sir W. Throckmorton's stud, which Mr. Montagu Chapman afterwards bought for £125, and "The Colonel," named after his former owner, Colonel Conolly, were high-class hunters, and could hold their own in any country, especially with such a good horseman as "Charlie" Moreton up. Mr. Moreton fancied small blood horses, and often used to say that he would be quite happy if he had ten *second* horses out, with light-weight boys on them, so that he could chop and change whenever his mount was blown. The following lines and appropriate sketch were sent to him by J. A. D. :—

"Ten little niggers, second horsemen fine; one got a cropper, and then there were nine.
 Nine little niggers, crashing through a gate; one squashed his little leg, and then there were eight.
 Eight little niggers, riding *not* like heaven; one tumbled on his head, and then there were seven.
 Seven little niggers, plying spurs and sticks; one 'blew' his little horse, and then there were six.
 Six little niggers to catch their Master strive; one got a ducking, then there were five.
 Five little niggers gallop faster than before; one found a 'public' out, then there were four.
 Four little niggers, jumping 'neath a tree; one crushed his little brain, then there were three.
 Three little niggers left, one was on a screw; pace found his weakness out, then there were two.
 Two little niggers, still are in the run; one broke a stirrup-leather, then there was but one.
 One little nigger only, pulled up at the check; but pulling *up*, he tumbled *down*, and broke his horse's neck.
 No little nigger when he's wanted; so, of course, the M.F.H. must finish on his first exhausted horse."

It was the year of the Franco-Prussian war that Mr. Moreton got *blasé* with the whirl of excitement in the Westmeath capital, and moved to country quarters at Clondrisse (it may have only been the bad smells in Mullingar which drove him away). Mr. Samuel Winter was living at Clondrisse; he was a constant follower and good supporter of the Westmeath Hounds, and of the greatest assistance to his friend, Mr. Moreton, who went to reside with him, but left his horses in Mullingar.

Tocock was still K.H. and Will Bacon First Whip. The last day of October saw Knockdrin a festive scene, the opening day of Mr. Moreton's last season. A fair day's sport, ending as every good day should end, with a kill. November 2nd, Moate



TEN LITTLE NIGGERS.

was the fixture ; found foxes, and had some hunting from the Hill of Bellaire to Castle Armstrong ; and on the 22nd the Glasson, Portlick, and Waterstown country produced some sport. No foxes to be found about Moate on December 7th, but the locals had a drag laid, to avoid which the Master went back to Rosemount, and found five foxes. Marked two to ground after ringing round the place. The best run of the season was from these same woods, thirty minutes without a check to Dorrington, then to Waterstown Glasson to Benowne, ten miles in all as hounds ran. February 4th, 1871, met at Ballinacor, killed a mangy fox at Shinglass, but a crowd of country people, shouting and heading the foxes, spoilt further sport. Mr. Moreton was very partial to that lower country, and had hounds at Ballinahown on 23rd March ; drew it blank ; also Glynwood and Creggan ; but a Moydrum fox took them by Carn Park to Moyvoughley. Moyvoughley gorse, small as it was, often held a fox. Towards the end of March a hound was drowned in the lake at Knock Ion when killing a fox, not as serious a catastrophe as that which befell the Benison Hunt years before. Mr. Moreton finished this brilliant season with a really memorable day, hounds hunting up to 7.30 p.m. Meeting at Greenhill and working to Gaybrook, they at last moved a fox at five o'clock, and there was no one left with the Master when he killed this his last fox in Westmeath.

The Hunt Ball was held in January. Another Levinge came to the fore, viz., Mr. Richard W. C., who put Levington at the disposal of the Ball Committee.

[Sir Richard Levinge, the fourth Baronet, purchased part of Farrenistic, and built Levington House in the centre of the deer park.] “Anything in the cause of hunting” has ever been the motto of the Levinge family, and the present owner of Levington is no exception. To make more room for dancing, the partition wall was removed, throwing two reception rooms into one, everything went off to perfection, and a most enjoyable evening was spent. These rooms have since been used as nurseries!

DINNER TO CHARLES MACDONALD MORETON, ESQ.

On the evening of the 28th March, 1871, the Members of the Westmeath Hunt entertained C. Macdonald Moreton, Esq., to a farewell dinner at Carroll's Hotel,



CLONDRISSE.

Mullingar, on the occasion of his resigning the Mastership of the Hounds. The dining-room was handsomely decorated with evergreens and flowers, interspersed with trophies of the chase. On the wall immediately behind the Chairman was placed the monogram of Mr. and Mrs. Macdonald Moreton, in illuminated letters, on the top of which was placed a fox's mask.

The following gentlemen sat down to dinner :—

James A. Dease, Esq., in the chair. On his right—the guest of the evening C. Macdonald Moreton, Esq.; Samuel Winter, Esq.; Walter Nugent, Esq.; and the Hon. A. Harris. On his left—Henry Murray, Esq.; R. W. Reynell, Esq.; Hon. F. Browne and

Captain Fosberry. The general company included—Colonel Gloster, 97th Regiment, Captain Browne, Joseph Tuite, Esq. ; Captain Kearney, A.D.C. ; Captain Hartopp, A.D.C. ; Major Upperton, B. D. Thompson, J. R. Malone, Robert Fetherstonhaugh, James Nugent, Percy Nugent, T. Orme Fetherstonhaugh, E. F. Whitney, James Winter, G. Adamson (Vice-Chairman) ; Richard C. Levinge, Thomas Chapman, H. E. Joly, Richard Reynell (Hon. Sec. to the Hunt) ; Thomas Pepper, C. Pepper, G. N. Purdon, G. Hedger, B. Hannon, C. Duigan, M.D. ; H. Berkeley, M.D. ; J. Ferguson, M.D. ; G. Stokes, M.D. ; William S. Kelly, John Kelly, W. Lynch, Thomas Kelly, William Evans, J. F. Hickson, John Rynd, E. H. Lewis, Charles Hall, Denis Colgan, W. Colgan, J. F. Eivers, Eugene Eivers, P. N. Fitzgerald, John Moore, J. Brabazon, E. Holehan, Walter Delamer, John Nugent (R. N.), Thomas Maher, Esqrs., &c., &c.

The cloth having been removed,

The Chairman rose, and said the first toast on his list was "The Queen." Most Irishmen are loyal ; all Irishmen are gallant. All her subjects admire and revere the many noble personal qualities that distinguish Her Majesty, and if anything could increase the growth of these sentiments amongst Irishmen, it would be the having more frequent opportunities of seeing the Royal Family amongst them.*

The toast was drank with the usual honours.

The Chairman next proposed, "The Prince of Wales and all the Royal Family." He said :—What I said of the toast you have just drank applies to this one too—it requires no preface. The Prince of Wales is, like ourselves, a fox-hunter, and, unlike some of us, a hard man across country. As loyal citizens and as fox-hunters, I call on you to drink his health. I must especially appeal to your good wishes for the newly-made bride, the Princess Louise, and the more so (in connection with the object of our present merry meeting), as she, like our M.F.H., has gone to the "Clan Campbell" to seek a worthy helpmate. (Hear, hear.) Let us hope that the next marriageable Princess may find a home in Ireland. (Cheers.)

The Chairman then proposed "The Army and Navy," which was responded to by Colonel Gloster.

The Chairman said the next toast he had to propose was "Our worthy Master, Mr. Macdonald Moreton." He said :—

"When three years ago my brother, Captain Dease, gave up the Mastership of your hounds—which he did with great regret—his chief solace was that he was resigning his horn to a gentleman who, he thought, would prove an efficient successor, and one in whose hands the Westmeath Hounds would not be likely to lose the good character they had attained at the

* Irishmen have been of the same opinion during the six-and-twenty years which have elapsed since then.

close of the fourteenth year of their existence as a county pack (hear, hear). Events have proved that my brother was right in his estimate, and that Mr. Macdonald Moreton is no degenerate son of the historically sporting house of Ducie (cheers). Mr. Macdonald Moreton is now, I am sorry to say, about to resign the office he has so worthily filled, and, though I know he is a modest man, as he is about to give up blowing his own trumpet in the hunting field, I hope he will not resent my blowing it here for him. During the three seasons that he has hunted our country he has given universal satisfaction. As a huntsman he has always been with his hounds, and he has each season 'accounted' for a very respectable number of that most 'unaccountable' of animals—a Westmeath fox (hear, hear). As a Master he has been ever courteous and obliging to all persons hunting with him, and I do not believe it is on record that he was ever guilty even of the venial offence of swearing at a horsebreaker (laughter). He had, moreover, never forgotten what we should all of us remember, that when we ride over the fields and fences of the farmers of the country, we do it on sufferance, and not as a *right*, and that we should be civil and obliging ourselves, if we expect civility and friendship from others (hear, hear). Mr. Moreton has turned out his men, hounds, and horses well, and as they should be. His servants have been civil and obliging; his hounds are always fit, and it is only doing him justice to say that, though he received an excellent pack of hounds from my brother, he will be able to hand over an equally good one to work, and an even better one to look at, to his successor (hear, hear). There is no doubt that in the amalgamation of the Glynwood with the old Westmeath pack we got some fine hounds. I share, I know, a universal regret when I say that Mr. Macdonald Moreton is about to leave our country, and I think I may assure him on our behalf that he will carry with him our hearty good wishes for himself and his fair lady (cheers). On behalf of the subscribers to the marriage present which stands on the table—[The handsome silver salver and flagon which were to be presented to Mr. Macdonald Moreton by the members of the Hunt, were placed in a conspicuous position on the table]—I ask Mr. and Mrs. Macdonald Moreton's acceptance of it. It is a tribute no less to his sterling qualities than to the charms of his wife, whose graceful presence we shall all of us sadly miss in the hunting field" (loud applause).

The toast was received with great enthusiasm.

Mr. Macdonald Moreton, on rising to respond, was received with enthusiastic applause. He said :—

"Mr. Chairman and gentlemen, I am a bad hand at 'throwing my tongue,' but I cannot 'run mute' on an occasion like the present! I thank you all from my heart for the kind way you have received my health, and drank to it. I came here three years ago, nearly a stranger, and to succeed a very popular Master—our worthy Chairman's brother, Captain Dease—who had, during his seven years of Mastership, earned the good-will and applause of all classes, and who had shown wonderful sport in your country (hear, hear). I am now, I regret to say, about to leave Westmeath, but I leave it as a friend departing from among friends, and a stranger no longer (hear, hear). I have been well supported by all classes, and I have never had an angry word with, or from any man in the country since I took your horn. Though I am going from Westmeath, I hope to return to it, and I look forward to have many another gallop over your fine country. I can hardly hope that I have really deserved all

the kind things that Mr. Dease has said of me ; but, at any rate, I may truly say, I have *tried* to deserve them (hear, hear). On my wife's account and on my own, I thank you heartily for the very handsome gift which the chairman has presented to me on your behalf. It will be a lasting and valuable memento of our time in Westmeath. Gentlemen, once more I thank you."

Mr. Macdonald Moreton resumed his seat amidst thunders of applause.

The Hon. Francis Browne proposed "The healths of the Ladies who hunted in Westmeath," and in eloquent terms did full justice to the sporting ladies of the country.

Mr. Thomas T. Chapman briefly returned thanks on behalf of the ladies.

Mr. Joseph Tuite proposed the health of Mrs. Macdonald Moreton, and said that this toast, in his opinion, was quite as important as that of her husband, for since she came to Westmeath she had been most anxious to have good hunting, and appeared herself in the hunting field on almost every occasion. The toast was received with applause.

Mr. Moreton returned thanks on behalf of his wife, and said Mr. Tuite had spoken the truth about her being anxious to have good hunting, as the first question she asked him every night on his return from the chase was "Did you kill a fox?" (Cheers.)

The Chairman then proposed "The health of the Secretary and Treasurer to the Hunt, Mr. Richard Reynell, junior, and Mr. Henry Murray." He said—I have heard a good Secretary described as one always ready to "write and do right." This description seems as though made to measure for Mr. Richard Reynell, junior. His pen is ever at their service, and so far as I know he never does wrong. I hope that our worthy Treasurer, Mr. Murray, will long continue to fulfil the duties of his office as satisfactorily as he has done in the past. I cannot desire better to the hunt than to hope that the hounds may have *few checks* and the Treasurer *plenty of them* (Cheers).

Mr. R. Reynell, junior, who on rising was very warmly received, returned thanks for the kind manner in which his health had been drank, and also thanked Mr. Macdonald Moreton, for the courtesy he had always shown him as Secretary. He said a good deal of progress had been made the last three years in hunting matters in Westmeath ; but much remained to be done, as they wanted a Master, more gorse coverts, and more general interest to be taken by the hunting community, without which no Secretary could have things as they should be.

The Treasurer, Mr. H. Murray, also returned thanks.

The health of "The Strangers" was proposed, and Mr. J. Winter returned thanks in an appropriate speech.

The health of "The Chairman" was then drank with very great enthusiasm.

The Chairman briefly responded.

Mr. R. W. Reynell proposed the health of "The Owners of the Gorse Coverts," which was, in his opinion, a toast second to none in importance, as without good coverts, it was impossible to have good fox-hunting. He coupled with that toast the name of Mr. Tuite, who had done more than any other gentleman in the county, not alone in making coverts, but in supporting the fox-hounds.

Mr. Tuite responded, and said it had always given him great pleasure to assist in every way in his power to promote the sport of fox-hunting in Westmeath. (Hear, hear.)

Mr. S. Winter proposed the health of Mr. S. A. Reynell, Master of the Meath Fox-hounds, and said he wished greatly he had been there, but regretted that from slight indisposition he was prevented from being present. They all knew him as the first sportsman in Ireland, and he called on them to drink his health. The toast was drank amidst much cheering. Captain Hartopp returned thanks on behalf of Mr. Reynell.

Mr. Joly proposed the health of the Vice-Chairman, G. Adamson, Esq., which was received with applause.

Mr. Adamson briefly responded.

Mr. Maher proposed the health of "The Committee," who had so nobly come forward to take charge of the hounds when they had failed in getting a Master. (Cheers.)

Mr. Tuite, Mr. Winter, and Mr. Malone responded.

CHAPTER VIII.

1871. A COMMITTEE. MESSRS. MALONE, WINTER, AND TUITE.—TOCOCK HUNTSMAN.—MATTHEWS COMES TO IRELAND AS WHIP.—CAPTAIN COOTE TAKES THE MASTERSHIP AT END OF THE CUBBING.—SOME GOOD SPORT ENSUES.—ANECDOTE AND QUOTATION.—THE BENEFITS OF HUNTING TO THE COMMUNITY AT LARGE.—MONEY SPENT ON HUNTING SINCE SAM REYNELL'S TIME, 1835 TO 1897.—A HUNT BALL DESCRIBED IN VERSE.—CAPTAIN COOTE LEAVES.—ANOTHER CHANGE OF MASTERSHIP.—INK SLINGING IN 1872.—WHAT LORDS GREVILLE AND VAUX THOUGHT OF IT.—CAPTAIN GREVILLE-NUGENT APPOINTED M.F.H.—TWO YEARS' VARIABLE SPORT.—AN ORIGINAL APPEAL TO THE FOWL FUND.

PENDING the finding of a Master when Mr. Macdonald Moreton gave up, the following committee agreed to work the country:—Captain J. Richard Malone, Mr. Samuel Winter, and Mr. Joseph Tuite.

The first named was then, and has ever since been, one of the leading men of the hunt, both as to management and in the field; and there is probably no man of his weight in Ireland who can live with him when hounds run fast. He now commands the IX. Batt. Rifle Brigade, or Westmeath Militia.

Mr. Samuel Winter was keen about sport of all descriptions. His residence—Clondrisse—was conveniently situated, and he undertook the management of the northern limit of the country.

When, not long after this, Mr. Winter left Westmeath he was socially and sportingly a great loss. Succeeding to his grandfather's name and estate, he went as Mr. Samuel Sanderson to Clover Hill, near Belturbet, and it was good-bye to hunting when he went to live in the County Cavan. He left many friends behind him, and looks back to his hunting days with pleasant memories. Mr. Joe Tuite was also an important, not to say an officious, member of the Westmeath Hunt. Of a very old county family, descended from the Barons of Moyashell, the name of Tuite appears early in the history of the Westmeath hunt.

Mr. Joseph Tuite always supported the hounds most liberally—one year he gave £80 subscription. It was he who selected the site (it is on Hospital property)

for the good little gorse covert of Crissauns. It cost Mr. Tuite upwards of £40 to plant and enclose it, and foxes from Sutherlandshire were imported to



COL. J. R. MALONE.

tenant the gorse. One of these, a "bob-tailed fox," was on the war-path for four years, and showed wonderful runs from Tullaghan, where he had taken up his abode; and seemingly, out of respect for his patron, this fox invariably ran to Sonna, or in that direction. Tullaghan was another of Mr. Tuite's favourite coverts; he and Mr. Murray took it under their protection.

Mr. Winter on the hunt committee represented the *suaviter in modo*, of which Mr. Tuite was the *fortiter in re*. They purchased hunt horses, and superintended the cub-hunting, with Toccock carrying the horn, his son George second Whip, and James Matthews, first Whip. The latter was engaged by Mr. Tuite, and christened

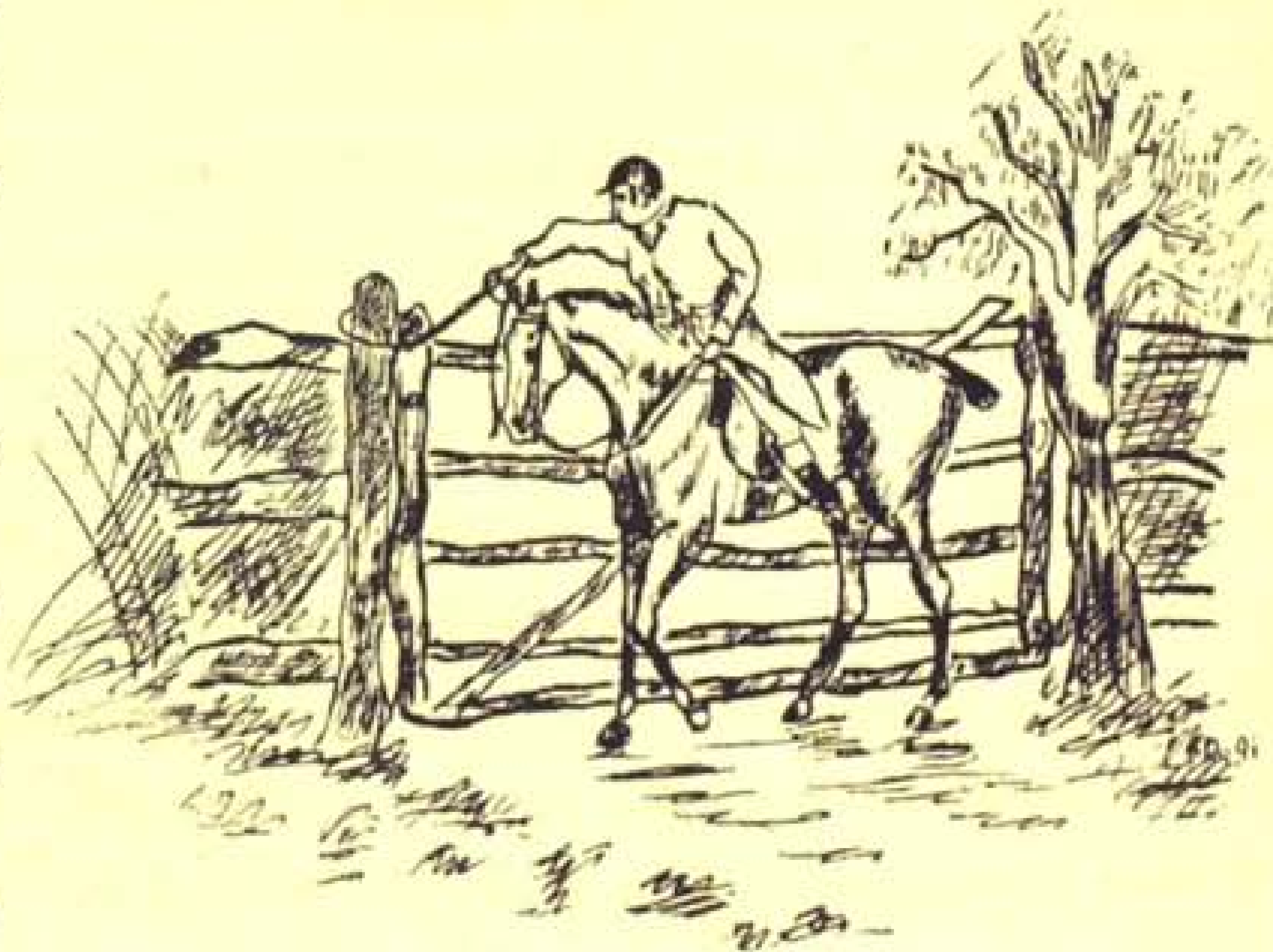
a kennel name "Will," by which he has been known for six-and-twenty years. If any member of the Westmeath Hunt intends to give him a legacy, let him remember the following doggerel:—

"Take care that you make no mistake
in the names,

By calling him 'William,' his real
name being 'James.'

If mentioning James for a gift in
your will,

His name is James Matthews, not
'William' or 'Bill.'



'WILL' MATTHEWS

Will's uncle, Tom Matthews, was in Duhallow, and in Meath; before that he was huntsman to the Warwickshire with the Honourable W. H. North, in 1861, and also in Worcestershire, and with the Cottesmore Hunt. Soon after Will's arrival in Ireland he went to call on Mr. Reynell of Archerstown: Sam, of course, asked his pedigree, and then remarked: "If you are as good a man as your uncle, you'll do."

It was not till the opening day of the season 1871-2 that Captain Coote came into office; he took over the Hunt stud and went into residence at Culleen, lent to him by his friend Mr. Tuite. Mr. Tuite it was who "discovered" him. Captain Richard Coote had served in the Carabiniers; he had hunted harriers in his native county of Cavan, was an all-round sporting man, and had possibly picked up many wrinkles during four seasons' hunting with the Badminton. He imported to the wilds of Western Meath some of the nattiness of the Duke's country.



S. WINTER.

Mr. Reynell continued the arduous duties of Hon. Sec., and Mr. Henry Murray, of Mount Murray, acted as Treasurer to the Hunt.

A sporting correspondent writing of Westmeath, in 1871, said: "Sporting farmers and sporting foxes it has in abundance, and it only wants a few good holding gorses to make a certainty of finding our little red friend when wanted." This penny-a-lining sportsman, knew his book, but he might have added a note of warning to farmers, to keep down wire and attract the Saxon gold.

Captain Coote did not really get a fair chance. He came on the eve of the hunting season, hounds and country were new to him, and he was not acquainted with many of the field. However, a man of such varied experience as the gallant Carabinier was not long in getting settled down.

He was a great man with his fists when occasion required. One day when

hunting his harriers in the County Cavan a big burly fellow refused to open a gate : " I'll make you open it," said he. " Get down off your horse and try," said the countryman. A crowd gathered round to see the fun, as the bully was a noted man, able to " clear a fair ;" however, science and the noble art, coupled with pluck and condition, left the Captain champion of the day and the clodhopper rolling in mud and gore. He never had to ask twice to have a gate opened, within miles of Cootehill after that day. Cock-fighting in the big entrance hall of Cootehill was another of his pastimes, and in a main between County Cavan and County Monaghan the *élite* of the two counties were present to the number of about one hundred, and the floor was said to have been paved with gold, wagering was so heavy. The gallant M.F.H. once stood to win on the Derby a sum sufficient to clear his heavily mortgaged estate : his fancy was beaten a head ! Cootehill or Bellamont Forest now belongs to Mr. Smith.

Hunting began rather earlier than is usual in Westmeath, and on the 30th October, 1871, the M.F.H. invited all to a champagne breakfast at Culleen, and then moved off to draw for a fox in Lord Greville's pretty woodlands overlooking Lough Owel,—the highest lying water in Ireland.



J. TUIE

There were three foxes on foot in the laurels in the oak wood, but scent was so poor that nothing could be done with them, the ground got foiled, and the foxes seemed to vanish. Some more of his Lordship's preserves were called upon that same week, and a litter of strong cubs at Clonyn gave hounds two hours hard work with occasional sallies into the demesne, men and horses all ready for a gallop; but were disappointed. One cub was marked to ground in a rabbit hole and left.

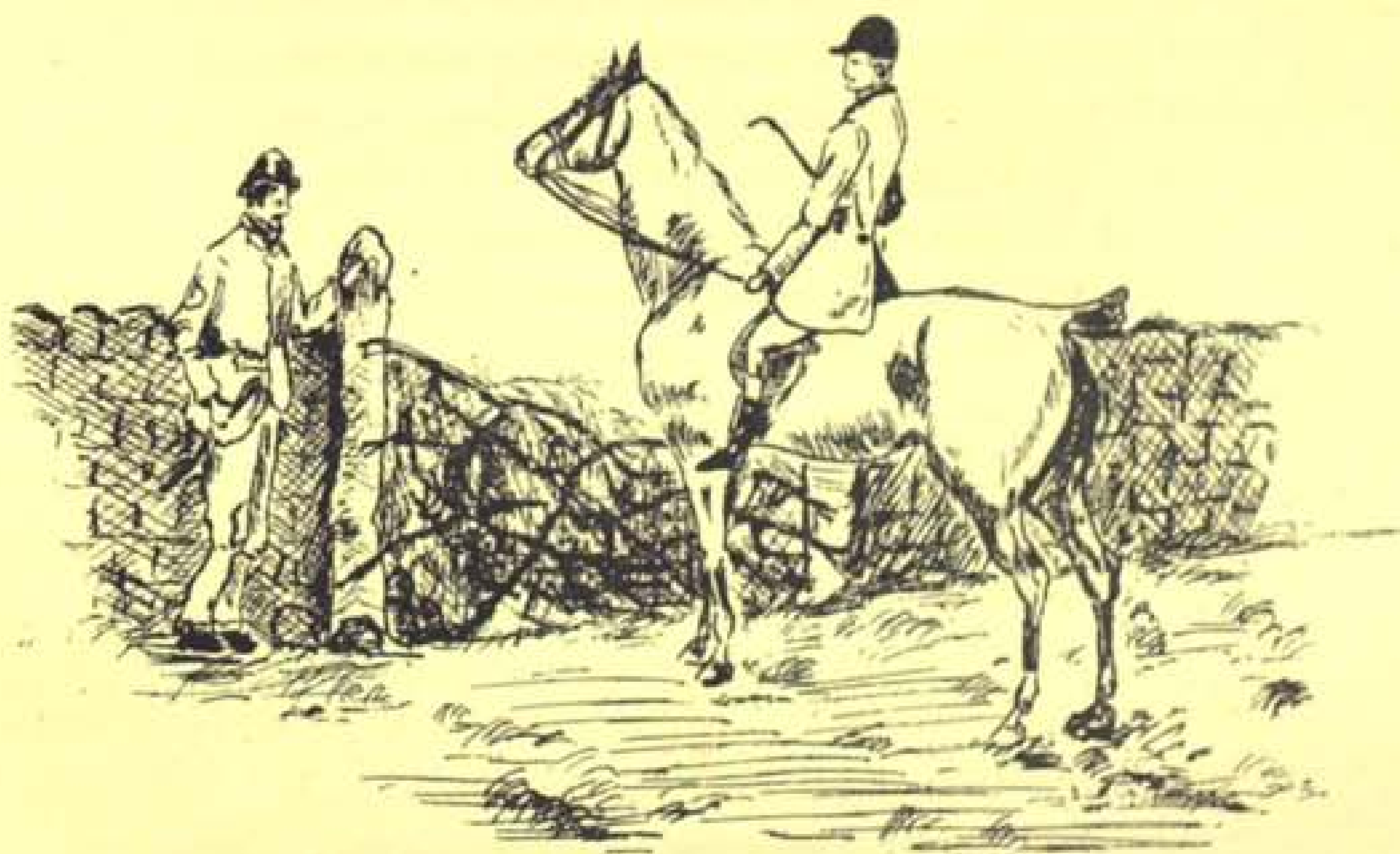
Drumcree laurels gave Captain Coote his first good cross-country pursuit : an old fox slipped away the

moment hounds topped the fence. Matthews holloaed him away, and the Master held his field, to give the hounds a chance; no swearing or fuss, but at the word of command: "Now, gentlemen, you may go," each one settled down to ride or look for a gap, as the case might be. A cavalry officer makes an excellent field master, having command of men and being quick to grasp the situation, when "he who hesitates," &c., for a field of hunting men (including women and children) is very like a troop of cavalry, only more stupid and less obedient.



CAPTAIN R. COOTE.

The first brush from which Tocock shook the mud before handing it to the Master for presentation, was at Killynon, and there could be no worthier recipient for the trophy than Miss Reynell. Jeffrystown was then called upon on this 19th December, and again one of Mr. Reynell's coverts held. This was an old fox, and hounds got well away, crossing Gigginstown, and turning left crossed Clonderlever hill into Barbavilla, for Glananea, and to ground in Drumcree, which was not on the stop card for that day.



"SURE, AN ASS WOULD LEP THAT."

Though rather intersected by demesnes this was some of the nicest country in Westmeath ; forty-seven minutes brilliant hunting. There was no wire up in 1871.

“ Great heavens ! rash man, what a crowner you come,
Your collar-bone broken, two ribs and a thumb,
While the pride of your stable lies stretched on the plain,
And the friend of your heart never rises again ;
Then bitter the curses you launch in your ire
At the villain who fenced his enclosures with wire.”

There was an instructive article in the Westmeath local papers in 1896, showing the amount of money expended in this county on hunting. It proved beyond contradiction that a quarter of *a million* had been thus retained in the district since Mr. Reynell first blew a horn at the kennels of Clonderlever in 1835. Farmers, think of this !

The Hunt Ball was a great affair this year, and held in the Court-house at Mullingar, on January 26th, 1872 ; it was thus described by a local poet :—

“ While there's life in my heart, and as long as I breathe,
I'll ne'er cease to sing the fame of Westmeath,
Where the whole length of winter fox-hunting holds sway,
Till at last it gives way to the green drake in May ;
Whose ladies are fair, as her huntsmen are brave,
And where every man carries his whip to the grave.
While we hope that her fortune may ever shine bright,
And look back on the past with unfeigned delight.
That 'no time's like the present ' 'tis ever confessed,
And so seventy-two must hold rank with the best.
Have you been to the pantomime ? Take my advice,
And if not, go there soon, it's exceedingly nice ;
Besides, if you go, you'll be able to see
The beauty and truth of my next simile ;
For there you'd behold with unmixed admiration,
The exemplified sense of the word 'transformation.'
Dwarfs and giants by turns exchanging their features,
And both giving way to most exquisite creatures ;
Chambers cheerless and cold and gloomy as night,
Quickly changed into regions resplendent with light ;
We're surprised how so many things suddenly vary,
And all this is done by the wand of a fairy.
Yet a scene just as wondrous as any of these,
And also as well calculated to please,

Has occurred here at home in the midst of us all,
And of which the result was the Westmeath Hunt Ball.
Now, Mullingar Courthouse is not just the place
You'd expect a display of youth, beauty, and grace :
And if ten days before I had happen'd to tell you
'Twould be so, you would think I was trying to sell you,
And you'd say (without meaning the least incivility)
Such a thing was a palpable impossibility.
And, no wonder, for then you would find nothing there
But bare walls and benches, and plenty of air ;
Which latter is well in its way, and quite right,
Tho' not just the thing on a January night.

But on Friday all these were most wondrously changed,
Tho' I'm sure I can't tell you how all was arranged ;
And in so short a time transformed they were,
It is plain that the hands of the fairies were there,
Who with exquisite taste first beautified all,
And then with their charms adorned the ball ;
And with such expedition was everything done,
They had finished before we supposed they'd begun.
But while giving all praise to the fair fairies rule,
We must not forget their attendant, Drumgoole.
If Northern Wizard, it must be confess'd,
A wizard he's proved him to be in the ' West.'

Where crusty old lawyers, in wigs and long gowns,
Overruled with their tongues, or looked downward with frowns.
Lovely ladies, all radiant with smiles, we behold,
Whose hearts are as warm as the others were cold
(But beware of their eyes, as they move in the dance,
Which in passing pierce through with electrical glance).
From north, south, east, and west, and from further away,
Rank and beauty keep pouring in endless array.
Above, Liddell's Band caused the music to flow,
While the gay 97th responded below.
But though everything's altered, one word is the same ;
Still, in courtship, the courthouse is true to its name.
And, now that I think it, I can also believe
That here many a man may his sentence receive ;
And if sentence of death isn't passed upon you,
With joy you may find yourself transported too.
I ween if you're on the look out for a wife,
In that case we wish you 'transported for life.'

Some thought that the floor was inclined to give way,
 Which it didn't; but this I will venture to say,
 That had this occurred, when we got to the ground,
 'Fallen angels' in numbers we'd have all around ;
 More substantial ones, too, as we find to our cost,
 Than those that we read of in *Paradise Lost*.
 One thing called to my memory Belshazzar's ball,
 And that was the writings we saw on the wall ;
 But in it no further resemblance I see,
 For we wanted no Daniel t' interpret R. C.*

There was a noon meet at Culleen on Saturday, "after the ball," and though there had been a pleasant gallop of forty-five minutes to the Crooked Wood, Captain Coote wished to show the strangers who were out, what a good Westmeath fox could do in a good part of the country. Tullaghan Gorse was, therefore, called upon ; late it certainly was, but the February evenings are long enough, and a ring of five miles ending in a sewer near Walshestown Chapel, was voted the best thing so far since Christmas.

The wind up of the season failed to produce anything brilliant; Tocock was getting slow. Matthews did not know the country then as well as he does now, but Captain Coote's Mastership would probably have given satisfaction had he been asked to stay on for another season. An undercurrent of jealousy upset the calm of the hunt.

On the 9th of April, 1872, the fowl fund again wanted replenishing, and an entertainment with the high-sounding title of "Phantasmagoria Representation" was given by Mr. W. A. Barnes, in the Lecture Hall at Mullingar ; front seats, 2s, and second row, 1s., was cheap for looking at a fine collection of chromatropes far surpassing in brilliancy and variety the hues of the rainbow. Scenes from the late French War, and the death of—"a bold running fox?"—no, but of Mary Queen of Scots, besides other instructive and beautiful pictures.

A great deal of disputation now took place : innumerable hunt meetings were held and much ink-slinging. One party wished to retain Captain Coote : Lord Greville and his followers were for the Hon. Reginald ; Lord Vaux and Mr. Briscoe were opposed to the latter ; bitterness and family spite were dragged into the controversy. Some shareholders threatened to sell the hounds, other members said they would withdraw their

* Richard Coote, M.F.H.

subscriptions, and so on. All this happened nearly a quarter of a century ago, but it reads like the year of the Diamond Jubilee! Eventually it was decided to elect Captain the Hon. Reginald Greville-Nugent as Master. Mr. Samuel Winter, acting at a friend of "Reggie's" during his absence, wrote from Clondrisse, on June 8th, to Mr. Briscoe, who complained in a truly Hibernian manner of "having received a letter signed by no person, but with Reginald Greville's name to it!" Captain Greville had broken one of his "limbs" at Mullingar Races, and the signature of his amanuensis did not satisfy Mr. Briscoe. This was what was written :—



CAPTAIN THE HON. REGINALD GREVILLE-NUGENT.

"MY DEAR BRISCOE,—

"MULLINGAR, 6th April, 1872.

"I have been thinking over what you have been saying to me about the hounds to-day. I am still of opinion that it would not be fair to ask me to be answerable for the hounds, if I should have the bad luck to have dumb madness in the kennel [N.B.—He seemed to have a personal dread of this malady], or if the hounds should be poisoned. I am ready to sign an agreement to give up the hounds as I get them, if neither these two misfortunes happen to the pack while I am Master; and I think if you ask the proprietors, they will be satisfied with the guarantee.

"Very truly yours,

"REGINALD GREVILLE NUGENT."

As late as July 14th things were not going to Lord Vaux's liking, so he threatened to "sell the hounds and divide the spoil." The pack was said to be value for £400. Lord Greville, the first Baron, in writing, on the part of his son, to Mr. Briscoe, put the case very clearly; and he being himself one of the eight shareholders of the pack, and a man *compos mentis*, his letter bears very strongly on the difficult question regarding the ownership of the hounds. His Lordship wrote from London on 8th June, 1872 :—

"MY DEAR BRISCOE,—

"I understand that you consider Reginald should sign an agreement to give up the hounds as he got them, when he ceases to be Master, without making any allowance for casualties; and, further, I am told that no agreement of any sort was got from Mr. Moreton,

the Committee, or Captain Coote. Such being the case, surely it is not fair to ask your present Master to do more than his predecessors did. There are some considerations respecting the hounds which should be borne in mind. When you sold them to the county for £400, the question was how that amount could be made up. It was done by eight gentlemen coming forward, and each advancing £50. But you sold, and they bought, the hounds for the county. You said at the time you could get much more for them; but so anxious were you that they should be kept for the county, that you would take less if that object could be accomplished. Therefore, it may be said that we who advanced this money hold the hounds in trust for the county. We clearly could not sell them for our own benefit to go elsewhere.

"Again, how is each share to be ascertained? The property is undivided, and it would require unanimity before taking any action. I believe that six out of the eight are quite satisfied with the arrangements made by the Committee appointed at the general meeting in the spring, and do not require anything more to be done.

"It is to be remembered that some time since the county purchased Mr. Longworth's hounds, and how are they to be distinguished from the rest? In my opinion the hounds should be made over to the county, on the condition that if at any time the pack could not be kept up from want of subscriptions, or otherwise, and the hounds should be sold, the proceeds should be applied to the repayment of the eight (who advanced the £400), or their representatives.

"Yours very truly,

"GREVILLE."

Mr. Briscoe thought differently, and described the fact of Captain Coote being exempt from an agreement as "a grave mistake, which we now wish to rectify." He considered that Captain Reginald's youth and inexperience demanded even stricter terms than would be asked of a more staid individual.

Mr. Briscoe was inclined to facetiously refer to "wild oats" as unsuitable feeding for foxhounds; "he had sold the pack for £250 less than he could have got for it elsewhere; he had been badly treated by the Committee when he, Lord Vaux, and Mr. Boyd came forward to fill a gap; he had been insulted by the patrons of the Hunt Ball; he, therefore, ceased to subscribe to the Hunt (but lent his coverts); he would never give his hounds to the county, and would give the Committee nothing—but his blessing!" Had Mr. Briscoe ever heard of the "Jackdaw of Rheims"?

During Captain Greville Nugent's first year of Mastership sport can only be described as moderate, at least in the early part of the season, for with the exception of a few sharp scurries in the stonewall country and a nice day at Drumcree, there were few good runs. After Christmas things improved, and on 22nd February, 1873, the Master had a bye day at Ballinea and hunted hounds himself. There were said

to be outlying foxes about Hanstown, Keoltown, and Bryanstown, but he found them not. When turning for home he got intelligence of a traveller (not commercial) that was seen moving towards Tullaghan where earths were open. By galloping forward the Master circumvented the wily one: his whip was sent on to the earth, and soon had his cap in the air as the fox passed close to him. Racing through Ardon, Walshestown, Clintown, and Clondardis they turned for Knocknacrieve and Johnstown, round again by Piercefield and Frewen, beyond which the fox heading for Portloman was not persevered with; the few who were out declared it the best thing of the season, and were satisfied to leave him in hopes of his giving them as good a gallop another day.

It is very true that hounds take their character from their huntsman, and the pack had in Westmeath become decidedly flighty in the year 1873: it consisted of eighteen and a half couple of dogs and twenty-four couple of bitches. Tock hunted the hounds, Matthews and Tock, junior, turning them to him. The Master generally made Clonyn his headquarters. The Royal Welsh Fusiliers were at Mullingar, and it goes without saying, that they were all well known in the field, and also helped considerably at the Hunt Ball in the Court-house, on February 7th. Their "Red Dragon Cup" was run for at the Hunt meeting that year. At the end of the season Tock took a place in England as stud groom, after which he often came over to visit his old hunting grounds in quest of horses for his master. He was replaced in the following year by Tom Drayton as K. H. and first Whip, Matthews and George Smart assisting. The Master made an attempt to hunt the hounds himself, supplemented by Drayton, who took the horn during his frequent absences. Captain Nugent lived at Ballyglass, Mullingar, during part of this term of his Mastership, and afterwards at Clonhugh. He kept up the numbers but not the efficiency of the pack. He was the only Westmeath Master who ever affected race riding, and was more renowned in silk than in scarlet; for "Mr. St. James's" name was well known on every steeplechase course in the United Kingdom. A consummate horseman, with rare pluck and a light weight, his name figured at the top of the list of gentlemen riders in Ireland, and the year after he gave up the Westmeath hounds and devoted his whole time to steeplechasing, he rode four winners at the Punchestown meeting. Always cheery and gay, from the day he joined the Coldstream Guards, till, in 1878, he met his end in the sport he loved so well, Reggie Greville had more friends than enemies. He knew Loughgar racecourse well, and often sported silk there. The 8th Hussars held their regimental races in Westmeath in his second season.

Mr. D. Colgan's "Rockfield" by "the Coroner" carried his owner into first place at the hunt races, light and heavy weight starting together. In 1874 a change was noticeable in the hunting field—in Westmeath, perhaps, more than in other counties, for the clergy were debarred from joining in the sport. There is one notable exception, and as he resides within a short distance of the Deserted Village, it may truly be said of him in the words of Oliver Goldsmith:—

"A man he was (*and is*) to all the country dear."

A very extraordinary appeal was made to the "Fowl Fund," of which the following is a *verbatim* copy:—

"TO THE HUNTSMEN OF THE WESTMEATH HOUNDS.

"SIR,

"The following lines were a postscript to my first letter to you, but as I did not wish to say too much I concluded with what you received. On reflection I now post them to you, hoping you will take the liberty to hand them to Mr. Reynells, as I consider it a charity and an act of justice of you to do so, as I am at too much loss owing to a cut-away bog on my land adjoining the hill over from which I cannot keep my ducks and geese. In January, '73, I lost 8 ducks as they were commencing to lay. I did not intend seeking compensation, considering it would be loosing time owing to former disapointments. Had not for Mr. Rochford Boyd's gamekeeper finding fragments, and hearing I was the sufferer, induced me to write my bill, and that he would get me compensated, he being an honest man that would be above telling an untruth, I thought it would be so."

The following lines, which were intended as the "postscript" mentioned, show the result:—

"That the above is truth none can deny,
As Mr. Blecco can certefy,
He knowing the damage done to me;
To Mr. Reynolds he did give my bill
Which stated all the fox did kill,
The remains of which Mr. Blecco found
All about the pleasure ground
The promised payment, 'tis strange to say,
He put it off from day to day,
And, to tell the truth, I think it no treason,
He then adjourned until the next season
Now to conclude, no more to say,
He threw out my bill the last hunt day

Together with many others too,
 The reason why I will tell you.
 The more a copper he would not pay
 As he got no fox upon that day,
 But if bold Reynard you did then see
 He would have some other excuse for me,
 Experience doth tell me so,
 The longer we live the more we know.
 But if I was to begin my days agin,
 I would banish each duck, each goose, turkey, and hin,
 Sooner than feed foxes and not be paid
 By the far-famed sportsmen of Westmeath.
 Since losing the duck I lost five geese.
 Bad as my case is, others are worse ; persons depending
 On their fowl for tobacco and groceries. I wish you were
 Speaking to one fellow-sufferer, named Paddy Maloney,
 Commonly called Paddy the hob.
 If you were to hear Paddy the hob's lamentation,
 You would say it is a curious nation
 All he suffered from tobacco ; how Misses had to abstain
 From tea ; and how he was quartered each hunt day
 Until hunted himself the day all claimants
 Was hunted. Their was more laughed at us
 By persons standing by, than if the fox was
 Started. The laughed at our foolishness for loosing
 Time, looking for what we never will get. I hope
 I can yet tell them the are false prophets,
 That I will get compensation. I would divide the
 Calamity, accept a part, and be greatful to boot.
 Hoping the gallant sportsmen will not dispute.
 Now I think, my friends, I said enough
 No more at present from Rippenduff,
 For to go back unto John Longworth's time,
 I am sure I would write to long a rhyme.
 A copper damage the would fain never pay
 Oh what will become of him the last day ?
 I hope in time he will repent
 He and his friend great John Nugent;
 That before their death the would act fair,
 And pay their portion of the old arrear.

“ I am, Sir, your sincere Wellwisher.

“ PATRICK KEENAN,

“ Rippenduff, Castletown G.

“ July 25th/74.”

One of the best things of the season of '73-'4 was on December 19th, when they met at Turbotston, and had a rattling gallop of seven miles to Annagh from Pakenham Hall: hounds were stopped, as the Meaths were to be in the vicinity next day. This same point was made, but a wider circuit run, twenty-two years later.

When the racing season commenced it was impossible to keep the Captain at home, and the kennel management was none of the best. Hounds that did not go fast enough were left at home, and not even exercised. It was evident that the Master tired of the task he had undertaken; and those who had opposed his Mastership in the beginning chuckled to themselves when he resigned.



CHAPTER IX.

THE COUNTRY HUNTED BY A TRIUMVIRATE.—DEATH OF MR. JOLY, WHO HAD SUCCEEDED MR. REYNELL IN THE SECRETARYSHIP.—ROSE HUNTSMAN, MATTHEWS FIRST WHIP.—NEW COMMITTEE, AND PROMOTION OF WILL MATTHEWS TO CARRY THE HORN 1875.—SOME INCIDENTS IN THE HUNTING FIELD.—DEATH OF MR. HOLAHAN.—MR. HUMPHRIES AND HIS STAGHOUNDS VISIT WESTMEATH.

THERE was no county man coming forward to take over the Mastership, so again a Committee of three had to carry on the Hunt, and in the spring of 1874 Captain J. R. Malone, Mr. Ambrose More O'Ferrall, who was then living at Culleen, and Mr. R. Reynell, jun., were elected as a triumvirate.

Mr. G. A. Boyd proposed to the Committee that they should purchase a share in the hounds. They refused, and would not sign a guarantee unless they were exempt from risks from poison or dumb-madness. Mr. Boyd had a great deal to say about the ownership of the hounds, &c. A voluminous correspondence between him and Mr. Ambrose More O'Ferrall was lost in the fire when Balyna was burnt, in 1888. Mr. Henry E. Joly, of Clonmoyle, took the Secretaryship, and worked with as much zeal and courtesy as his predecessor, Mr. Reynell, had done for seventeen years. Mr. Joly's term of office expired, unfortunately, with his death in 1877, when he had endeared himself to all classes by his courteous manner and attention to the details of the Hunt.

George Rose was engaged as huntsman from Major Browne's hounds, the South Stafford. Matthews and George Smart were the two Whips, and the Hunt horses were kept at livery with David Fulton, V.S., Mullingar, whose son was afterwards taken on as Whipper-in. Sport was not brilliant, things had got disorganized, and it was not till the second season of the Committee that their improvements began to bear fruit.

It was during a run from Gillardstown, *via* Drumcree and Glananea, round Lough Lene to Windtown, that Mr. Holahan fell, in a most simple manner, was crushed, and never recovered consciousness. The Hunt was soon again in mourning. On St. Patrick's Day, 1875, Westmeath sportsmen were much concerned when, on the racecourse at Baldoyle, a telegram announced the death of one of their erstwhile Masters, Captain Richard Coote.

Loughegar was again the course selected for Hunt Races, 1875, April 19th. Mr. Colgan's "Rockfield" repeated his victory. Lord Kilmaine rode

his horse "Treasure," and was first of the light-weights; both lots started together. Matthews had the leg up on Mr. Salmon's mare in the Farmers' Race.



A. MORE O FERRALL.

A ridiculous story of Box and Cox business, amusing to all except the pony, happened to, perhaps, the smallest boy who ever appeared in the saddle with the Westmeath Hounds. This youth had a broken-winded pony, which he was allowed to ride when the family could spare it from harness. The boy was entrusted with foddering the animal; but his father kept the key of the oats bin. One hot summer, the boy was advised by his *fidus achates*, a neighbouring car jarvey, not to give the pony any new hay, as it would work better on oats alone; the father thought

that new hay was fine stuff, and so gave the wretched animal no oats, and it was bedded on sawdust. The family went out driving, but the pony failed signally to draw them up the hills. "You must have given 'Jack' very little oats, Dad," said the lad. "Oh, he don't want any corn when getting lots of good force-grass hay." "But I gave him no hay this week, Dad!" What a pity this pony had not a cross of Balaam's moke in it. He would have made things hum.

In 1875-6 Sir Walter Nugent and Lord Kilmaine joined Mr. Reynell in place of the two retired committee-men; but his Lordship shortly afterwards went abroad, and his vacancy was filled by Mr. Richard Levinge, of Levington.

Matthews was promoted to huntsman at the instigation of Mr. Reynell. Tom Drayton (the only left-handed Whipper-in that Westmeath has seen) afterwards went as K. H. to Captain H. Steeds, and turned out the Clonsilla Harriers in faultless style. He later went as K. H. and First Whip to Captain Macnaghten in Hereford-

shire, where they must both have often wished for a good Westmeath fox in those pheasant preserves! Will Goodall was First Whip (his father, Stephen, hunted the Kildares about the year 1857, before their present huntsman Frank, of that ilk).



LORD KILMAINE

W. Rawle came on as Whip for a short time, and then went to Kildare. Young Fulton acted as Second Whip. He was so fond of sport that he preferred turning hounds to following his father's, the noted veterinary surgeon's profession.

The Hunt subscription in 1875 was £1,154. There were 105 members; some good names, now alas! not represented:—Lord Vaux Sir, John Ennis, Adams Reilly, Richard Coffy, Philip Batty, A. More O'Ferrall, Captain Fosbery, Messrs. Colgan, W. S. Kelly, Eivers (3), Murphy (3), B. D. Thompson.

The season opened at Lynbury, where the sporting baronet and committeeman then resided. Kilpatrick Gorse held a leash, one of which led hounds (seventeen and a-half couple) and horsemen (about fifty) a rattler through Ledeston, skirting Keoltown over the Burrow hill right-handed into Dysart—(Keoltown, Mr. Swift's place, was not then plastered with barbed-wire as it is now, nor was Kilpatrick). The fox tried the earths at Bryanstown without success. The pace was good, the ground holding, and brooks the same, as some thrusters found to their cost. The hunt still speeded on, over the M. G. W. R. into the road at Dundonnell, through Churchtown and Miltown, where the fox was viewed: he struggled gamely on, was bolted from his refuge in Croughill by a terrier, and killed, after running six miles in forty-three minutes from the time he left Kilpatrick Gorse. This was a most encouraging beginning for the Committee, and for Will Matthews in his first season as huntsman.

One of the best runs that took place under the Committee was from Waterstown in the far-off country. Late in the evening, as a last resource, this gorse was tried and not found wanting. Hounds ran hard without a check for fully five miles, and this run was talked about for years.

Knockdrin does not savour of a really brilliant thing across good country, but one of the best hunts Mr. Reynell remembers during his seventeen years of secretaryship was from those woods through Ballynegall, skirting Tullaghan Gorse, along the slope of the hill to Portlomon, and to ground under a bridge near Sonna. Mr. Andrew Connolly, of Greenpark, on his famous rat-tailed horse, by "Vulcan," was the most prominent man all through. He was a very forward rider. Another hard nut to crack was Mr. Lewis, "Neck-or-Nothing" he was called. These two sportsmen rode rather jealous, and one day they cannoned on a double bank, both men and horses rolling into the opposite gripe; up they got, and, in the heat of the moment, began belabouring each other with their whips, after which they set to work again, but quite overlooked the fact that they had climbed on to the wrong horses! This Mr. Lewis and the present owner of "Violetstown" were both galloping, independent sort of riders, and went hard on occasions.

On the 23rd November, 1875, Pakenham Hall and Kinturk furnished sport,

both foxes running bang into Meath territory, perhaps in honour of "Sam" Reynell, who had joined his nephew that day. From the Earl of Longford's woods they ran, *via* Kinturk, for forty-five minutes through Windtown, towards Lough Glore, and killed in the open at Ballymanus. A Kinturk fox then took them to the Rock of Corry, crossing the Oldcastle road near Cressley (said to be the oldest racecourse in Ireland), and on by Sleeveboy and Caslanakirka, a slow hunting run of an hour, but most enjoyable.

What would the present generation think of the following hunt card, issued just twenty-one years ago?—

Jan. 19. Ballinahown.
 „ 21. Rosmead.
 „ 24. Newforest.
 „ 26. Ladywell (near Athlone).
 „ 31. Cooksboro'.



SIR WALTER NUGENT, BART.

Still we could do with a few hunts like the Rosmead day, when after twenty minutes hunting a South Hill fox to death, another crossed the Delvin Road touching on Clonyn, passing Rosmead to the right over a lovely grass country for Kilgar, crossing Sam Reynell's lawn (Mr. Waller was at the time Master of the Meaths), where the ladies of the house enjoyed a true beer jug version of the hunt; fox, hounds, and hunters all in sight together; forty-five minutes up to now, when after a slight check this good fox retraced his steps rather wide of his outward journey, and hounds were stopped at the Delvin Road. There was a large contingent out from Meath, who were greatly pleased with the day's sport.

At the close of the season, 1875-6, Mr. A. E. Humphries, who kept harriers at his place Ballyhaise in Cavan, took his hounds, horses, and deer to Mullingar by invitation, and gave the local bruisers some rare gallops. He found it a better scenting, and a much pleasanter country to ride over than his own county of Cavan. Mr. Humphries lays great store by a silver hunting horn, suitably inscribed,

which was presented to him by his Westmeath friends on the occasion : a hunting crop was at the same time given to his wife.

In May, after the season was over, a *soirée*, literary and musical, was held in Mullingar. Colonel Addington, of the 100th regiment, placed his band at the disposal of the committee. Mr. S. A. Reynell gave a lecture on fox-hunting and in most humorous style delineated the various modes of conducting the noble sport, and wound up amidst a perfect furore of applause. The proceeds of the entertainment went to the coffers of the "Fowl Fund," so it was hoped that foxes would become numerous and well cared for. The country was very anxious to find a Master, and their search was soon successful.



CHAPTER X.

MR. MONTAGU CHAPMAN'S FIVE YEARS MASTERSHIP, 1876 TO 1881.—MR. R. W. LEVINGE SUCCEEDS MR. JOLY IN THE SECRETARYSHIP IN FEBRUARY, 1877.—"CHRISTY COFFY."—REPAIRS TO THE KENNELS AT CULLEEN.—THE SOHO HARRIERS.—DEATH OF CAPTAIN GREVILLE NUGENT.—MR. BILL KELLY.—CAPTAIN J. R. MALONE TAKES THE SECRETARYSHIP IN NOVEMBER, 1879.—MR. LYONS' HARRIERS.—A "FAMOUS" HUNT FROM TULLAGHAN.

MR. MONTAGU RICHARD CHAPMAN, son of Sir Benjamin, the fourth Bart. of Killua, or St. Lucy's, was born in 1853. He had just left Oxford, and was living at home. No better selection could have been made for the Mastership of his County Hounds, to which post of honour he was duly elected. His father (1841-47) and his uncle (1830-41) had represented the county in Parliament, and his grand-uncle Sir Benjamin, had sat for the Borough of Fore in 1773, and for the county in 1784.

Killua Castle is in the extreme north-east corner of Westmeath, on a point jutting into Meath, and in Meath hunting country. It was impossible to work things from home, the furthest meet down by the Shannon being forty miles off; and as Mr. Chapman would not do things by halves, he took rooms in Mullingar for the hunting season, and was on the spot to direct operations, and to look after the many details of the Hunt establishment. He was a big man, riding over fourteen stone, always usefully mounted and generally in the first flight, taking more note of his hounds than did some of the scatter-brained thrusters in front of him.

The subscription was fixed at £1,100, with kennels kept in repair and rent free.

He began the season with forty-three and a-half couple of hounds under Matthews' care, but was not over successful with the cubs, scent being poor; and



SIR MONTAGU CHAPMAN, BART.

only four and a-half brace of pates were to hand when the regular season opened on the last day of October, 1876, at Mullingar : sport was moderate, though they found in Kilpatrick bog.

Johnny Mason turned the hounds to Will. He was a plucky little rider, with a loose seat, wild, but willing, and got more than his share of falls. A nasty roll on the 26th February laid him up for a fortnight. Toop, the Second Whip, had been second horseman to Captains Trotter and J. Kearsley when they were hunting in Meath. Toop afterwards came to Meath under the Earl of Fingall, and later again as kennel huntsman to Mr. Watson. Toop tied the neatest scarf in the hunt !

Circulars had been issued in January, 1877, by Mr. Joly, anent the Hunt Ball, announced to take place on 6th February ; but it was postponed on account of his illness, and did not take place till the 10th April. The following list of stewards is a guarantee that everything was carried out up to date :—

STEWARDS.

The High Sheriff, Co. Westmeath	Philip O'Reilly
Right Hon. the Earl of Longford, K.C.B.	J. L. Naper
Right Hon. the Earl of Granard, K.P.	J. J. Ennis
Lord Greville	Ambrose More O'Ferrall
Lord Kilmaine	A. Adams Reilly
Sir Benjamin J. Chapman, Bart.	Captain Loftus Lewis
Sir Walter Nugent, Bart.	Captain King Harman, M.P.
The Hon. Reginald Harris Temple	Francis Chapman
Montagu Chapman, M.F.H.	Captain John R. Malone
W. Pollard Urquhart	Brinsley Marlay
Colonel Cooper	W. S. Kelly

150 tickets were sold by Mr. R. W. Levinge, the Hon. Sec.

On February 15th, 1877, the hunt were called upon to perform a sad duty in recording the death of Mr. H. E. Joly, their valued Hon. Sec. ; Mr. R. W. C. Levinge was elected in his stead. His hunt list showed ninety-eight members, and there were some liberal subscribers, viz. :—one, £40 ; three, £30 ; five, £25 ; nine, £20 ; three, £15 ; twenty-nine, £10 ; five over, and the rest, at £5 each, making up £1,103. Miss Reynell interested herself in the “Fowl Fund,” and something over £60 was annually expended on poultry claims. Mr. Chapman instituted a “Puppy Fund,” and a sum of £15 was presented in prizes to puppy walkers. The following obtained prizes :—Mr. Manning of Streamstown, Messrs. Minox and J. O'Kelly of Suntown, Mr. Wray of Hopestown ; Captain Fosbery got walks and prizes for a couple and a half ; Messrs. Cowley, Fay, Brennan, Clomisky, L'Estrange, Pilkington of Kilbride, and Mr. Reynell's

herd. This is the most suitable way of obtaining support from farmers who are fond of hunting ; and by degrees the Westmeath sportsmen took a personal interest in the working of their charges when entered. In 1876, and for some years, Mr. Christopher Coffy kept a smart pack of harriers at Newcastle, hunting hares, carted deer, and occasionally an outlying fox. He once hunted a respectable member of the R.I.C., who came to count the hounds about dog-tax time. Mr. Coffy instructed the kennel-boy while "Robert" was counting the hounds, to paint, with a feather dipped in aniseed,



KILLUA CASTLE.

round the heels of his well-folded regulation trousers. They gave the peeler ten minutes start, and then laid on the pack, which ran like fury till they got up with the policeman, and then devoted more attention to his trousers than he cared for. He was sorry that 28 Vic., cap. 50 had ever been put on the statute books, and never counted Master Christy's hounds again.

Poor Christy, whether hunting, racing, shooting, or fishing, he had at his command an endless fund of wit and good humour, which made him a most amusing companion. He was a neat horseman, and rode a few good races in his time. Amongst others Mr. Odlum's "Barmaid," winner of the Lightweight Hunt Cup at Loughgar, in 1877 ; Mr. O'Reilly's "Castaway," winning the Welter at the same meeting. The

M.F.H. rode "Rapid Rhone;" but carrying 14 stone 7 lbs., it was hard for him to give 7 lbs. to an animal like "Castaway." She had won the cup also in 1876.

During Mr. Chapman's tenure of office there was a scratch pack of hounds at Soho (a most appropriate name for harrier kennels). Mr. Peter Nugent Fitzgerald of Soho was better known on the turf than in the hunting field, for a gun accident by which he lost a leg, handicapped him in the saddle. He bred, broke, and trained his horses at home, and it was not unusual to see a string of five or six chasers ridden their schools with the Soho (or Multyfarnham) Harriers, any one of them good enough to win a handicap steeplechase. "Haymaker," by Leamington, was one of his sires, and of high repute for cross-country horses. The hounds were a rough-and-ready lot, some of them trencher fed and without any pretence at smartness in the turn out; they nevertheless hunted hares well, and often gave an outlying fox a dusting round about Multy, Lackan, Ballynalack, and as far as Frewen. Mr. Chapman looked rather suspiciously on the Soho 'dogs' when they were in the vicinity of a fox covert, for it had been reported to him that Mr. Fitz had run his hounds through Frewen gorse. When "hunters' certificates" time came round they were refused to the four-year old generation of "Haymakers," which had in consequence to be sent to Meath to qualify, and during the process, one of them broke its leg. These hounds sometimes hunted deer, and showed sport: a famous run from Curry, near Lickbla, was one of their best.

Mr. Fitzgerald "ran" the Newbrook Races, and there was always a Multyfarnham Harriers Plate run at the June meeting. Mr. M'Cormick's "Huntsman" won it in 1880.



R. W. C. LEVINGE.

The Master of Soho was accused of selling hounds when they had been walked for him and a pack formed, so people fought shy of helping him to form another pack

when his got rabies, and had to be destroyed. Now, in 1897, there are no harriers in the county.

When entering on his second season Mr. Chapman found things greatly out of repair at the kennels. A Hunt meeting was called, presided over by Mr. G. A. R. Boyd. Mr. W. S. Kelly took the matter up, brought his universal popularity to bear on wavering subscribers, and the debt of £70 was soon written off as paid.

A resolution was passed that a minimum £5 membership be strictly adhered to. Some new members joined the club, but several large subscribers dropped off this year. Lord Vaux, Messrs. W. C. Lynch, U. W. Evans, C. W. Bailey, A. More O'Ferrall, Murphy, Battersby, and Captain Dawson.

Complaints were very unfairly made that the Athlone end did not get its proper share of hunting. Mr. Adamson of Auburn being very wroth, reduced his subscription as a protest. Neither extremity of the county has ever been really satisfied since Mr. Longworth's hounds were given up. Mr. Chapman lent Doon, Ballinahown, and some of that distant country to the Earl of Huntingdon. Mullingar was again the opening meet, and a larger field than usual joined the cavalcade to Ledeston. Mr. Lyons' wood held an old fox which broke at once, and crossed almost exactly the same line as that described in 1875, having first taken a turn round the much-wired environs. This fox was killed in the open near Bryanstown. The late Master, Mr. Moreton, kept some horses at Fulton's, in Mullingar, after Christmas, and enjoyed a few gallops in his old hunting grounds. The best run Mr. Chapman had during his five years Mastership was from Reynella gorse, a covert now given up. Running through Edmonton and Gigginstown, touching Hope's gorse without dwelling, it would have been a fair run of 35 minutes, if it had ended here; but making his point for Barbavilla, where there was a waver, but hardly a check, hounds were at him again over Collinstown road, and bursting up the rising ground, pulled down this good fox, when trying to jump up a high bank on the summit of Gillardstown hill, ten miles as hounds ran, and all fair rideable grass country, and not wired in those days.

Mr. Chapman interested himself in getting up the first red coat, or Point-to-Point races in Westmeath. Mr. O'Reilly's "Castaway" won the Welter, and Mr. Brabazon's "Tustada" the 12 stone event. The Misses Reynell organized a lottery to augment the Fowl Fund and £30 was netted.

The Hunt Ball was again held in the Courthouse at Mullingar, the date being January 25th. In March of this year hunting was suspended for a

week out of respect for the memory of a late Master and popular sportsman "Reggie" Greville, who was killed riding a horse called "Longford" at Sandown Park.

1878-'79. The same Master and huntsman, Harry Rees as Whip, and Mr. R. W. C. Levinge still Hon. Sec.; the latter now fills the more lucrative and perhaps more important post of Secretary to the Grand Jury of Westmeath. The experience he gained, and the friends he then made, had more than a little to do with his present appointment, which he so worthily fills. Matthews now had 47 couple of hounds in his charge, the entry of $15\frac{1}{2}$ couple were Lords FitzHardinge and Yarborough and Sir David Roche's blood. Westmeath was now honoured by Viceroyalty, the Duke of Marlborough, then Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, occupied Knockdrin. Lord and Lady Randolph Churchill constantly graced the field with their presence. In October of this season, a very fast 25 minutes is recorded from Mullacrew to Archerstown, also another good hunt from the same gorse, towards Kilgar, then left-handed through Drumcree and Glananea to Clonderlever. Mullacrew was a useful gorse, lying between Glaxtown bog and the mill at Drumcree. The 24th February can be recorded as one of the best of Mr. Chapman's third season, from Gigginstown over the Moat of Balreagh towards Clonkill, crossing Loughegar race-course and Tubberquill, marked the fox to ground after a ring round Knockdrin, 90 minutes in all.

The red coat races took place this year at Catherinestown in March, Mr. E. Purdon and Mr. J. F. Eivers winning respectively the heavy-weight 14 st. 7 lbs. and light-weight 12 st. 7 lbs., Mr. W. M'Loughlin's "Nannie" easily accounting for the Farmers' plate. There was a race meeting at Loughegar that year also, and "Grace II.," dam of the celebrated "Cloister," won a £30 plate at it. In the spring of the year 1879 hounds were hunting across a small bog in the Athlone country, when they suddenly stopped, very busy and apparently marking their fox to ground. The huntsman on getting to them found that hounds had pulled out a whole litter of cubs, from a shallow burrow, and eaten the lot with as much relish as their followers would have done a Spring lamb! Many a blank draw in the following season was put down to this catastrophe. The Master did not pack up his red coat, and envelope the buttons in tissue paper, till the 10th April.

Mr. Chapman entered on his fourth season, 1879-'80, the right man in the right place; he understood the people, and knew the wants of the country. Harry Rees from the Meaths gave satisfaction as First Whip. Mr. Levinge talked of resigning

the Secretaryship, and Mr. Chapman wrote in September asking him to withhold his resignation till the next hunt meeting, at the same time expressing a hope that his successor would be equally obliging and courteous. In November Colonel Malone undertook the onerous and rather thankless duties, and discharged them efficiently for some years.

On account of the recent death of a well-known and popular sportsman, Mr. William S. Kelly, Manager of the Hibernian Bank at Mullingar, where he kept open house for anyone of sporting proclivities, the usual tryst for the opening Meet was changed from Mullingar to Turbotston. Plenty of game, but nothing brilliant, rewarded Mr. Chapman for his twelve-mile drive to covert. "Bill" Kelly was an extraordinary man, popular to a degree with all classes, a great sportsman and supporter of the hunt; his hospitality was unbounded, and had he been alive in 1895, he would most decidedly not have countenanced either Mr. Hawke or Mrs. Chant or any of their ways. He was "Bill" with everyone (because his name was William, and not from anything to do with "flying kites"). The



"BILL" KELLY.

stories of his dinner parties, the chaff, badinage, and wit which always surrounded him, would fill a more entertaining volume than it falls to the lot of most editors to publish.

Under the supervision of Captain L. Lewis, late Royal Engineers, some lasting improvements and repairs were made to the county kennels. Subscriptions amounting to £200 were collected. Slanemore was the race fixture, and provided a fine course of three miles over a natural country. Mr. E. Eivers won the 14 st. 7 lb., and Mr. J. Brabazon the 12 st. 7 lb., "Nannie's" last year's victory being repeated. Colonel Davies' horse won the regimental (20th Regt.) steeplechase. This wound up the season 1779-'80, one of almost constant good sport, though it was a year of unprecedented frost and snow.

Will Perkins took Harry Rees' place in the summer of 1880, with a lad called "Jack" as Second Whip. It was Matthews' sixth season as huntsman, and Mr. Chapman's fifth and last year of office. There were forty-four couple of working hounds in the kennel. In May, 1880, Mr. Chapman had consented to continue hunting the country, on a subscription of £1,000. The guarantors had to make up the deficiency for their less generous confrères.

Mr. John Charles Lyons kept a pack of harriers at Ledeston, from 1881 to '84. He bought them from Mrs. Stacpoole; they had been the first boycotted hounds in Ireland, but Westmeath had more sense of fair play and sport than had County Clare, and Mr. Lyons was free to hunt where he wished. There was a very fair show of game in the country from Lough Owel to Mullingar and westward to Loughnavalley. This pack showed many a good day's sport. Mr. Lyons hunted them with the assistance of his friend and neighbour, Mr. Rowland Hudson, and they worked most harmoniously with the county hounds. These hounds were sold to Mr. Balfe, and unhappily they soon afterwards showed symptoms of dumb madness, and had to be destroyed. Mr. Lyons had been away from home, and it was only on his return that he heard of a supposed rabid dog that had been in the neighbourhood; one of his hounds, a very smart bitch, had a knack of jumping out of the kennels and returning over the wall at her pleasure, so she was probably the means of conveying the disorder to the pack. Mr. Lyons was rather unfortunate in this line, for it is not many years since he lost a valuable red setter from rabies, when grouse shooting with a friend. The dog was dull and shy all day, unwilling to work, quite contrary to his usual bold style of ranging, so he was taken home in a pony-trap, sitting between the knees of the two shooters. Next morning he had bitten the woodwork of the loose box in which he had been shut up, and chopped the straw into chaff, foaming at the mouth in the last throes of rabies.

Mr. Chapman sent in his formal resignation on the 21st October, and in spite of the unanimous request of a full meeting of members of the Hunt, Mr. Chapman, in a most touching letter, explained that he was unable to reconsider his decision. A meeting was held in December to arrange for the future hunting of the country.

In February, 1881, hounds met at Mullingar, and a large field trotted on to Tullaghan, following Matthews and a picked lot of dog hounds; they merely touched the covert when there was a holloa from the whip on the far side. A few bog-drains checked the ardour of the field, and let hounds get fairly settled down. Crossing the Mullingar road, hammer and tongs, by Slanemore Hill, they turned sharp right

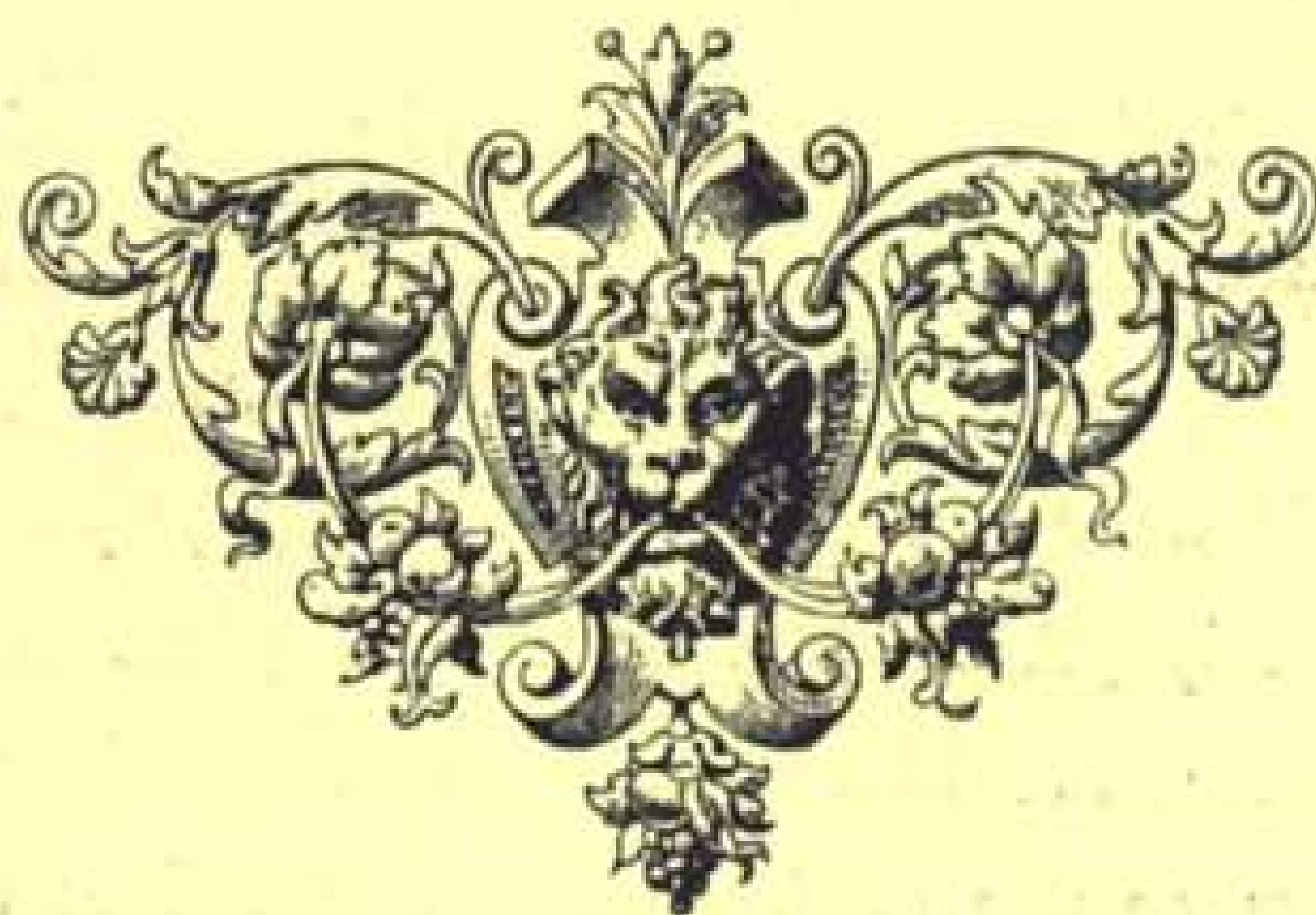
handed by Portloman, through Frewen gorse and down by Piercefield, passing Mount Murray on the right, where a few rasping high doubles thinned the ranks of the field. Skirting Sonna, hounds ran steadily on, but without their usual dash, and passing Tristernagh* gorse for Baronston, within two fields of Mr. Malone's coverts they rolled the fox over. The best man in the hunt from find to finish was Mr. Towers-Clark of the Royal Dragoons, then quartered with his regiment at Longford, and who was riding his good horse, "Sorcerer," by "Magician," son of the "Flying Dutchman." Mr. Gerald Dease was about the next best, and, curiously enough, he was riding a mare by the same sire. Mr. Clark never let hounds a field away, and handled the fox just before Matthews turned up. What was his surprise to find that it smelt of aniseed, had the mark of a collar on its neck, and had evidently only run one field. The whole thing was a well-planned drag, reflecting little credit on the sporting proclivities of the originators of the disgraceful joke. Messrs. O'Reilly, Grant, Hegarty, and Will Matthews, were well up in this hunt, and two ladies went well for the greater part of the journey, fully ten miles, as the "red herring" ran. It goes without saying that the Master was kept in ignorance of the plot. Captains Ames and Nichol of the Royal Dragoons were out, also Colonel Graham and other strangers, who cannot have been favourably impressed with a huntsman who hunted a drag ten miles without finding it out.

The hunt races took place at Rathconrath in 1881. Colonel J. R. Malone turned the scales at 18 stone, but rode a gallant race. Captain Cotton our would-be M.F.H. also had a leg up at this meeting. There was a race meeting at Newbrook in August of that year. Testimonials were not so common twenty years ago as they are now, and Mr. Chapman is justly proud of a handsome piece of plate and an illuminated address which were presented to him at the end of his five years' mastership. Out of the sixty-two subscribers to the testimonial, it is sad to think how many are gone to other happy hunting grounds.

On Poolnagorth Hill one evening the hunted fox went to ground in a cave; a hound got in after him, and could not extricate himself; it was late in the afternoon, and Matthews would not leave a favourite hound behind him—it is invariably a keen one that goes in after a fox. The light of a candle, borrowed from a cottage hard by, and held inside the cleft of the rock, shone upon a fox *couchant*, and a badger, glaring at the hound, whose head was fixed so firmly in the crevice of the rock that the stone had

* There is no dwelling-house at Tristernagh, only the ruins of an old abbey, founded by Sir Geoffrey Constantine, an English conqueror in the time of Henry II. It was afterwards the seat of Sir Henry Piers, Bart.

to be broken away with a pick before the hound could be released. The broc and Reynard then had the den to themselves. Badgers are not numerous in the county, but occasionally make their presence known, to the discomfiture of the earthstoppers. An old sow was caught at Windtown in 1895, and three at Pakenham Hall. The earths at Lisnabin were constantly scratched out by them last year (1896), and it is not long ago that Lord Longford had one before his hounds at Knockdrin. This was a big boar, who with his back to a tree used his strong jaws to such purpose in saving his brisket (the most vulnerable part of a badger) that the twenty couple of hounds would not tackle him without help from the huntsman. A very old sow badger was dug out on the hillside at Knock Ross when cub-hunting in September, 1897, and hounds had a rare worry, rolling over and over till they killed her on the shore of the lake.



CHAPTER XI.

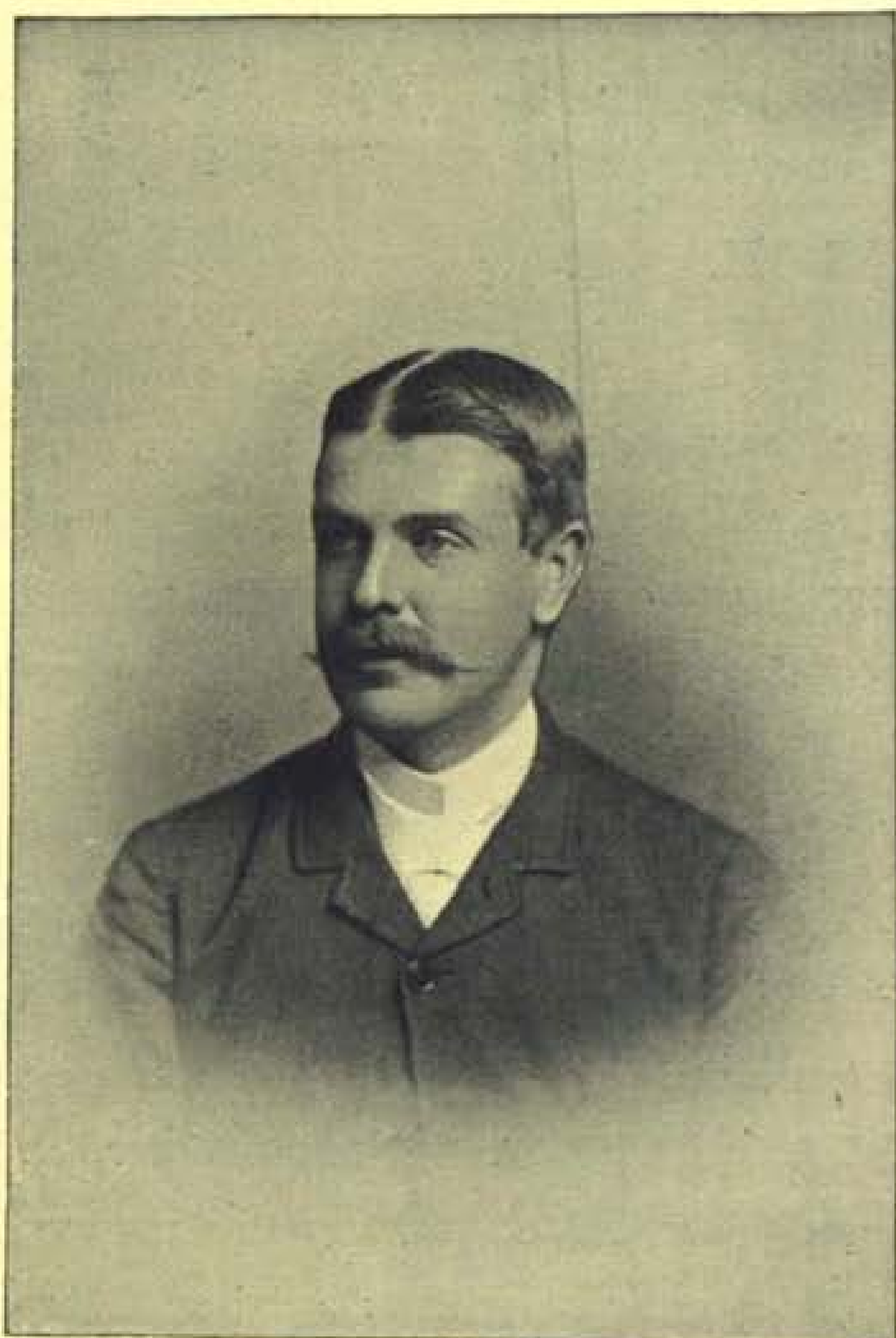
SEASON 1881-2, LOOKING FOR A M.F.H.—CAPTAIN COTTON.—A COMMITTEE WITH CAPTAIN E. PURDON AS MASTER.—PURCHASE OF KENNEL FITTINGS.—THE “BAD TIMES,” AND HALF-HEARTED ATTEMPTS AT STOPPING HOUNDS.—CAPTAIN MACNAGHTEN TAKES THE HOUNDS IN 1882 FOR ONE SEASON—BELMONT, THE MASTER’S RESIDENCE.

IN answer to an advertisement, Captain Cotton came forward and offered us the benefit of his English experience gained in hunting a pack of harriers. He introduced himself to Westmeath at a hunt meeting in March, 1881, was given a mount the following day, expressed himself pleased with hounds and country, and was accepted as the future M.F.H. He was to be permitted to carry the horn and forthwith to enter on his duties. He sent over some horses to livery at George Cumming’s, also five couple of old dog-hounds from the Duke of Beaufort’s. The latter were, however, pronounced on arrival at Culleen, to be better suited for double-’arness than ’untin’!

Nothing was heard of the Captain for some time, beyond the report that he was in training for a walking match against time for a stake of £100. Things went on in a happy-go-lucky sort of way all the summer, and the cubs were waiting to be hunted. The Treasurer had advanced £300 to the Master, and on November 1st, a communication from the bold Captain rather startled the members on the eve of the hunting season. “Unforeseen circumstances,” he said, “prevented his carrying out the terms of his contract!”

Out of the money advanced, the expenses of maintaining the establishment up to date were allowed him, including the cost of horsing the men for cub hunting; but in closing accounts, five couple of draft hounds were our only asset against a deficit of over £100, and a Committee had at the eleventh hour to start on hunting the country. A guarantee fund was established for purchase of horses, and Colonel Magill, Captain L. Dames, and Mr. R. S. Fetherstonhaugh, undertook this task.

It was in May, 1881, that the benches, boilers, furniture, and fittings, at the



MAJOR EDWARD PURDON.

Kennels were, for the first time acquired by the hunt, instead of remaining the property of the Master : funds were raised by subscription for the purpose of purchasing them from Mr. Chapman.

Captain Loftus Lewis of Violetstown undertook the collection of field-money, auditing and paying accounts, and earth-stopping. The Hunt Committee consisted of Mr. E. Purdon, Captain Thomas L. Dames, and Major J. R. Malone, the latter also acting as Hon. Sec. : The thirty-six-and-half couple of hounds were under Matthews' and Perkins' care. Things had got to rather a low ebb. The meets were not published ; small cards, of which the following is a copy, were posted under sealed cover to members of the hunt, by way of keeping them secret :—

PRIVATE.

Westmeath Hounds Meet, January, 1882.

Wednesday, 25th. Ledeston Railway Arch.

Friday, 27th. Drumcree.

The opening meet in 1881 was held at Mullingar. Knockdrin was the first draw. A fox broke almost at once, and hounds got well away with him, very fast, over the hills at back of the Mountain Chapel, over Poolnagorth, into Mornington. There had been bellows to mend up to now, and very few, except the Hunt servants, were able to go on. A check at the lake-wood of Mornington let up the field and the panting horses ; but Matthews was away again at the bottom of the hill, having viewed his hunted fox, and stuck to him till he was rolled over in the demesne of Donore—a very fine performance so early in the season.

Captain Thomas Longworth Dames understood hounds and hunting, having kept a pack of harriers at Greenhill, his residence near Edenderry. He was always keen

or a ride, but took little or no part on the 1881-2 committee. When the Captain gave up his hounds, he handed them to Mr. Coffy, who kept the pack on under their new title of "The Newcastle Harriers," one of the conditions being that the Edenderry country was to be hunted in its turn.

Mr. Peyton had a few hounds, and hunted Captain Dames' old preserves in latter years; but they were rather a parody on hunting, and not above the pursuit of a bagman.

During the time of their committee, and, under the field-mastership of Mr. Edward Purdon, there was a dark cloud over the hunting horizon, which nothing but time, tact, and patience could clear away. A paid mob was *sent down by train* to Multyfarnham to stop the hounds hunting near there, but so elated were they with the local drink, or the sight of so many horsemen and red coats, that they forgot the object of their mission, and returned to Dublin, having had a jolly day in the country and seen a good hunt.

About a week later an organized party of boycotters assembled at Killucan. Quite two hundred men and boys marched on Lisnabin, where hounds had been announced to meet, and the secrets of the little cards had been revealed. A fox was soon on foot in the bog covert, and, as ill-luck would have it, ran bang through the crowd; they shouted and yelled like maniacs. As Casca says, in *Julius Cæsar*:—
"The rabblement shouted, and clapped their chapped hands, and threw up their sweaty night-caps, and uttered such a deal of stinking breath that it had almost choked Cæsar; and, for mine own part, I durst not laugh, for fear of opening my lips and receiving the bad air." This Killucan rabble broke branches off the trees, and tried to wipe away the scent where the fox had run; they opened the earths, and the much-frightened fox got underground. Any isolated horseman was made an Aunt Sally of; but the mob never attempted to assault either Hunt servants or the field, though they outnumbered them by more than four to one.

During all these disturbed times, hounds were welcome about the Crooked Wood, Knock Ion, and in the Castlepollard district. There is no accounting for this, excepting by the innate love of sport of the farmers and inhabitants. Some of them petitioned the Committee to give the country people a day's sport on St. Patrick's Day, as a reward for their loyalty to hunting, none of the members of the Hunt to join in, except on foot or on wheels. Their request was willingly granted, and such a motley crowd turned out as had never before been seen. Every four-footed beast, from the humble moke upward, was pressed into the service, the Crooked Wood was the place

of meeting, and with lots of foxes at Mornington and the hills, a most entertaining day was spent. The shamrock was duly honoured in the evening, and all went home declaring that fox-hunting was the finest sport in the world.

Mr. Charles Kelly's "Odd Trick" won the Hunt Cup in 1882. At the same meeting a celebrated chaser made his *début*—viz., "Belmont," bred by Mr. Hudson, and owned by Captain R. F. Meysey-Thompson.

Times were disturbed, and the agitators took advantage of bad seasons and poverty on the part of the people to sow dissention. The Irish peasants have a keen love of sport, and as great an appreciation of the gain to a neighbourhood from the keeping up of a pack of fox-hounds, as those who take part in the fun, and many of them have no doubt lived to regret their ill-advised violence. We find mention of hunting being stopped in 1833. Less than fifty years later another futile attempt was made, though not by the people's own instincts, for they were made the dupes of cowardly politicians, who sent down organized mobs to stop the hunt. Fortunately it did not "catch on" in Westmeath, or many a family would have been thrown out of employment, as they were in Limerick and Curraghmore, where the more successful attacks on Mr. John Gubbins' and Lord Waterford's hunts brought ruin to many a cabin. No one was the better of it, and two honoured Irish sportsmen were driven from the homes they loved. Politics were, of course, at the bottom of this agitation, just as in England, in 1852, we find that Sir Robert Peel advertised his stud of hunters on December 4th, in the following terms:—"To be sold at Messrs. Tattersall's, the entire stud of Sir Robert Peel, Bart., who is declining hunting with the Atherstone hounds, in consequence of the unsportsmanlike conduct and political animosity, even in the hunting field of certain protectionist farmers." They had insulted him and warned him off their lands, because *his father*, the great Sir Robert Peel, had repealed the Corn Laws. The Warwickshire and Leicestershire farmers, like the Ballymanus schoolmaster of 1833, visited the sins of parents on their children. Mankind is much the same, all the world over.

Captain Edward Purdon must be credited with taking the burden of the hunt on his shoulders during this trying time, and some very enjoyable days were had in spite of all difficulties: one in particular, on the 26th February, may be recorded, when the mysterious little card said "Reynella," but there was no note of encouragement from the hounds till they reached Lisnabin. Mr. Purdon's well-preserved laurels as usual held a fox, and after a two hours' run the chase eventuated at Grangemore.

People recalled happy recollections of twenty years back, when about this time they heard with regret of the death of Mr. Briscoe, who had shown good sport during his two years' Mastership.

The bad times were now on the mend: the tenant farmers of Ireland had been granted a concession, directly and indirectly, of some millions of money, and were more cheerful and hopeful of the future; they attended to their business, and gave up the suicidal idea of stopping hounds: the committee had carried on the hunt under the most adverse circumstances, with great credit to themselves, and to Matthews, whose conciliatory policy and friendliness to the people largely assisted them.

1882-3 was commenced under a committee, while Mr. Charles Kelly was elected Field Master. Captain Meysey Thompson, the Adjutant of the Westmeath Rifles, resided at Annebrook. He, together with Mr. Evans joined Mr. R. S. Fetherstonhaugh on the Hunt Horse Committee, and in August of that year, Captain Loftus Louis joined Major Malone in the Secretaryship.

Matthews had charge of all affairs in the Kennel, with Sam Lynch to assist him. (Sam's brother was kennelman and feeder for years.) It was not till the 14th September, 1882, that a Master turned up in the person of Captain William H. Macnaghten. He had served in the Bengal Light Cavalry, hunted a pack of harriers at Eastbourne, and shown good sport when Master of the Cattistock and Tipperary hounds. A true lover of fox-hunting, and a tremendous hound man. He brought a niceish entry of six and a-half couple with him. The agreement was that he was to hunt the country on a subscription of £800, from which was deducted the expense incident to keeping up the establishment, from 1st May to date. The country was to be kept by the hunt, and earth-stopping, which field-money almost covered, was paid by the Master.

It was stipulated that Matthews should be kept on. Things were not done very smartly, but sport was by no means bad during the season. One of the most sporting runs was on March 2nd, at Killare Cross Roads, when the Captain was hunting hounds in Matthews' absence. After an hour and half in a semicircle from Rosemount, the fox dead beat, crept on to the roof of a thatched house, and lay flat, with his ears back, begging in vain for his life; but hounds and huntsman had their hackles up, and would not be denied. On the 12th April, the master sent in his resignation. A meeting was held with Mr. C. Kelly, the High Sheriff in the Chair. Lord Kilmaine explained to the members present that Captain Macnaghten, could, he thought, be induced to retain the Mastership, if Matthews' services were dispensed with; but the weight of opinion was for the retention of their huntsman.

Captain Macnaghten had selected Belmont as his residence, and a very suitable situation it was, though perhaps rather further from the kennels than an enthusiastic Master cared for. It was formerly the residence of Mr. Anthony Adams Reilly, who, though not a hunting man, was nevertheless a subscriber, and very useful as an organizer; being a man of taste, he was always in demand, and was most good-natured about dances and such entertainments. He it was who got up the first of the Westmeath hunt balls. Mr. Reilly, though artistic in many things, had a most gruesome ornamentation in his house at Belmont. He collected all the ropes that had hanged criminals in Westmeath, and looped them in festoons on the walls of his entrance hall with a label and history attached to each.

Mr. Reilly's successors at Belmont have generally preferred masks and brushes in place of the "hempen cravats" as ornaments. The present owner, Mr. Rowland Hudson, can add the County Polo Cup which the Westmeath team, thanks to his exertions, have now won two years in succession. Mr. Hudson, as Hon. Sec. of the Westmeath Polo Club, has the custody of the Cup.

A party of Westmeath sportsmen were travelling by train from Mullingar, to meet the hounds at Streamstown one morning, when the conversation—as sometimes happens!—turned on hunting. A well-known popular and cheery member of the hunt addressed himself to a full carriage, and told the story of a peppery M.F.H. having marked his fox to ground, when up gallops a sailor who had landed that morning, got a mount, and ridden like a torpedo boat into the middle of the pack, kicked one hound, trampled on another, and addressing the Master, whom he had never seen before said: "Well Mate, and how did your moke carry you?"

"To my perfect satisfaction," said the M. F. H., and aside, "I hate those sanguinary sailors."

"Is not that a funny tale, Mac?" said the raconteur.

"Yes," replied Mac, "I was the man who hated the sailor."

What a never-ending topic of conversation are hunting and horses?

"Where is the horse that doth untread again his tedious measures? He doth nothing but talk of his horse."—*Merchant of Venice*.

After a musical party a well-known Westmeath lady remarked to her neighbour at supper: "That is a very beautiful thing that was played this evening: it is out of 'The Queen of Sheba, by Gounod.'" "How do you say the horse is bred?" asked her brother, who was better versed in Weatherby than Mozart!

CHAPTER XII.

CAPTAIN TOWERS-CLARK, 1883 TO 1886.—IMPROVEMENT IN THE PACK.—CATHERINES-TOWN AND CULLEEN RACES.—NEWBROOK HOUNDS.—HON. P. GREVILLE NUGENT'S HARRIERS.—THE RUN OF THE SEASON.—INCIDENTS OF THE CHASE, THE LIGHT SIDE OF NATURE

THE 1st Royals were quartered at Longford in 1880. Captain Towers-Clark hunted with Mr. McCann's harriers, but was more partial to the Westmeath Hounds, and rarely missed a meet that was within reach. On the regiment moving to Dublin he made a name for himself in the Ward country, where the fences can be taken as you meet them, and at fair hunting pace which was his style. He was a very steady, straight rider to hounds, and got so fond of Irish hunting, that, hearing the Westmeath country was vacant, he allowed his friend and brother officer, Captain Cecil Fetherstonhaugh, to introduce his name to a hunt meeting in Mullingar, in May, 1883. Westmeath was not slow to realize its good fortune in getting such a Master. He made up for want of previous experience of hounds by constant attention in kennel, and an early start at the cubs. Matthews was retained as K.H., and had an apt and hard-working pupil in his new Master. Thus opened the season of 1883-4. Will Drayton who had learned his business in Meath and Kildare was engaged as Whip. Fred Hobson rode the Master's second horse, and did Second Whip's work.



CAPTAIN JAMES TOWERS-CLARK.

There were only twenty-four couple of working hounds fit to keep on. Captain Clark purchased twenty-five couple more, towards which the county subscribed £100. He agreed to keep forty-four couple, not more than four couple

to be over five years old, and to hand over thirty couple of working and ten of unentered hounds and all puppies, when he resigned the country. Following after Captain Macnaghten, the new Master naturally took on Belmont as there was no suitable residence to be had nearer to the kennels. Belmont belonged in the year 1680 to Hans Widman, and it was called Curristown. Mr. Lyons took it in exchange for other property, and in 1737 Mr. Henry Lyons called it "The Mount." Just 100 years after this Mr. Wm. Adams Reilly lived there ; he married Miss Frances Lyons. The place was at this time re-named Bellemount : hence Belmont.



BELMONT.

Then came Mr. Anthony Adams Reilly, another member of the Westmeath Hunt, as mentioned elsewhere ; he sold his interest in the land and house, which latter he had rebuilt, to Mr. William Brereton Hudson, and during the last half century Belmont has seen more change of residents than most other country seats, viz. :—a resident magistrate, a sub-sheriff, two masters of foxhounds, a county surveyor, and a noted hard rider and good all-round man, Mr. Thomas Jameson. The county polo club had its first ground there in Mr. Rowland Hudson's time, and he hunted from Belmont

in 1880, 1881, and 1882, he has recently bought it from his brother, Sir William Brereton Hudson, and is now living there, a great addition to the hunting field, the polo club, and anything in the way of sport. Mr. Hudson is one of the prime movers in the covert fund, and committee established in 1897. Belmont, from a foxhunting point of view, is celebrated as having been the first spot in Westmeath where that cursed invention, barbed wire, was used: it is now one of the few places which is free from it; but, there is wire to right of it, wire to left of it, and wire behind it!

The custom of putting up the hounds there at night, before hunting in the lower country, which Captain Clark started, is still in vogue, and saves many a blistered foot. During a previous Mastership the huntsman was sometimes made to walk home to kennels from Belmont after hunting. He was reported at one time to be on the look out for a couple of "hasses," if he could get 'em cheap, to use as 'acks!

The country was pretty well stocked with foxes, and during Captain Clark's reign he never had a blank day. He neither moved nor imported any foxes, nor did he come across a single case of mange. He lost only one hound by poison: an accident, where poison had been laid for sheep-worrying curs. He killed a fair share of foxes, though he found the earth-stopping very indifferently done, but was no advocate for digging.

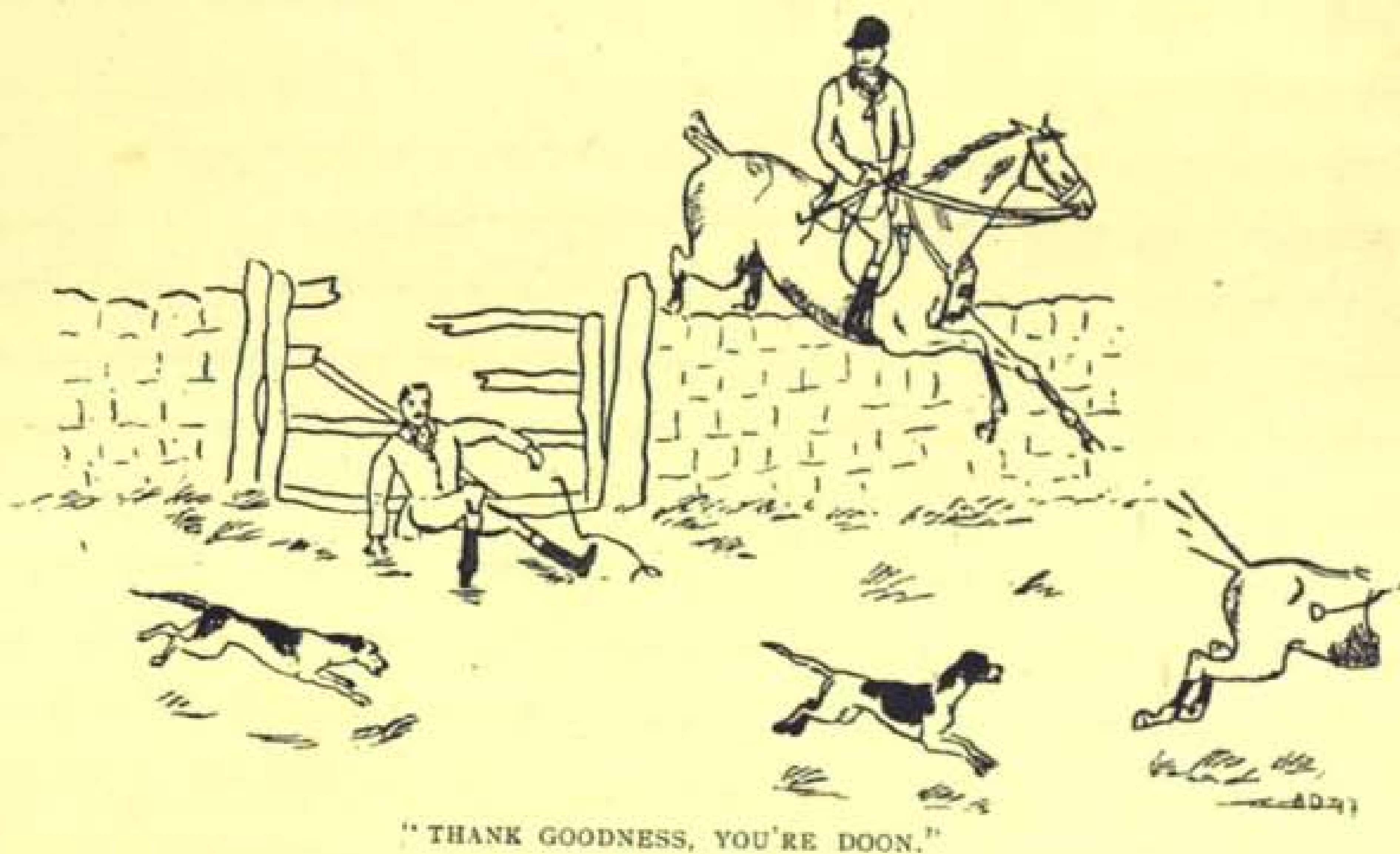
It was on the 23rd and 24th of January, 1884, that tremendous storms swept over the country, doing untold damage to trees and houses.

Captain Clark rode in the Hunt Races at Catherinestown, in April, when Mr. J. Brabazon, on Mr. Cathrew's horse, won the Welter Cup (presented by the 5th Northumberland Fusiliers, keen foxhunters, who were quartered at Mullingar), and Mr. Edmund F. Dease rode his own horse, "Sparkling Hock," to victory in the light-weight race, after running third in the Welter race the same day. The Newbrook Harriers held their races at Culleen. The Honble. Patrick E. Greville-Nugent bought some harriers, and started hunting hares on the outskirts of Westmeath in 1883. It was a nice pack, that had been kept by a Mr. Thomas in England for some years. Mr. Greville-Nugent had experience with hounds, having been a M.H. in England. There was room for a two-days-a-week pack, and hares were plentiful about Clonyn the Master's residence, Sheepstown, Killalon, Crossakiel, Loughbawn, and Fore. Many an outlying fox gave them a scurry; and these harriers were, therefore, of service to the Westmeath Hunt, by keeping stray foxes at home. Towards the end of the season Mr. Greville-Nugent occasionally hunted deer.

Unfortunately he gave up the hounds at the end of his second season, and sold them to Captain Brocklehurst of the Blues.

In the following year, 1884-5, Captain Clark's sport improved; a beautiful entry of sixteen couple was put on, mostly from South Cheshire bitches and Belvoir, North Stafford, and Tynedale dogs, two couple of Mr. Russell's blood, drafts from Bramham Moor and the Duke of Buccleuch.

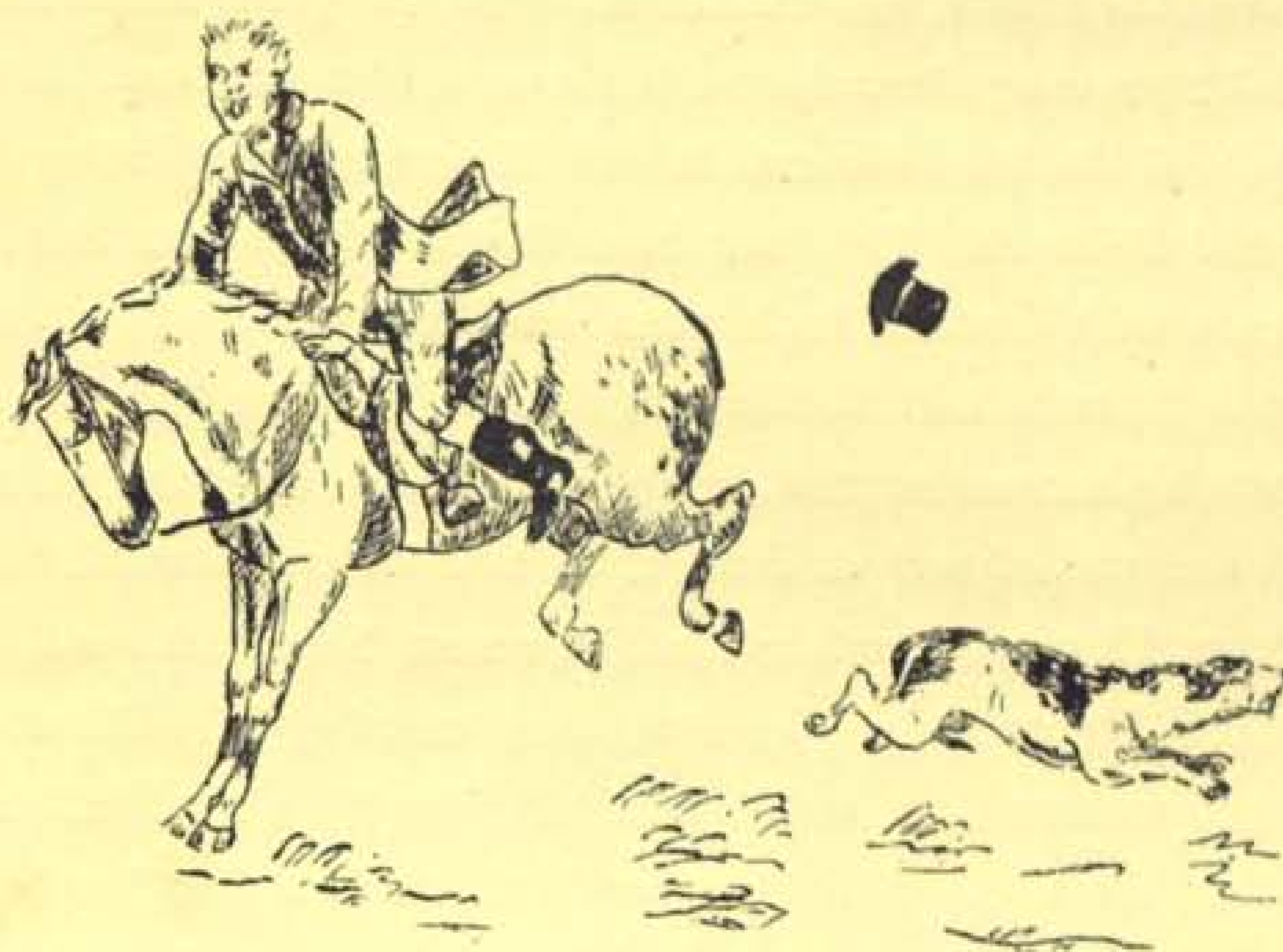
Captain Clark was very consistent in hunting the stonewall country, though he often had to sleep out overnight at Moate, as trains did not suit. He had one very sporting day at the Doon, hunting his fox across the river, which the Master swam, and Matthews making for the ford, they were the only two up to see the fox killed at Ballinagore. In the same part of the country an amusing scene was enacted: hounds were being pressed by an over-zealous sportsman, a real good fellow, a friend of Captain Clark's, a hard rider, and also hard of hearing: at last he got a roll, and the Master, jumping in his wake, looked at his prostrate form, and called out, with a North British accent, which unusual emotion sometimes evoked: "Thank goodness, you're 'doon.'" "Please, don't stop, Clark; I'm not a bit hurt," was the reply. His deafness left him unconscious of the Master's sarcastic rebuke.



Another day the Master had really cause to be angry. A young farmer jumped off the road into a turnip field, and landed bang on a hound that went reeling and howling up the furrow alongside of its torturer, who called out quite innocently, "Hey! Captain, here's one of your dogs got the staggers."

The Master was not idle in the summer, and his constant attention to hounds

and country made both what they should be. He replanted Frewen Gorse, amongst other things. Landowners and fox-preservers were pleased to see him, and during the early spring, when out exercising hounds, he had ample time and opportunity of inquiring into all matters concerning the hunt. Where cubs were brought out, the



"ONE OF YOUR 'DOGS' GOT THE STAGGERS."

occupier of the land was rewarded and encouraged to care them as the apple or his eye. Malcontents were pacified, and "the kind word that turneth away wrath" was ever on the Master's lips. In August he turned his attention to the cubs, instead of going racing, for which he cared little or nothing, or yachting, of which he was passionately fond. He gave up grouse-shooting and the

"Land of brown heather and shaggy wood,
Land of the mountain and the flood,
Land of my sires what mortal hand
Can e'er untie the filial band
That knits me to thy rugged strand?"

A stern sense of sporting duty tied Captain Clark to Westmeath. Entering on the season 1884-5 the staff remained the same, with the addition of Matthews' son Ernest. Earthstopping improved, and the Master attributed this improvement to his system of paying at the meets or at Belmont, or, in fact, at any time the cards were presented. Captain Clark was most liberal, and his stop cards became as negotiable as bank notes, so that men took them from each other as cash payments. There was no case of rabies or dumb madness in the kennel; distemper, however, was prevalent,

and the Master had great difficulty in rearing puppies through the "yellows." Of the sport during Captain Clark's years of office, three runs stand out pre-eminently above the rest, and curiously, two out of the three were on days when it was doubtful if the elements would allow of the hounds going out.

Glencarra was the fixture, and the hounds could not get to the meet till 1 o'clock, but were rewarded by seventy-five minutes fast over a nice stone-wall country. Snow then fell heavily, and the hunt-servants looked like so many "Father Christmases" before they reached Belmont. The best hunt that Matthews ever remembers in his life-long experience with hounds, took place one snowy morning, also in Captain Clark's time, when hounds met at Multyfarnham. The weather was so wild and stormy that many sportsmen turned for home ere reaching the meet. Found at once at Donore, and ran, almost as straight as a ruler could mark it on the map, twelve miles. From Donore Woods to the hill, across Stonehall road, over top side of Poolnagorth and Upper Galmoylestown, then crossing Mr. Gibson's farm, and over the Mullingar road straight up Sheefin hill, the high road still serving those who were not riding the line. Hounds never dwelt, and ran fast, leaving Taughmon well to the left. Here it is supposed the fox went to ground, and that as hounds swung round in trying for the line, a fresh one jumped up from a lot of rushes, and now hounds had it almost to themselves, with Knockbrack to the left, and skirting Edmonton, they raced over Ballinderry. The Mullingar-Delvin road was crossed near Killynon gate, then by Clondrisse, and over the river; there Mr. W. McLoughlin was the last man to see them flying through Clonikivant and Huntingdon (then the residence of Mr. Salmon, who was dubbed Lord Huntingdon). Captain E. Purdon was one of those who had turned his back on hounds in the morning, and had gone home. What was his surprise about 1 o'clock to hear the cry and the crash of the bitches as they burst through the laurels and marked the fox to ground in the main earth near Lisnabin gate. He got them safely kennelled in the stable yard, and Matthews, on his arrival, twenty minutes later, found *every hound up*. Mr. C. Allen, V.S., happened to be passing on a car, and saw the fox make four attempts to cross the wall (six feet six inches high). The hounds were too beat to follow, but, of their own accord, dashed down the road to the gate two hundred yards away, and hit off the line inside the wall. Captain Makeson of the 5th Dragoon Guards was out that day, and saw the first part of the run. Only one lady saw anything of it, and she went home with "a wing up," and on making inquiries for her groom, was told that a mile further back he had

fallen off and broken his leg. Lord Longford, our present M.F.H., saw a lot of the hunt, riding a brown horse that had been in Captain Trotter's stud. It was an extraordinary performance on the part of hounds. Captain Clark missed them at Poolnagorth, where he took a right-handed turn ; but like

The rule of the road, when driving your carriage along :
If you go to the *left*, you're sure to go *right* ;
If you go to the *right*, you go wrong.

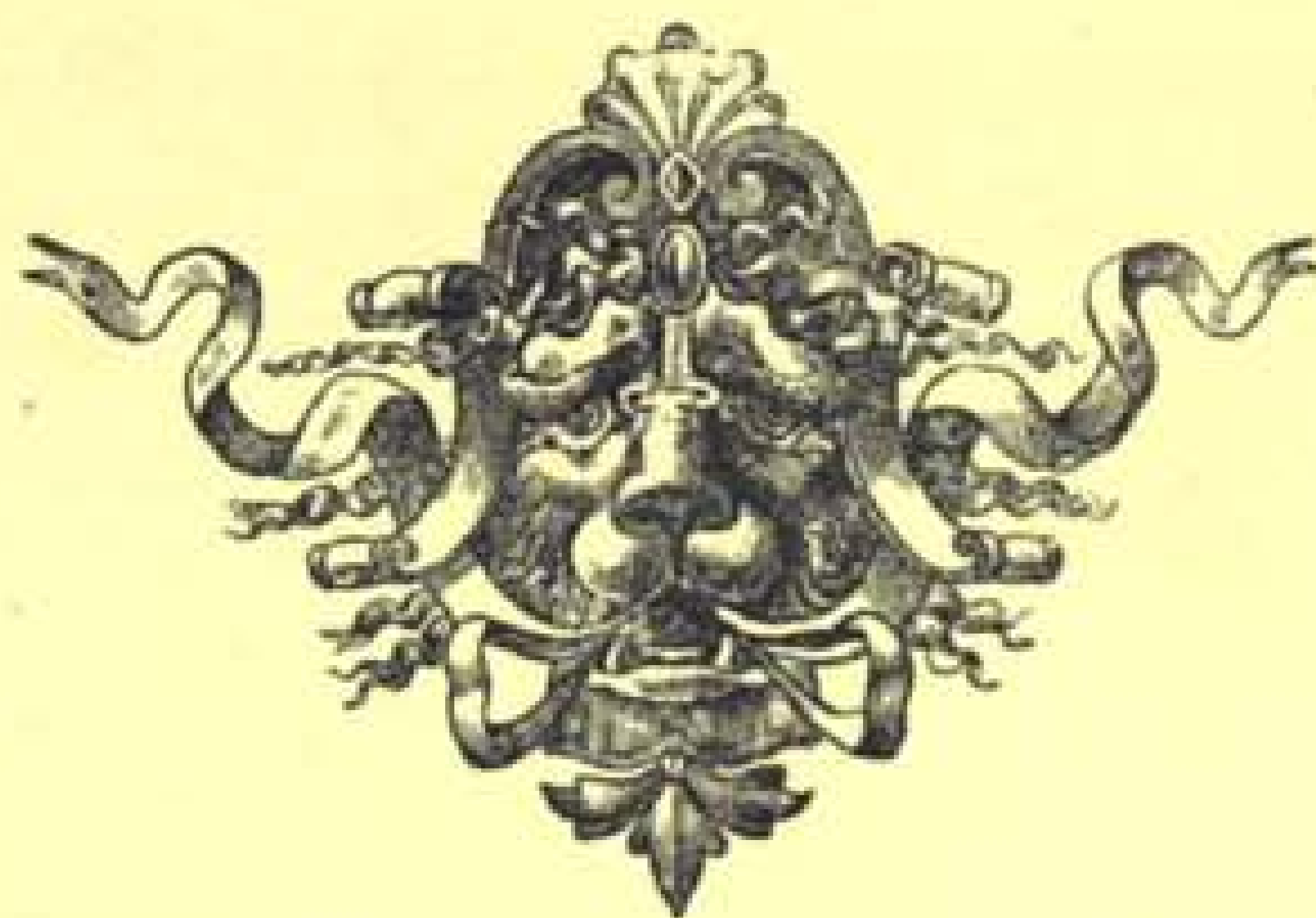
The Master never saw hounds again till they returned to the kennels. Catherines-town races, on April 15th, wound up the season. Captain Loftus Lewis and Mr. Theobald Fetherston were the winners.

The autumn of 1885 saw Captain Clark enter on his third and, unfortunately, his last season. Will Neal came from the South Cheshire as Whip, and Drayton went to Major St. Leger Moore to Kildare, where his cheery red face was afterwards to be seen for some years, generally spouting blood after bursting through a bull-finch. He was a bold resolute horseman, was Will Drayton ; he knew his business, and did it without being told. Neal was not much good, not a patch on what his father had been in the Cottesmore country ; but a year in Ireland did the lad good, and in the following year he went to the Woodland Pytchley. The poor fellow broke his ankle while at exercise soon after Captain Clark engaged him, and Ernest Matthews took his place temporarily.

Lord Greville was now living at Clonhugh, to which he succeeded on the death of his father, in 1883, and took a great interest in all county affairs. His Lordship allowed himself to be nominated on the Hunt Committee in November, 1885, and has taken a prominent part in more ways than one in hunting matters ever since. It is to Lord Greville that the hunt is indebted for the gorse covert called Frewen. In November, 1871, Captain the Hon. A. Fulke Greville acquired from the tenant, one James Cormack, about two and a-half statute acres of the lands of Monroe, or Wattstown, at a yearly rent of £5. A fox covert was planted, an earth built, and under the name of Frewen Hill this gorse has become famous, and been the source of some good runs. Monroe belonged to the late Lord Greville during the lifetime of John de Blaquiére, who died, 2nd January, 1882, but part of the adjoining townland of Wattstown or Frewen still remains part of his Lordship's estate. Having paid the rent for ten years, he handed over his tenancy of the covert to the Hunt Club, and they continue as tenants to Cormack, at a yearly rent of £6, under Colonel Stevenson, who succeeded to the Portlomon estate.

Both Hon. Secs. expressed their wish to retire this year. Captain Clark showed consistently good sport during his Mastership, and the county owes him a deep debt of gratitude. He spent his money generously but judiciously, and left behind him many friends and a good pack of hounds. Five or six couple of these hounds belonged to the Master, but he presented them to the pack.

The hunt races on the 18th April, 1886, were brought off at Culleen over Mr. Reddy's private course. Captain E. Purdon won the welter, and Mr. C. Coffy the light-weight race. The Newbrook Harrier Hunt Meeting was also held at Culleen. These harriers hunted the country vacated by the Ledeston Hounds, but they sometimes had recourse to the 'Calf,' while Mr. Lyons always stuck to 'Puss.' When Mr. Brabazon gave up the Mastership, the duties devolved on Mr. Killian of Greenpark. The establishment eventually broke up, and has not since been revived. An extra day in the week with foxhounds suits all the country better.



CHAPTER XIII.

LOOKING FOR A MASTER IN 1886.—LORD GREVILLE TAKES THE COUNTRY.—CLONHUGH PAST AND PRESENT.—CHANGES IN THE RULES OF THE HUNT CLUB.—HOUNDS RUN OVER GROUND STAINED WITH HUMAN BLOOD IN 1754.—THE BERKELEY DRAFT.—DIFFERENT CROSS-COUNTRY EVENTS.—CAPTAIN C. FETHERSTONHAUGH'S HARRIERS IN 1888.—REFERENCE TO THE SOUTH WESTMEATH HOUNDS.—A GEOGRAPHICAL LEGEND.—DEATH OF SIR LEICESTER CURZON SMYTH.—“MEMMS” ON RABIES.—MAJORS GRANT AND HALL CONTINUE AS HON. SECS.—POINT-TO-POINT RACES IN 1892 AND 1893.—LORD GREVILLE'S STUD.—HIS LORDSHIP RESIGNS, AND IS PRESENTED WITH A TESTIMONIAL, IN 1893.

TIME slipped by, and we still wanted a Master—a rich one for choice. Lord Greville, the second baron, had sat for Westmeath in Parliament from 1865 to 1874, and it was only natural that a man in his position should be looked to as a probable aspirant to the now-a-days still greater honour of putting M.F.H. to his name, as master of the hounds which his brother had previously hunted. As a boy, and in after-life when Lord Greville served in the 1st Life Guards, nothing in the shape of sport came amiss to him, from horse-racing to breeding toy terriers; he was now forty-two years of age, never distinguished as a hard rider, but a fair horseman, priding himself rather on his “hands” than as a bruiser over a country. On coming forward to offer his services, Lord Greville was at once elected M.F.H. He kept Matthews as Huntsman and imported Will Wootton from Scotland (Fife) as First Whip. Ernest Matthews left with the late Master as Second Horseman, then joined the 1st Life Guards, and afterwards the Cape Mounted Police, and is getting on well in South Africa.

The pack handed over by Captain Clark was made up of thirty-four couple of smart fresh hounds, and an entry of six couple, besides those which he presented to the Hunt; a lot of Bramham blood had been introduced, and it was very suitable for Westmeath.

Clanhugh, or Clonhugh, in Irish, signifies the race or descendants of Aedh

or Hugh. It was at one time little more than a shooting lodge, when owned by the Forbes family. Lord Greville improved it into a charming residence and perfect hunting box, with excellent stabling and a stud farm attached.



LORD GREVILLE.

He always kept a thorough-bred sire or two, and they were greatly patronized by the hunting farmers, as well as by his Lordship's tenants. "Gamester" was a nicely-balanced, good-actioned little chestnut horse; old "Stratblane" and "Deuce Ace," by "Robert the Devil;" each in turn left some good stock in the country. A bye-law of some importance was put on the statute books of the Hunt in March, 1887:—"That the name of a proposed new member be submitted through the Hon. Sec. to the Committee on being proposed

by a member of the Hunt; that the Committee may, if they think necessary, call a general meeting, and submit the name for admission. The minimum subscription to remain at £5, and that all members are liable for the season's subscription, unless they give due notice of resigning before the first of May." But it was rather an anomaly, considering that, in the following November, at the instigation of the Master, "farmer" members were admitted on payment of a yearly subscription of two guineas. This was the first resolution of its kind ever passed in an old-established Hunt, and brought about a material change in the Hunt as a club, and also in the qualification for hunt races. The amount of these small subscriptions was only a drop in the ocean, and the new rule carried so far that one prominent member of the Hunt gave up his place on the Committee, and joined as a two guinea member. The change was open to many abuses, and put difficulties in the way of the National Hunt qualification, for steeplechase riders. It so turned out that almost all the farmers who joined were good sportsmen and supporters of the Hunt, and everyone would have welcomed them without their two guineas.

Lord Greville considered two days in the week enough for cub-hunting, and then only for four or five hours; he also thought the hounds too flash for the country, and he determined to get drafts from his old friend, Lord Fitzhardinge. Major Grant

and Major Hall took over the Secretaryship in Lord Greville's second year, and Colonel Malone, Captain Loftus Lewis, and Mr. John Gordon were elected on the Committee.

The custom of using whistles was now introduced, and hounds used to fly to them at once till it was overdone ; the Hunt servants also carried spare stirrup-leathers across their shoulders, a useful and sporting dodge in vogue in the Cottesmore and



CLONHUGH.

other hunts. The Royal Dublin Fusiliers were quartered at Mullingar during this season. Sport was fair and foxes plenty ; but there were very few " kills in the open." In Lord Greville's time the proverb was transformed by the foxes from

"More die of eating than the sword,"
Less die of eating than the spade,

When Wootton* was discharged, his place was taken by Tom Clonan. Clonan was the first home-bred Whipper-in in Westmeath that was any use. A quiet rider,

* Wootton is now hunting hounds in county Cork.

attentive and civil, with few chances of learning, he picked up more hunting knowledge than most of those who graduated in a better school. He was the makings of a huntsman, had he lived and his health allowed it; but consumption snatched him away when still a boy. He had cool-headed confidence, without swagger or bluster, kept his ears and eyes open, and his mouth shut—just the contrary to most of his countrymen—and was sober. On one occasion, from Knock Ion, Tommy Clonan got away with hounds, and stuck to them over so curious a line of country that suspicious people hinted something about a drag. Running almost due north, across the Mullingar-Castlepollard road, leaving Derrynagarragh to the right, hounds got rather scattered at the bog beyond Gillardstown deerpark, and here they changed foxes, and Matthews got left. The fresh fox was a mountaineer, and set his mask for the Rock of Corry, taking the shortest route by Cullen's gorse, and turning near Loughpark, on over the Castlepollard-Oldcastle road, through Freaghmore and Millcastle, leaving Gilbertstown Mills to the left, across Robinstown to the hill, where he was seen just in front of hounds in the furze and rocks. It was Clonan's first attempt at hunting hounds, and he handled them so well that the field resorted to an old-fashioned custom, and made a "cap" for him. This was a slow, straggling hunt of fully eleven miles, beginning and ending at the two highest points in the county, and both of historic interest. Knock Ion is a hill 700 feet high, and beautifully wooded down to the edge of the waters of Derravaragh. A legend, handed down by tradition, tells of a chapel or hermitage, and the "holy well" of St. Coiragh, sometimes called St. Eyon or Leyon, in the face of the rock is still to be seen. Lough Derravaragh, or Lock Dairbhreach, pronounced "Darrery," signifies the "Lake of the oaks." It has been called the lake of "the severe judgment." A story is told of a man driving a stolen cow across the ice one hard winter; the beast fell and broke her leg, and was thereupon killed, skinned, and carried away. The thief and amateur butcher forgot his knife, and returned for it to the spot, where now the ice was melted by the blood and entrails of the cow. He fell in, and was drowned. His dying yell was wafted to the shore: "Oh! I have received a severe judgment," which in Irish has the sound of "Derevreach."

The Hill of Mael, on the contrary, is bare, as the name implies, for the old Irish mael=bald or hornless; hence the mael cow, pronounced "mwheel," the old polled cow of the country. The hill, sometimes called "Pattern Hill," stands 795 feet above sea level, and its summit commands a magnificent view of seven counties. It and the surrounding country was the property of Edmond Nugent, of Carlanstown, who was

member for Mullingar in King James's Parliament ; his sons, Robert (who died 1728) and Michael, who died eleven years later, succeeded in turn, and then came Robert, who was created Baron Nugent, afterwards raised to the title of Viscount Clare and Earl of Clare, died October, 1788. These large estates went to the Duke of Buckingham by marriage, and were bought by the fathers of the present owners, who, unfortunately for themselves and their families, could not foresee the land legislation of the last quarter of a century.

“ The tyrannous and bloody act is done,
The most arch deed of piteous massacre
That ever yet this land was guilty of.”

SHAKESPEARE, *Richard III.*

Apart from its beautiful scenery and fox-holding capabilities, Knock Ion is notorious as the scene of a cold-blooded cowardly drama of murder and robbery, which with its ghastly termination is worth recording as an object lesson to other evil-doers. Various legends have gathered about it, but the following narrative is authentic, being abridged directly from the original record.

This latter is a bulky manuscript pamphlet, taken down in the presence of two men of high standing, Messrs. Walter Nugent and George Tyrrell, and is the voluntary confession of one of the murderers named Francis Geraghty of Williamstown near Coole. It is so discursive as to be hardly intelligible in parts ; entering minutely into the smallest details of the whole conspiracy. The Nangles were a very old Westmeath family, and connected with many of the aristocracy of the day. They originally came to Ireland with Strongbow, in 1169. Mr. O'Neill Nangle married, in 1602, Miss Moor of Rosmead. They were also allied to the family of Fitzsimons of Tullynally, and from whom they inherited property. After the termination of the war in 1690, Garrett Nangle returned to Mayne, where he had owned a large estate. He died intestate. His grandson, Hyacinth Nangle, in 1754, went to reside at Streamstown House, at the northern foot of Knock Ion, whilst carrying out his intention of building a family residence at Mayne.

It came to the knowledge of one Edmond Hughes, that Mr. Nangle had lately received money for conacre and potato ground, and “ had not left any at the bank in Dublin for fear of the wars.” This miscreant accordingly planned the robbery, though he was foster-brother to his proposed victim, and had been reared almost from childhood by the family. The cowardly ruffian would not take any active part himself, saying he was too heavy to walk, and that he was too well known by all the

inmates of Streamstown House. He and his wife advised, however, that no person should be left alive in Mr. Nangle's house so as to prevent the possibility of identification.

Accordingly, on the night of the 30th March, 1754, Maurice Crosby, Mary Carney, James Hughes, Luke Murray, and J. Geraghty, having blackened their faces with burnt straw and tallow, started from Murray's house, at 9 o'clock, for the bridge of Kiltoom, where they met William Conran of Portnashanagan, and Owen M'Cabe of Knockacor, by appointment. [Portnashanagan is the Irish for bank or landing-place of the pismires (ants).] Here, with straw and tallow, brought with him for the purpose, James Hughes now blackened the faces of the two new-comers, as black as their cowardly hearts, and the party set off for Streamstown House.

On arriving there James Hughes pulled an iron bar out of the kitchen window, crept in, and lighted a rush candle which he found inside. He handed out two sides of bacon, some hung beef and two loaves of sugar, and then said: "Now, boys, come in, this place is ready for yous, for they are all fast asleep." They did as they were bid, and left Mary Carney outside, "for fear she might faint."

Geraghty got frightened, and started to run away; but Hughes caught him by the breast, and said, "You dog! you are trembling; you can't do one ha'porth of good; but do you hold the candle."

Mr. Nangle and his wife were in bed. Hughes pulled aside the curtain, and, with an iron bar which he had brought from Luke Murray's house, gave Mr. Nangle a blow on the head which cut and stunned him, and then dealt him three or four more blows which he thought killed him. The terrified wife rushed to the next room, where her child and the two maids slept, and here more innocent blood was shed. Hughes, with his iron bar, and Murray, with the bar pulled out of the kitchen window, attacked Mrs. Nangle and the maids, and left them for dead, after which they went in search of the men-servants, and found a lad of fourteen named Farrell, whom they treated in the same brutal manner. Then they returned to the first room, and found Mr. Nangle standing with one arm through the sleeve of his waistcoat. Seeing the murderers, he cried out to his man, "Jack Smith, where are you? will you not assist me, and save my life? Upon which Hughes, with the same bar of iron, felled him to the floor, and either Hughes or Crosby stabbed him in the abdomen either with a knife or with a "flesh fork," which Crosby had carried in his hand from the kitchen. They then went to search for Jack Smith, when, in the maid's room they found, lying in the bed, and clutching one of the poor dead girls, the eldest boy of the house, a dear little child, only

four years old, who was crying bitterly. Luke Murray begged of Hughes not to kill the poor child, "for," said he, "we have done quite enough already." Hughes said: "By God, I will, for he might tell of me to-morrow or after, for he knows me well. We will burn the house, and finish them all, and then it will be said it was the Mackissons that did it." He struck the child two or three blows, and then took a long knife out of Murray's hand, with which he cut Mrs. Nangle's throat across, though she was dead. This Mrs. Nangle was *née* Dowdall, of county Meath. The miscreants then ransacked the house, set fire to the roof in two places, and left the candle sticking in the thatch, after which they returned to Luke Murray's, and there divided the spoil into seven parts.

The fire consumed the roof and contents of the house, deeds, documents, &c., but left the walls intact, and they now form part of the present building. The murderers were tried in Mullingar, and two of them were hanged on the summit of Knock Ion, where their remains hung in chains for some years after—a ghastly sight, but only in keeping with the brutality of their crime. Christopher, the youngest child, was out-at-walk, or at nurse, as was the custom in those days, and was to have been taken home on that very night of the horrible crime; but the storm which helped the murderers in their bloody work, kept the foster-mother and child at home, and thus saved the life of Christopher Nangle, who grew up to be a fine character, and a kind-hearted, accomplished gentleman, and lived to the age of eighty.

In 1789 he married Miss Ellen Dardis, heiress of Gigginstown, in this county. Her mother was a Dease of Turbotston, who died in 1797, aged seventy-two, and was buried at Killulagh. Mr. Nangle used to describe his visit to Gigginstown for the Mullingar races, two years after his alliance with the Dardis family. He joined as a lieutenant in Mr. O'Ferrall's Balyna Yeomanry, and lived at Garisker, in the county Kildare, where he took an active part on the side of law and order during the troubled times of the rebellion.

The new Berkeley draft were not beauties, and were curiously marked—some very light-coloured hounds, a few badger-pie, and others almost white—mostly bred from a dog called "Cromwell," a name which made its mark in Westmeath, and not such a pleasant one, about the year 1650. Lord Greville fancied these colours for a country where there are bogs, as it enables the huntsman to discern the movements of his pack at a distance. In March, 1888, his Lordship sent in his resignation, but later consented to continue in office, if the subscription was made up to four figures. This

the Hon. Secs. found impossible ; but the Master generously consented to bear the extra expense, and thus entered on his third season of 1888-9 with the same staff.

In 1887 Mr. Reddy again put his racecourse at the disposal of the hunt stewards. Captain G. Nugent won the Welter, 14 st.; and Mr. Coffy, with "Theodora," the light weight, 12 st. 7 lb.

A pony race at the same meeting nearly put an end to the author of *Records of Hunting in Westmeath*. After passing the post a winner, horse and jockey were turned over on the flat by one of the crowd.

In 1889, over a natural course at Stokestown, Dr. Finegan rode his mare "Kate" to victory in the light-weight race. This good mare had previously captured the challenge point-to-point Galway *versus* Westmeath.

Mr. E. F. Dease rode the winner of the Welter in Captain Loftus Lewis's horse "Violetstown."

To finish the season 1889-90, a pleasant day's racing at Newbrook showed the M. F. H.'s green Jacket in front, with Captain Gilbert Nugent in the saddle, and beating a good horse in "Whitelegs." Mr. T. Fetherstonhaugh won the light weight. There was also a "red coat race" at the meeting. Captain Cecil Fetherstonhaugh's good mare "Quiver" easily defeated the other two runners, though she was a "Cyclops." Lord Greville proposed hunting the country four days a week if the subscription were raised, but the scheme fell through.

When the winter of 1888 was over, Captain Cecil Fetherstonhaugh purchased the Wicklow Harriers from Mr. Comerford. The pack was in a deplorable state, so that out of twelve couple only half were "put on," the rest being "put under." Godfrey Shepherd, son of Mr. Comerford's huntsman, came as kennelman to Bracklyn, and, as will be seen later on, he was promoted to service in the Westmeath Hunt. Godfrey's father went as K. H. to Mr. G. F. Brooke's hounds—a model pack on flag or field. Captain Fetherstonhaugh supplemented his six couple with a few Westmeath drafts, and others from English kennels, and some pure-bred harriers from the Drewstown (the old Allenstown pack). Mr. W. Gore Lambarde was living at Clondrisse, not far from Bracklyn, and helped in the management of the hounds. He was a good rider, and with his experience of several packs of hounds in England was a valuable coadjutor to his brother-in-law, the Master ; in fact, his leaving Clondrisse for Newgrove, in Meath, had more than a little to say to the disposal of the Bracklyn Harriers.

Within a radius of about seven miles from the kennels there was a great scope

of harrier country, and the farmers everywhere showed good feeling towards the sport, and preserved hares. Being a private pack, taking no subscriptions, some of the local clergy had an opportunity of spending many a pleasant half-holiday with these hounds, and were always welcome

The captain showed very nice sport, though he only hunted the country for two seasons, but the pack did not leave the county. Mr. Broughton Adderley was living near Athlone, on the outskirts of the Westmeath Hunt. He bought the Bracklyn hounds, and after many vicissitudes they still flourish as the "South Westmeath Staghounds," of which Lord Castlemaine is now the Master, and Mr. F. W. Russell the amateur huntsman. As mentioned elsewhere, his Lordship got the loan of some very good Westmeath coverts. He has hunted, in turn, hare, stag, and fox, but by sticking to the last named, it would not have taken him long to form a first-class hunt.

Several race meetings have been brought off under the auspices of the S. W. M. H. In 1891 Captain de Robeck (now Master of the Kildares) was hunting from Athlone, and rode his own horse to victory in their Welter Hunt Cup at Moate.

Clonhugh was the hunt fixture for 29th October, 1889. The Master's hospitable board was not despised, for the rain ruffled the waters of Lough Owel,* and cast a gloom over the scene. Hounds could not work in the wet laurels, even with a fox close in front of them. Colonel Burnett, and others of the Royal Irish Rifles, journeyed out from Mullingar, in spite of wind and weather. This regiment supported sport of all kinds during their sojourn at Mullingar Barracks.

The season 1890-91 was Lord Greville's fifth. The Master's second son—now in the 7th Hussars—relieved his father of some of his arduous duties in the field. This was rather resented by certain members of the Hunt who had "birdcatcher" hairs when Mr. Charlie Greville was in his cradle. His Lordship had the misfortune to be bitten by a dog around which hung suspicions of hydrophobia, and was induced to take a trip to Paris to the Pasteur Institute. On his return, at a hunt meeting, a vote of congratulation was passed on his Lordship's recovery. Majors Grant and Hall

* Lough Owel something more than two centuries ago was named Lough Foyle (which signifies the lake in the hole); it was also called "the borrowed lake," from a legend that two sisters lived, one in Westmeath, and the other in Roscommon. The former asked for and got the loan of the water which lay in the county Roscommon (where the track of the lake's bed is still pointed out). The term of the contract was "till Monday," but the Westmeath lassie made it "the Monday after eternity." Thus long ago contracts were broken. Lough Owel is supplied from springs alone, and has flowing from it two streams—the first north, called its silver arm, running into Lough Iron, the Inny, and Lough Ree; the second, its golden arm, flowing south into the Brosna, Lough Ennell, and the Shannon. Thus the stolen water lies with its two arms stretched towards the province from which it is supposed to have come

continue as Hon. Secretaries. There was a niceish draft put on this year by Oakley "Romeo" and Bicester "Chieftain."

The coverts near Glasson—viz., Moydrum, Waterstown, Reynard, Portlick, Whynian, Littleton, Auburn, the "loveliest village of the plain," were lent to Mr. Adderley, provided he got leave from the owners.



HOUNDS AND KENNELS.

Corea was, however, resumed from Mr. Biddulph, M.F.H. Matthews stuck to the cubbing, and Lord Greville came home for the hunting season proper, which opened on Monday, November 3rd, at the Master's residence. A nice spin from Frewen was an agreeable curtain-raiser to the good scenes that were to be acted later on. The time-honoured meet at Mullingar on 12th November, the day after the fair, was well attended; but sport was only moderate. On the 21st the meet was cancelled, as the Hunt had lost an honoured and respected member in Captain Ralph Smyth, of Gaybrook,

The northern end of the county was rather neglected. Trains helped to bring the Streamstown meets within reach ; but for the Delvin side, hounds were often sent on overnight to Clonyn, and kept in the riding school in the stable yard. One night there was a quarrel, and the huntsman, not being able to get to them in time, a hound called "Raglan" was missing in the morning. They belied the adage that "dog won't eat dog," and left nothing but a thigh-bone. Captain Wallace, of the 53rd Regiment, took rooms at Mullingar, and hunted with the Westmeaths this season. He was a good all-round sportsman, whose first introduction to the county was when he came on protection detachment to Loughpark, near Castlepollard, with a company of his regiment, in the eighties, at a time when murder and anarchy reigned under an effete Government, which shut the stable-door when the horse was gone, and sent down troops to patrol the country after the harm was done.

The East Lancashire Regiment, quartered at Mullingar, became members of the Hunt. The races were run over Newbrook course, the Welter being won by Mr. Percy O'Reilly's "Whitelegs" (Lord Greville's horse, "Cooksborough," had beaten "Whitelegs" in 1890—form was now reversed), and the light-weight by Mr. A. J. Pilkington's "Aristocrat," owners up ; and the same two gentlemen won again in the following year, this time "Musician" winning the light-weight. The Hunt lost this year a model specimen of country gentleman, soldier, and sportsman, by the death of General the Hon. Sir Leicester Curzon Smyth, K.C.B., of Drumcree. He was all that is embodied, in the truest sense of the words, in a *Christian gentleman*.

" The smiling morn may light the sky, and joy may dance in beauty's eye,
Aurora's beams to see ;
The mellow horn's inspiring sound may call the blithe companions round,
But who shall waken thee ? "

Nothing special marked the advent of 1891-92. The Berkeley drafts were falling off in quality, Lord Fitzhardinge had ceased taking as much interest as formerly in his pack ; Lord Greville could not manage to get on many home-bred puppies, and the pack rather declined. The Culleen kennels are subject to kennel lameness. There is not sufficient exercise-ground, and the buildings are rather damp. Distemper is very prevalent, and young puppies do not thrive well. Dumb madness has happily not attacked hounds ; it is a terrible disease, hard to account for in its origin, and impossible to cure. Its symptoms were thus described by one of the Westmeath huntsmen. He said of the hounds : " They heat's nothing, they bites at heverything, and they can't see out of their heyes"—truly a deplorable state to be in. It is not

many years since Matthews shot a mad dog in the passage of the kennels. The hounds had another narrow escape returning from Larkfield along the road at Saunder's bridge, near the canal, a mongrel retriever came reeling along the footpath as if its back was broken, frothing at the mouth, eyes starting out of its head, chopping at imaginary objects, and with all the symptoms of rabies: luckily he was turned by some horsemen who were in front of the hounds; one of them, a V.S., galloped into Mullingar, and gave word to the Constabulary, who followed the dog, and shot it.

The above-named huntsman had wonderful descriptive powers. He was one day spelling out an advertisement nailed up to a tree, and being asked what it contained, said: "Marngle for sale, sir—'Marngle,' a kind of fruit!" This was his idea of mangold-wurzel.

Point-to-point races were revived in 1892 at the instigation of Mr. Herbert Fetherstonhaugh, who was Secretary and Manager, as well as Clerk of the Course. He was assisted by Messrs. Salmon and Taylor, and, with Clonderlever as a point of vantage, a capital day's sport was enjoyed by a large crowd of people.

In 1893 Lord Longford won the Welter race over the same country, but the following year the stewards failed to get leave to use the course, so no races were held. Godfrey Shepherd and Jack Matthews were Matthews' two Whips when Lord Greville entered on his seventh and last season in 1892.

Mr. Philip O'Reilly and Captain Fetherstonhaugh joined the Hunt Committee. Mr. O'Reilly is a staunch supporter and ardent follower of the Westmeath hounds. He was never appealed to in vain when funds were low and the hat going round; and perhaps no member of the Hunt can boast of seeing the end of so many hunts in the field or so many hunt cups on his sideboard.

Subscriptions remained about as they were. The Hon. Secs., Majors Grant and Hall, had to use all their persuasive powers to induce members, not only to subscribe, but to send in their pittance in proper time. The East Lancashire still subscribed, and the officers of the R.I.C. also joined, and sent £10 from their corps.

Scent served well towards the spring of 1893, and some clinking sport was the result; but the men were not as well mounted as they had been. Lord Greville found the Mastership almost too much of a tie, so that with business to attend to, and also bearing in mind what his friend Mr. Gladstone had done in 1881, his Lordship decided on resigning the post which he had honourably filled for seven years, sharing with

Captain (now Sir Gerald) Dease the honour of the longest reign of any Westmeath Master. His Lordship was an advocate for hunt breakfasts and luncheons, and always maintained that the "bob" or "tanner" paid for holding a horse tended to make hunting popular. Lord Greville is Chairman of the Newbrook Racecourse Company. The Hunt Races were run there in the spring of 1893. Mr. Ballasty's horse, ably handled by Mr. P. Cleary, won the Welter Cup. Mr. Percy O'Reilly, the champion Westmeath polo player, rode his own horse to victory in the light-weights.

The old Newbrook Racecourse only lived on its records of the past in 1889, when a company was promoted to buy up the farm, and work the concern on the lines of other such undertakings. The shares were soon applied for and taken up. Lord Greville, and a strong board of local directors, have worked the concern ever since, and in 1895 they made an enclosure for the horse show, with stands, stables, and jumping course complete. Golf and pigeon shooting are also enjoyed within the grounds of the company.

Lord Greville's stables were well filled with useful cattle, and the Hunt servants suitably mounted. Matthews had, amongst others, an old favourite in a hog-maned bay mare, that he had ridden during Captain Clark's Mastership; she was a wonder over narrow banks. There was a good little grey horse named "Corkscrew," not that he came from the South of Ireland or was unsound; but probably he could bore his way through anything. About the most useful one in his Lordship's stud was a grey cob, standing 14 hands 1 inch; she had belonged to a gentleman in the county, who found her too slow for polo, and lent her to a neighbour for harness. This cob, "Mary Anderson," by name, was then sent to a dealer's for sale on commission. Lord Greville happened to look round the yard, and seeing a likely-looking one, had it out, and bought it on the spot, ordered a horse-box, and sent the mare down to Mullingar to carry the Whip next morning. For fear of his Lordship being prejudiced in having bought an animal he had so often seen, and which he could have had ten pounds cheaper at home, the dealer wired down to the late owner of the mare:—"Greville bought 'Mary Anderson'—mum's the word!" The most inquisitive young lady telegraphist could hardly have interpreted this wire.

It was too good a thing to keep secret, and no one enjoyed it more than his Lordship, and well he might laugh, for he had got hold of a plum. The mare is called "Mum" to this day. She has won prizes at local shows in the brood mare classes, and her produce are as good as their dam. She was a marvellous conveyance over a bank

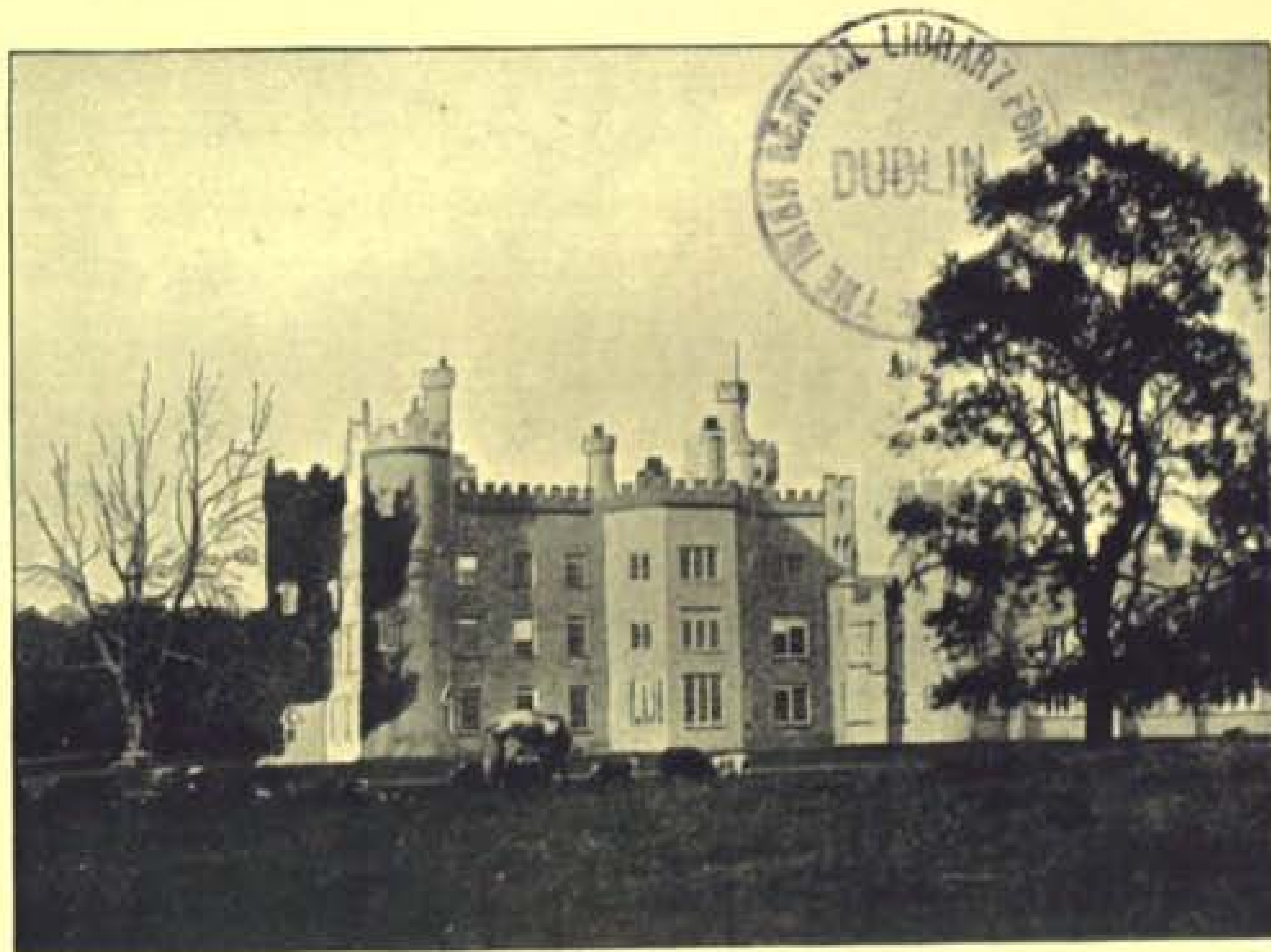
and stonewall country. When put after a couple of seasons to carry a whipper-in no day was too long for "Mum;" she never lost her condition, though doing three days a fortnight up to March, and finished the season by dropping a fine colt foal in June. "Cooksborough," by "Midnight," was and is still a high-class hunter. Lord Greville went well on him for some seasons, and won the hunt cup with him. His Lordship must have bought them of the right sort, for in the year 1897 two of his old huntresses took prizes with foals at foot, at the Mullingar Horse Show. "Blackthorn" was, perhaps, the best he ever had, though not "every man's horse." Bought as a colt for £34, and cast for being unsound in foot, eye, hock, and knee, he hardly looked worth taking for farm-work; but Mr. O'Reilly got him, and finding the horse too good for agricultural purposes, put him to jump; all his infirmities vanished, and he was quite the most brilliant horse in the hunt. Lord Greville bought him at a high figure, and soon passed him on at a profit; Captain Trotter got him, and Sir Thomas Hesketh eventually gave top price at the Meath Hunt Horse sale, adding a nought to the horse's original cost.



CHAPTER XIV.

THE HUNT IN JEOPARDY.—LORD LONGFORD AND THE HON. E. M. PAKENHAM'S MASTERSHIP, 1893.—MR. COOKE OF COOKSBOROUGH.—SOME GOOD SPORT AND IMPROVEMENTS IN THE COUNTRY.—CHANGE IN THE HUNT STAFF.—THE HARDEST FROST ON RECORD.—HUNTING FOUR DAYS A WEEK.—SOME LUDICROUS SCENES IN THE FIELD.—PAST AND PRESENT MEMBERS OF THE W.M.H.—POOR SPORT IN 1896-7.—DEATH OF MR. R. S. FETHERSTONHAUGH.—PUPPY-WALKING IN JUBILEE YEAR.—WHAT MR. THOMPSON THOUGHT OF HIS NEIGHBOUR'S HOUNDS.

MASTERLESS when Lord Greville resigned, we had country and hounds, foxes and a huntsman full of vulpinism, who knew his way about thoroughly; and, best of all, Westmeath could boast of farmers who were one and all for sport. A committee is never quite satisfactory, but as a last resource it was to



PAKENHAM HALL.

have been tried, when two county men came to the rescue. Lord Longford was a subaltern in the 2nd Life Guards, and his brother the Hon. Edward Michael Pakenham in the Coldstreams. (His Lordship often finds himself in the latter when hunting!) Both were fond of the sport, young, popular, and blessed with the goods of this

world. His Lordship succeeded to the title and estates in 1887, on the death of his father, the fourth earl ; his residence lies in the extreme north of the hunting country.



A. COOKE.

Mr. Pakenham inherited Cooksborough, erstwhile called Moygullen, from Mr. Adolphus Cooke, whose property adjoined Lord Longford's. Mr. Cooke was anxious to have his estates made one with his Lordship's. He was a kind old gentleman, but eccentric in some ways ; fond of horses, of which he bred some very useful ones, and imported the best blood of the day. Many of the colts were left to roam in the broad pastures at Cooksborough, unbroken and untouched, till they were ten or twelve years of age. Amongst other things he professed to believe in the transmigration of his soul to a fox ; so if his belief was realized it may have happened that his heir has ere now marked him to ground. Mr. Cooke wrote his own epitaph :—

“ When the day arrives that I must die,
In some lonely spot let my body lie,
Wherein no mortal was laid before ;
There let me rest for evermore.”

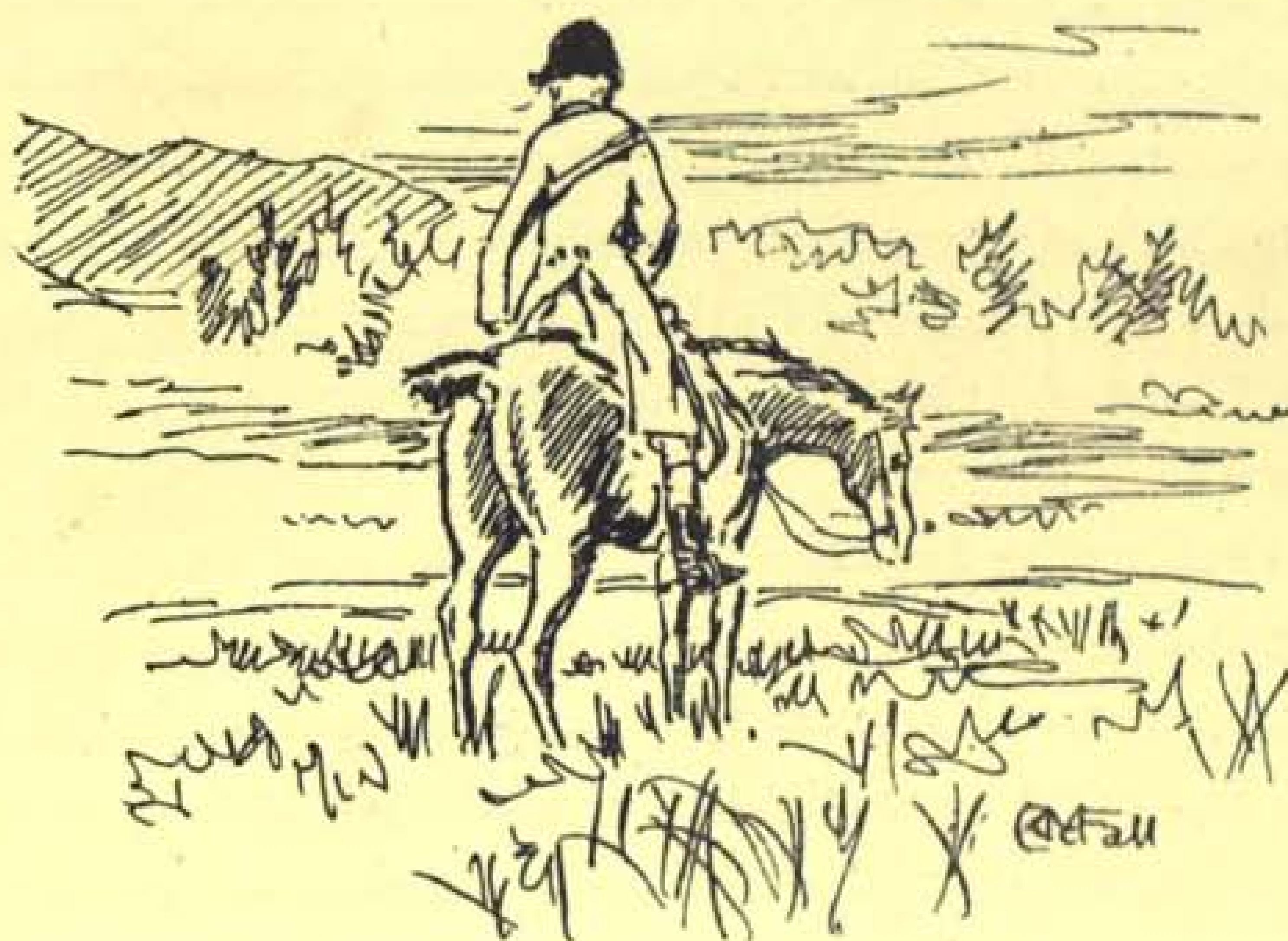
“ A. COOKE, Cooksboro'.”

Shortly after Mr. Cooke's death a fox, after ringing about the demesne, was eventually killed in the kitchen of Cooksborough House. It was naturally remarked that the kitchen was a fit and proper place to find a cook, and all wondered if the old man's prophecy had come true.

Westmeath was jubilant when these two gallant sportsmen stepped into the “breach.” It was the first occasion on which a joint mastership had been tried. They both remained in the army, and they have, as far as possible, taken alternate “leave,” which allows one or the other to be at home the greater part of the Winter. It would be easier for the Masters to manage things if living in the country. Still they

spare neither expense, trouble, nor personal sacrifice in the cause of hunting. Matthews was kept on; James Sorrell came from Mr. Chandos Pole as first, and Peter Sullivan, a local lad, was appointed Second Whip. The former is a lightweight, quiet but determined rider, and knows his business; the latter, a good rough-rider, having graduated in the 99s. races, but he had no kennel knowledge.

With a stud of twenty-one horses, forty-four and a-half couple of hounds (including the Berkeley and home-bred entry, fourteen and a-half couple), hunting began under very favourable auspices at Gartlanstown Bridge on the 31st



JAMES SORRELL.

October, 1893; a sharp, frosty morning; some hunting, but nothing of note; hounds got "divisioned," as an old Master of the Berkeley hounds once called it.

On November 6th, in spite of the storm and a slack morning at Gillardstown, an afternoon fox gave us a nice spin; he ran well, but lived to run another day.

December 4th was a new fixture, Kinturk, where the M.F.H. gave a lawn meet to do honour on his home-coming to the best supporter of the Westmeath hounds. Even those, who as a rule, are adverse to coffee housing, joined this day in drinking the health of their host, Colonel F. Pollard-Urquhart, R.H.A., the owner of Castlepollard.* Many reminiscences of eight-and-twenty years back were called up by the presence of Colonel G. R. Dease in the field that day. Unfortunately, there was not much in the way of sport to renew memories of his old, happy hunting grounds.

* Castlepollard two hundred years ago was called Ballinegross.

This season of 1893-4 turned out satisfactorily on the whole, and hunting continued till 31st March: three days a week, and often a bye-day. The Hunt Races were held at Newbrook on 2nd April. Captain Lewis, of Violetstown, as usual, had a good thing for the Welter Weight Cup, and a horse of Mr. Reddy's, "Garçon," by "Monsieur," won the Light Weight Race at his ease.

Lord Longford was at home in the early part of the season, 1894-5, which can best be remembered by the unusually severe frost and snow. Hunting was stopped for thirty-three days in January and February. The hunt staff remained the same, except that Tom Jennor took Sullivan's place; he came from harriers in Surrey. On first landing in Westmeath, Tom did not quite understand the country, and very soon found himself and his horse floundering in a bog. "Look out, young fella," says Will, "or you'll be drowned; you're not in Surrey, among the 'op gardens." But he very soon got into fox-hunting ways, rides the country well, and is still giving great satisfaction, and is a light weight.

Besides attending to hounds and kennels the new Masters did a good deal towards making the country more practicable by putting passes and bridges over impossible places. Knightswood Bog, near Tyfarnham, for instance, though still a flounder to get across, is better than a two-mile gallop right or left to Multy or the "flag." A bridge near Derrynagarragh, at the edge of the Bishop's Lough, and a bridle-path through Donore Bog and Ballynacloon, are some of the improvements which bring bits of bad country within ken of hounds and huntsmen. The bridge over the River Gaine is on Mr. Murphy's estate, and it was a very kind concession on his part allowing it to be put up. He is not a hunting man, but carefully preserves foxes. In old times the gallop up the avenue at Ballynacloon, and clatter down the road to Multyfarnham, before joining hounds at Donore, was the ruin of the Ballynacloon country.

The opening meet, Crooked Wood, 2nd November, 1894, was a warm, dry day, with S.E. wind, and a very fair scent. There were two foxes in the Crooked Wood, but nothing was made of them. A Knockross fox got a long start of hounds by Gartlanstown, over the valley near Taughmon, and ran to Clonderlever, out of scent. The third fox was found at Hope's gorse, and ran over Mr. Hope's farm, at Clonderlever, right-handed into Barbavilla bog, round the house, and hounds just touching on a line back to finding point, the fox ran them out of scent. A wonderful fine show of foxes this day: the fourth and last fox, was moved in Glananea, an old warrior, that

only skirted Drumcree, crossed the river Deal* at Martin's mills for Sheepstown, where he turned sharp for Mullacrew; over the Delvin road near the School-house and hounds were stopped at nightfall before crossing the demesne wall of Clonyn. A brilliant run of six miles, but the field got badly away at Drumcree, and missed the best part of it. Fifth November, Turbotston gorse held an old fox, and being an easy place to get away from, hounds crossed the wall close to him, and dusted him merrily over Carne, south of the Castlepollard road, into Pakenham Hall, where they changed on to other foxes, but were soon got right again, and picked up the line of the hunted one at Coolure wall, running fast over Williamstown and Mayne, through Fearmore and Ballynameagh, through Gaulstown gorse, over Castlepollard road to Pakenham Hall, a good hunting ring of five miles. The Kinturk foxes would not be persuaded to move that day.

The first fox of the season killed was on the 19th November, at Lisnabin.

It was authentically counted that Lisnabin had provided eighty consecutive "finds" without a blank day. This is probably a record in the annals of any hunt, specially as these coverts are not generally called upon in the cub hunting season.

"The wren, the wren, the king of all birds,
On St. Stephen's day was caught in the furze."

The curious old custom of killing these delightful little birds on this day arises from history or legend of wrens tapping their beaks on the drums in a night bivouac, and awaking the enemy. Perhaps the legend is no truer than the verse! On St. Stephen's day, 1894, a *fox* in lieu of a *wren* was found in the furze, and though it was late in the evening we enjoyed the fastest seventeen minutes of the season; from Hope's gorse by Gigginstown and Clonderlever, pointing for Gillardstown, but lost after crossing the road, on the edge of Derrynagarragh or Bishop's Lough.

Jan. 19th, 1895. Matthews was attending the obsequies of his father, and Jem Sorrell hunted the hounds for three days. Scent was poor, and sport not worth recording, with the exception of a slow hunting run, over the deer park and Gillardstown, losing him at a spot where a most ludicrous incident once took place. There is a valley lying between two of the Gillardstown hills, with a small inland lake generally frequented by the geese from neighbouring farm yards: a fine fat gander had wandered on to the adjoining hill, and was grazing happily till the cry of

* The river Deal runs into the Boyne, and from Drogheda eastward to the Irish Sea. The Gaine, whose source near Monelea is not four miles distant, joins the river Inny in Derravaragh, and thus flows into the Shannon and the Atlantic Ocean.

hounds startled him, and set him fluttering down to rejoin his "companions of the bath." The height from which he started upset the goose's calculations, and he soon found himself in mid-air, and flying almost as well as his wild relations. Riding quietly along the bridal path was Mr. J. B., a light weight from an adjacent hunt, and he just intercepted the course of the gander's parabola. As to which was the most surprised, the horse, the man, or the goose, when the two latter lay sprawling on the ground, remains a puzzle to this day. It was very funny.

The laughter had scarcely subsided when a fox was found on the black hills and ran a merry burst into Barbavilla. On the 25th January, when leaving Mr. Herbert Fetherstonhaugh's hospitable luncheon table at Gaulston Park we little thought that there were six weeks of frost, snow, and general misery before us, till on March 1st the ice was figuratively and literally broken. Bracklyn was the rendezvous, and poor as the sport was both there and at Clonlost and Lisnabin, it was thoroughly enjoyed by a big field.

There was a blank day at Delvin on March 8th, though this was a good fox year, but the percentage of kills to finds was very low indeed. Of course the earth-stopping was a good deal to blame; for instance, on March 13th, it was galling to see three foxes marked to ground—one at Jamestown, one near Loughnavalley, and the third at Fay's scrub; but "by the *beard* of the *prophet*" there was a good one in Crissauns! at a rare pace the bitches—losing nothing of their keenness from the morning disappointments, gave this fox a rare doing—by Churchtown, crossing the road towards Tuitestown, and skirting Greenpark bog, they recrossed the Mullingar road, and then raced back to the gorse, where the fox was first found, and were on top of him in covert when he got underground after fifty-five minutes. Like many a good thing in Westmeath, it was late in the afternoon, and the freshness was out of the horses.

22nd March, another evening hunt, after putting in a lot of bog work at Claremont and the Downs, Lisnabin was the evening draw, and a brilliant forty-two minutes the result: Joristown across Knocksheeban and Corbetstown over Sion hill to ground in Clonlost. Most of the field had gone home disgusted, and but a few who took Lisnabin on their way home had remained to see this good hunt.

Captain Fetherstonhaugh won the Welter Hunt Cup with "Son of a Gun," a horse of his own breeding; "Garçon" accounting for the light-weight for Mr. Reddy.

The Honourable Edward took charge of the cubbing in 1895, and began on 16th August—the first pack out in Ireland. Fifty couple of hounds dashing into Knock Ion

with the sun shining at 5 a.m. was a soul-stirring sight. The opening meet was announced for November 4th at Crooked Wood, where Mr. Tormey's hostelry provided accommodation for man and beast. It was a foggy morning, with some scent, and as hounds were running a fox on the hill at Mornington, a cub ran right into the jaws of death.

On November 6th, Tom Jennor fell and broke his collar-bone. On the 20th of the same month was the first run of any note, over the Slanemore and Greenpark country.

Mr. Arthur Fetherstonhaugh, a popular member of the Hunt, died, and hunting was, of course, suspended on November 27th, the day of his funeral. There was some frost and snow in December, and the meets on 7th and 21st had to be abandoned.

When Captain Cecil Fetherstonhaugh resigned his share of the Secretaryship, Major Hall undertook the duties alone.

On December 16th, 1895, there was no fox in the Killucan country till reaching Lisnabin, and then a rabbit-hole saved him. With Clonlost blank, and Mr. Reynell's coverts only "morning stops," things looked black, till a fox was tallied away from the spinney, within twenty yards of the open earth at Edmonton; a blazing scent, and getting away almost on his back, hounds fairly raced over Killynon and Clondrisse, to within two fields of Cooksborough, where, headed, the fox turned sharp for Clonlost, and the first check let up Matthews and the stragglers. Hitting it off again, hounds ran slower into Lisnabin, divided, seven couple carrying the line short of the bog covert, round the big grass fields towards Killucan. The tail hounds had now joined the leaders. The fox lay down, dead beat, and, after some casting about, he jumped up, was coursed three fields, and rolled over—forty-five minutes very pretty hunting. Scent was good all this week, and good sport universal. The Ballymacads ran an old dog-fox from Crossdrum to Loughcrew, over Patrickstown Hill, and killed; and in Meath Mr. Watson had two red-letter days.

The Earl took over the reins of office when his brother returned to barrack life, and, on the 18th of the New Year, quite the best run of the season rewarded his efforts. From Turbotston hounds ran across Carne and the Castlepollard-road, leaving Gaulstown to the left, by Trumroe, over the big grass fields of Rathcrevagh and the River Glore, across the Rock of Corry, through Ballymanus gorse, killing (a two-year-old dog fox) at Annagh—a seven-mile point, and ten as hounds ran, the last four being in the Meath country. Unfortunately, there were very few people out to see it, and several got left behind *en route*.

Mr. A. Biddulph was given a loan this year of all coverts outside the county.

bounds, and also Ardnaglave, Bellair, Castle Daly, Doon, &c. Lord Castlemaine got for the South Westmeaths all coverts west of Rosemount, Clare Hill, and Shinglas, with the right of morning stops at Rosemount and Ballintubber.

Fox's gorse, near Streamstown, was given up, and Killahee enclosed and rented; the latter, being well looked after by Major Grant, became a very useful covert, and is now permanently on the Hunt rental.

January 22nd may be marked with a red letter. Baronston was the meet, not generally a popular reunion, any more than is Turbotston; but these two showed the best runs of the year. It was a nice mild morning, and no sooner were the dog hounds thrown into the Ballycorkey end of the big wood than a fox was on foot. He never dwelt in Baronston or Tristernagh, and faced the hill for Frewen, where, being headed, he skirted Slanemore for Tullaghan, and a fresh one saved him by leading hounds back slowly to Slanemore, where the fresh fox was lost.

His Lordship had a unique experience one wet day when the meet was at Knockdrin, and after ringing all about the woods there and at Ballynegall till half-past three, he determined to give his bedraggled field a gallop if possible, and made straight for the rock of Tyfarnham as a likely find. Just as the hounds were blown out of covert, a holloa at the far side of Knightswood bog got their heads up, and his Lordship let them go. It was 4 o'clock and they were still hard at it, round by Portnashangan and Clonhugh, and over Knightswood bog to Kilduff's furze, where in the darkness and single-handed, his Lordship had sounded all the notes he knew on his horn, and used the most enticing hound language before he got together 12 couples near Mornington.

"He counted them at break of day,
But when the sun set where were they?"

By the time he had reached Sheefin this little lot was supplemented by a few more stragglers, but no sign of a hunt servant: suddenly the pack vanished from his hunter's heels, and to his dismay the Master heard hounds grumbling over what turned out to be a dead mule in the ditch! A passer-by put them away from their well-earned German sausages, and his Lordship soon afterwards came up with Jim, and then Matthews turned up, and the Master started for home about 7 p.m.

It is interesting to compare the last published list of members of the hunt with that of thirty-five years ago, and again, twenty years back, when one hundred and five subscribers made up £1,154, against £858 now subscribed by eighty-five members and eighteen farmers. Sons have taken the place of their fathers. Some names have

Gerald Dease	...	...	£20	0	0	Captain Longworth Dames	...	£5	0	0
Lieutenant-Colonel Nugent	...	...	20	0	0	James Eivers	...	5	0	0
Thomas R. Tighe Chapman	...	...	30	0	0	Eugene Eivers	...	5	0	0
R. Reynell	...	...	25	0	0	William Evans	...	5	0	0
Lord Vaux of Harrowden	...	...	15	0	0	William Fetherstonhaugh	...	5	0	0
Sir Richard Levinge...	...	...	15	0	0	James Fetherstonhaugh	...	5	0	0
Thomas J. Smyth	...	...	15	0	0	Captain Grant	...	10	0	0
John J. Ennis	...	...	15	0	0	B. Hannan	...	5	0	0
A. Adams Reilly	...	...	10	0	0	Edward Hope	...	5	0	0
Philip O'Reilly	...	...	25	0	0	Henry E. Joly	...	10	0	0
Colonel Cooper	...	...	25	0	0	W. S. Kelly	...	10	0	0
The Lord Castlemaine	...	...	10	0	0	Thomas D. Kelly	...	5	0	0
Captain Hon. F. Greville	...	...	10	0	0	R. F. Lethbridge	...	10	0	0
Hon. R. Harris Temple	...	...	10	0	0	G. A. Murphy	...	6	0	0
R. H. Rochfort-Boyd	...	...	20	0	0	Captain Murphy	...	6	0	0
J. Bond	...	...	10	0	0	P. J. Murphy	...	6	0	0
A. Cooke	...	...	10	0	0	W. Brabazon, jun.	...	5	0	0
Robert Daniell	...	...	10	0	0	John M. Kelly	...	5	0	0
Cecil Fetherstonhaugh	...	...	10	0	0	Captain Hon. Edward Browne	...	5	0	0
Captain W. Fosbery	...	...	20	0	0	James M'Cormick	...	5	0	0
C. Hall	...	...	10	0	0	William Mooney	...	5	0	0
F. Hume Kelly	...	...	10	0	0	J. H. Moore	...	5	0	0
Thomas Maher	...	...	20	0	0	A. More O'Ferrall	...	25	0	0
J. Richard Malone	...	...	25	0	0	G. N. Purdon	...	5	0	0
Brinsley Marlay	...	...	10	0	0	F. W. Russell	...	5	0	0
J. D. Meares	...	...	10	0	0	John Rynd	...	5	0	0
Richard S. Fetherstonhaugh	...	...	10	0	0	Captain James Smyth	...	10	0	0
Henry Murray	...	...	10	0	0	Captain C. Vandeleur	...	5	0	0
J. L. Naper	...	...	10	0	0	E. W. F. Whitney	...	5	0	0
Captain Ralph Smyth	...	...	10	0	0	R. W. C. Levinge	...	5	0	0
B. D. Thompson	...	...	10	0	0	Captain Digby	...	5	0	0
Mrs. Tottenham	...	...	10	0	0	L. B. Irwin	...	5	0	0
W. C. Lynch	...	...	15	0	0	Captain Dawson	...	5	0	0
F. B. C. Metge	...	...	10	0	0	Joseph Brabazon	...	5	0	0
E. Battersby	...	...	15	0	0	R. H. Brabazon	...	5	0	0
Hon. A. Harris	...	...	10	0	0	William Levinge	...	5	0	0
U. W. Evans	...	...	10	0	0	Tenison Levinge	...	5	0	0
Philip Batty	...	...	10	0	0	Nugent Fitzgerald	...	3	0	0
C. Baily	...	...	5	0	0	James F. Eivers	...	3	0	0
A. Browne	...	...	10	0	0	George Adamson	...	5	0	0
H. Campbell	...	...	5	0	0	William Hickey	...	5	0	0
F. V. Chapman	...	...	10	0	0	Joseph Carew	...	5	0	0
Richard Coffy	...	...	10	0	0	William M'Loughlin	...	3	0	0
E. J. Colgan	...	...	5	0	0	Captain H. Loftus Lewis, Royal	...			
D. J. H. Colgan	...	...	10	0	0	Engineers	...	5	0	0

Major Magill	...	...	£5	0	0	J. Watson Murray	...	...	£7	0	0
Samuel Handy Somers	...	...	2	2	0	J. R. Battersby	...	...	7	0	0
Donation from a Lady	...	...	5	0	0	Major Hume Kelly	...	...	7	0	0
W. H. Daniell	...	...	5	0	0	R. Daniell	...	...	7	0	0
The Hon. Arthur Browne	...	...	3	0	0	J. H. Locke	...	...	5	0	0
						Captain Longworth-Dames	...	...	5	0	0
			£1,154	2	0	A. J. Pilkington	..	...	5	0	0
1895-6.						A. E. Joyce	...	...	5	0	0
Major Pollard-Urquhart	...	...	50	0	0	T. F. Levinge	...	...	5	0	0
Lord Greville	...	...	40	0	0	Dr. Finegan	...	...	5	0	0
Colonel Smyth	...	...	30	0	0	Theobald Fetherstonhaugh	...	...	5	0	0
Colonel Malone	...	...	30	0	0	J. W. Gordon	...	...	5	0	0
Sir Montagu Chapman	...	...	25	0	0	H. M. Pilkington	...	...	5	0	0
Colonel Cooper	...	...	22	0	0	C. Hall	...	...	5	0	0
Philip O'Reilly	...	...	20	0	0	G. N. Purdon	...	...	5	0	0
Captain C. Fetherstonhaugh	...	...	20	0	0	Captain E. J. Cooper	...	...	5	0	0
Officers K. O. Yorkshire Light						Major G. L. Nugent	...	...	5	0	0
Infantry	...	...	20	0	0	Wm. Brabazon	...	...	5	0	0
E. F. Dease	...	...	17	0	0	Wm. Murray (Dysart)	..	...	5	0	0
Lady Smyth	...	...	15	0	0	J. M. Kelly...	...	...	5	0	0
Major G. Dease	...	..	15	0	0	Major Grant	...	...	5	0	0
R. S. Green	...	...	15	0	0	Mrs. Fitzgerald	...	..	5	0	0
C. Brinsley Marlay	..	...	15	0	0	R. H. Bond	...	...	5	0	0
T. M. Reddy	...	...	15	0	0	Major Fetherston-Whitney	...	...	5	0	0
E. J. Beaumont-Nesbitt	...	...	15	0	0	M. Longworth-Dames	...	...	5	0	0
Lord Kilmaine	...	..	15	0	0	Wm. Quin	...	...	5	0	0
Captain T. J. Smyth	...	...	15	0	0	H. P. Wilson	...	...	5	0	0
F. Dames-Longworth	...	...	11	0	0	Major Lyster Smythe	...	...	5	0	0
Thomas Maher	...	...	10	0	0	Dr. Fitzpatrick	...	...	5	0	0
F. V. Chapman	...	...	10	0	0	Captain Lemon	...	...	5	0	0
C. Hannan...	...	...	10	0	0	Herbert Fetherstonhaugh	...	...	5	0	0
Hon. C. Fulke Greville	..	...	10	0	0	J. C. Lyons	...	...	5	0	0
R. S. Fetherstonhaugh	...	...	10	0	0	G. A. Rochfort Wade	...	...	5	0	0
Major Hall...	...	...	10	0	0	H. N. Magill	...	...	5	0	0
Percy O'Reilly	...	...	10	0	0	Dr. Dooley	...	...	5	0	0
Major O'Brien	...	...	10	0	0	Captain O'Dell	...	...	5	0	0
Major B. G. Lewis	...	...	10	0	0	R. C. Barton	...	...	5	0	0
Mrs. Boyd-Rochfort	...	...	10	0	0	L. P. Reynolds	...	...	5	0	0
Lord Castlemaine	...	...	10	0	0	E. A. Shaw	...	...	5	0	0
Captain H. L. Pilkington	...	...	10	0	0	Dr. Middleton	...	...	5	0	0
Major French	...	...	8	8	0	H. C. Levinge	...	...	5	0	0
N. J. Downes	...	...	8	0	0	L. P. Purdon	...	...	5	0	0
Colonel Magill	...	...	7	0	0	Captain Murray	...	...	5	0	0
H. W. Lloyd	...	...	7	0	0	E. Mason	...	...	5	0	0
Wm. Evans	...	...	7	0	0	R. G. Robinson	...	...	5	0	0

Mrs. Jackson	...	...	£5	0	0	C. Taaffe	...	...	..	£2	2	0
Major B. Randall	...	...	5	0	0	P. Cleary	...	..	...	2	2	0
C. C. Palmer	...	...	5	0	0	M. Ballesty	...	...	...	2	2	0
Captain Loftus Lewis	...	...	5	0	0	James Seery	...	...	...	2	2	0
G. Ronaldson	...	...	3	3	0	W. H. Bagnall	...	...	...	2	2	0
Major J. Purdon	...	...	3	0	0	Chas. Kelly	...	...	...	2	2	0
Michael Hope	...	...	3	0	0	Dr. Whyte	...	...	...	2	2	0
Wm. M'Loughlin	...	...	3	0	0	G. Reid	..	...	...	2	2	0
Eugene Salmon	...	...	3	0	0	Alfred Brabazon	...	...	...	2	2	0
D. N. Fox	...	...	3	0	0	Lieut-Colonel Stevenson	...	...	...	1	0	0
James Taylor	...	...	2	2	0							
F. Mitchell	...	...	2	2	0					£858	4	0
E. Gaynor (Athlone)	...	...	2	2	0							

It was a mild open season 1895-6, and hunting four days a week for an extra £100 subscription, in hopes of doing justice to the extremities of the country, hounds were out one hundred and five days, including thirty at the cubs. Digging was done away with, to the intense delight of those who prefer hunting to ferreting, and the chagrin of the local sappers and miners, who often used to earn the price of a drink when digging a fox. Such a custom had it become, that upon one occasion a fox had been marked to ground and left near Poolnagorth, and in the course of the day it was dug out and brought to the huntsman by some natives who expected to see a course. This was too barefaced, and on being told that the fox was not to be turned down for hounds, the miscreants cut off its brush, and threw it in the bag into the lake. Money spent on digging would have paid for grating most of the shores in the country.

On February 19th a nasty fall put the Master *hors de combat* (this is no pun on his Lordship's *charger*). Sport up to now had been excellent, but the month of March produced little worth chronicling. Hounds stopped in kennel on 13th and 14th: the Hunt was mourning the loss of a kind friend, Mr. H. C. Levinge, as good a fox preserver as ever owned a covert, though he did not hunt, and kept up his shooting.

Mr. Pakenham came over to finish the season, which wound up on 30th March. just saved a blank day by finding a vixen in Crissauns, and when she finally made up her mind to break, hounds ran her fast for twelve minutes to a shore near Loughnavalley, where foxes had often got in before. There had been a hint thrown out that the M.F.Hs. wished to resign, and the Mastership was offered to Captain Frank Wallace, but, to the delight of everyone, they remained on. The country, to show its gratitude, subscribed £143 towards repairing the kennels; a lottery of some

inimitable sketches by Colonel James Smyth produced twelve guineas, and the two Masters added £14 to the fund. The following work and additions were carried out:—First of all the huntsman's house had to be done up: the accommodation is certainly not in keeping with the size of Matthews' family; rooms were small, and painting and papering were badly wanted. A new boiling-house was erected, and the old one turned into a spare lodging room for hounds, thus at the same time increasing the size of the feeding house. The whole range of kennels was newly roofed with galvanized iron, tanks put up, the boundary wall coped, and everything made neat and comfortable. The harness-room, though small, is compact, and well fitted up with iron mountings, and Lord Longford and his brother erected a fine row of new wooden loose-boxes for their hunt horses.

The feature of the 1896 Hunt races was that none of the three winners were properly qualified! In 1896-'97 Lord Longford waged war against the cubs; the staff remained the same, with the addition of a junior Matthews, who was occasionally pressed into the service; his father was suffering from a slight attack of *Anno Domini*; Jim Lynch, the old feeder, had been superceded. Though it was not a wonderful season in any part of Ireland, Westmeath seems to have had more than its share of bad luck, and though hounds killed very few foxes in the early part of the season, nevertheless they were hard to find towards the end.

Ballynacloon saw the first cub of the season killed on August 19th. A couple and a half of hounds were lost by poison in September.

The death of Mr. Richard Fetherstonhaugh removed a well-known figure from our midst. He was looked upon as the *doyen* of the Hunt, and his funeral at Killulagh on October 10th was a sad gathering for many of his old friends. He was a connecting link between the last and the present generation, a resident country quire, good judge of horse and hound, and a fine rider. Hunting was, of course, stopped for some days.

The good runs of the season are easy to remember, they came like angels visits! One of these celestial spirits called on November the 18th, and found the Hunt at home at Rosemount. After marking two foxes to ground (in spite of the grand promises made at last earth-stoppers' dinner), an outlier near Jamestown got away in view: the first fifteen minutes was of the very best, till they checked at the Castletown-Loughnavalley road, then steady hunting leaving Crissauns to the left hand, a cur-dog coursed him and put hounds wrong, but scent had been serving, and horses were not sorry to have a blow. The summer's grass was not out of some of 'em,

and 1896 oats was not "old" till after Christmas! At him again, left-handed by Churchtown, all over a lovely grass country into the Major's covert at Killahee, a really good fifty minutes: several other foxes were there, but men and horses both said "hold! enough."

Mr. Pakenham took command from 1st December; he lost the services of his Second Whip, who was laid low with a broken leg, the result of a kicking horse in a crowd.

There was a hard frost from 16th to St. Stephen's Day, when they were just able to snatch a day, and a fox ran a new line from Knock Ion. He first broke and was headed, and met the hounds on his return journey, which changed his plans, and, making the best of his way due north, ran past Whitehall, over the Yellow river, leaving Tergeesus Fort to the east, skirting Cullen's gorse, then right-handed along the shore of Lough Lene to Cummerstown, near Drumcree, where he was lost; this was a nice gallop of about seven miles.

There was nothing till the 11th of the new year that the most artful penny-a-liner could turn into a hunt. Met at Killucan, and found at last at Lisnabin; ran a ring and hounds divided on another fox, between Clondrisse and Clonlost, all got together again when crossing the Killucan road from Lisnabin laurels, and now they really ran hard and straight in a thick fog for twenty minutes, past Corbetstown, no time to think or hounds were out of sight. Matthews was right to stop them at the river Deal, or they might have been lost in Grangemore. Hunting was stopped by frost from 15th to 30th January, 1897, if we except a terrible day at Knockdrin on 22nd, wrested from the ice-bound ground, when, with no earths stopped, we traversed Knockdrin and Ballynegall without success, and went home petrified. On the 15th February plenty of foxes and hunting in and about Edmonton and Jeffrystown by Battstown, and killed in Clonlost. In the evening a good old fox from Cooksborough, after a turn round the bog, took hounds and a diminished field a sharp burst by Clondrisse, through Edmonton, to Jeffrystown, to ground. This fox was found dead in Cooksborough two days later, with no marks of violence, and nothing to indicate that he came by his death from anything but exhaustion. Wednesday of the same week Rathconrath was the rendezvous, and Killahee the draw. To Major Grant's intense delight a fox was viewed away at once, and ran a ring right-handed, and quite fast: two grey horses could be distinguished carrying two redcoats bang on top of the hunt during this twelve minutes burst; one was Colonel Malone, 18 st.; the other Jem Sorrell, just half the Colonel's weight. From Coolnahay bridge

it would be invidious to mention names : all were in the hunt, and, after a check at the canal, a fox was viewed in the distance—probably not the original pursued—and the chase went on towards Ballyote and to Slanestown, up the road to Walshestown, and then pointed for Portlomon, and turned sharp left through Frewen gorse, into and through Mountmurray, all very slow. Then from Castleoney bog up to Leney Church, and sunk the hill to the Ballynalack road, where a fox, but probably not the Killahee fox, got to ground in a shore near Mr. Gaynor's house. Time—Two hours ; a seven-mile point, and eleven as hounds ran ; two-thirds of the run was over unstopped country.

Hobson's forge is an old-established meet, from which a variety of country can be drawn. Mr. Pakenham was there on March 5th ; did nothing of consequence till, in the afternoon, his own property Glackstown bog held an old stager : he had been hunted on 19th February, and ran part of the same line, viz. : Battstown and Williamstown, Killulagh toward Reynella, where he was given up after a fast and enjoyable forty minutes.

There were six blank days. Hounds were out one hundred times, including thirty-six cubbing, so the percentage of blanks was small. A fox was run to ground almost every hunting day. To be quite accurate, and quoting from the kennel diary : "forty three and a-half brace of foxes were marked by hounds." Some of these foxes had been dug during the cubbing season, and in this way lessened the mortification of the huntsman who could not handle them otherwise. If foxes cannot be killed above ground, it means one of three things ; bad hounds, bad huntsman, or bad stopping !

Earthstoppers must have had qualms of conscience when pocketing their money and eating the feast provided for them by the M. F. Hs. at the end of the season.

Weather was wild and wet in March, and 1896-7 may be written down as quite a bad season.

There was no hunt ball this year. The Y. L. I. presented a cup to be run for at the Point-to-Point races near Rathconrath on 23rd March, Mr. Percy O'Reilly rode his own horse to victory in the Welter race, and a half brother of this horse won the light weight for Surgeon Major Dooley. Not being up to its owner's weight, this horse had not been ridden many times to hounds !

Newbrook on 10th April was a pleasant day's sport. Mr. O'Reilly was again to the fore. It was curious to note that of the thirteen riders in the two hunt races, five were "farmer members," and three soldiers, so the steeplechasing element is not strong amongst members of the hunt.

The race day was, perhaps, too busy a morning for the show of home bred puppies. Two neighbouring Masters, Mr. Assheton Biddulph of the Ormond and King's County, and Captain Harrison of the East Galway were the judges. They had not a very gaudy lot to select from, but they compared well with the Berkeley draft. The following is a list of walkers of puppies adjudicated upon. P. O'Reilly, Major G. Nugent, Captain L. Lewis, Miss Reynell, R. W. C. Levinge, R. Hudson, W. M'Loughlin, John Jack at Pakenham Hall, T. McCutcheon, F. W. Russell—P. J. Fagan, P. Corr (for E. F. Dease), Captain C. Fetherstonhaugh, Miss Evans, H. P. Wilson; and the first prize-winners were—Charles Kelly, T. C. Foster, J. W. Murray, Yorkshire L. I.; Lord Greville, Thomas Lee (for Major G. Dease).

At the instigation of Mr. Pakenham, who takes much pains with the breeding of hounds, a great improvement has taken place in walking puppies. Members of the hunt and farmers are coming forward as they should do, and in the spring of 1897, a record number of puppies had been sent out to walk, viz.: thirty-three and a-half couple, with what result remains to be seen.

Though puppies are troublesome and mischievous, and lead to terrible scenes with the poultry woman, the gardener, and the groom who leaves sponges lying about, these little things must be put up with, in view of gaining a rosette at the puppy show. Even amongst neighbours differences occur. A careless herd puts down the premature confinement of his ewes to the gambols of a foxhound pup from over the way, and the following remarkable correspondence recently took place:—"Mr. Thompson presents his compliments to Mr. Simpson, and begs to request that he will keep his fox *doggs* from trespassing on his grounds."

"Mr. Simpson presents his compliments to Mr. Thompson, and begs to suggest that in future he should call them hounds, or not spell dogs with two 'gees.'"

"Mr. Thompson's respects to Mr. Simpson, and will feel obliged if he will add the letter 'e' to the last word in the note just received, so as to represent Mr. Simpson and lady."

"Mr. Simpson returns Mr. Thompson's note unopened and unread, the impertinence it contains been only equalled by its vulgarity."

CHAPTER XV.

1897 COVERTS OUT OF REPAIR.—THE OLD HUNT DISTRICTS REVISED.—VOTE OF CONFIDENCE IN THE M.F.H.—MAJOR HALL CONTINUES AS SECRETARY TO THE HUNT.—THE COVERT FUND WITH MR. H. N. MAGILL AS HON. SECRETARY AND TREASURER.—A LIST OF WESTMEATH HUNT COVERTS.—IMPROVEMENTS.—"FINUS CORONAT OPUS."

GORSE coverts had been sadly neglected, and many of the woods which were formerly sure finds had now grown bare. Rabbit-trapping, and the system of setting the rabbiting of demesnes to game-dealers, together with the increase of Sunday coursing and poaching had thinned the ranks of Westmeath foxes, and it was hard to find them where they did exist, they had taken refuge in the large woodlands, and bogs, and to lying out where they were an easy prey to the greyhound fraternity, in patches of wild unenclosed furze.

"Hopeless to find, yet loath to leave unsought."—*Shakespeare*.

Towards the end of the season 1896-7 some letters were written derogatory to the way in which the country was being hunted, and the feelings of the members were tested at a general meeting held at Mullingar, on March 4th. So far from agreeing with the complaints contained in these letters, a large and influential meeting unanimously passed a vote of confidence in Lord Longford and Mr. Pakenham, a vote which they accentuated by subscribing to a covert fund, and appointing a committee to carry out the work to remedy the above-mentioned defects, and to superintend the earth-stopping. The committee is now working, with Mr. H. N. Magill as Treasurer and Secretary; and the country divided into eight districts. This fund was kept quite separate from the hunt account, the latter continuing under the care and attention of Major George Hall, whose task is not an enviable one. Sportsmen when asked for a subscription seem to look upon the Hon. Sec. as their natural enemy! Major Hall's work is a labour of love, and he deserves the thanks of the hunting community.



MAJOR G. C. HALL.



As long ago as August, 1862, a meeting was convened for the purpose of dividing the country into districts for collecting funds, paying fowl claims, and for attending to the preservation of foxes.

Six districts were mapped out, and the following committees* appointed :—

DISTRICT.	1862.	COMMITTEE.
I. Bryanstown, Middleton, Newforest, James-town, Ballinwyre.		G. A. Boyd, J. Nugent, A. Connolly, M. M'Cormick.
II. Donore to Crooked Wood, Knockdrin, Tullaghan, Clonhugh to Ballinacloon.		W. Nugent, P. N. Fitzgerald, S. Phillips, P. Gaynor.
III. East of Belvedere, and South of Mullingar and Killucan.		R. Reynell, B. Thompson, R. Fetherstonhaugh.
IV. Outside a line from Cooksboro' to Moortown.		Lord Vaux, Richard Fetherstonhaugh, W. Merlehan.
V. From Gartlanstown Bridge to Drumcree, and North of Derravaragh.		G. R. Dease, W. Evans, W. E. Smythe.
VI. West of Lough Owel, and North of Castletown Station.		Jos. Tuite, J. Eivers, W. West, E. Eivers.

The 1897 districts and committees are as follows :—

No. 1 takes the northern side of Derravaragh as far as Drumcree, where it is joined by

No. 2, which is bounded from end to end by the River Deal.

No. 3 is a most important district, and served by a committee of five : their territory is dove-tailed into Nos. 1 and 2, and extends as far as the Crookedwood, where it touches on

No. 4, which has the southern shore of Lake Derravaragh as one boundary, and Lough Owel as the other.

No. 5 is the extreme east of the hunt, and extends to the County Meath.

No. 6 the cream of the county, with sound going, and big fences, west of Lough Owel, and with Mr. Longworth's old country as its S.W. bounds.

Nos. 7 and 8 have the River Shannon on one side to the west, a slice of King's County on another south west, and join districts 5 and 6. A tract of country large enough to maintain a pack of hounds to itself.

No. 1 contains the following coverts :—Barbavilla, Cullen's Gorse, Drumcree, Drumcree Bog, Decoy, Gaulstown, Gillardstown, Deer Park, Gillardstown Gorse, Glananea, Knock Ion, Kinturk, Kilbally Wood, Pakenham Hall, Ringtown, Turbotston, Yellow River. *Committee.*—W. Evans, M. Hope, E. F. Dease.

* Out of the 1862 Committees only four members are still living.

No. 2.—Bracklyn, Clonyn, Dunganstown, Glackstown, Grangemore, Moortown, Mitchelstown, Rosmead, Sheepstown, South Hill, Rockview. *Committee*.—E. Salmon, H. Fetherstonhaugh, C. Hope.

No. 3.—Cooksborough, Clonlost, Clonderlever, Edmonton, Hope's Gorse, Jeffrystown, Killynon, Lisnabin, Reynella, Sheefin, Taughmon, Williamstown, Moore's Gorse, Corbetstown, Killulagh, and Dysart. *Committee*.—R. Greene, R. P. O'Reilly, James Taylor, S. Purdon, D. Palmer.

No. 4.—Ballynegall, Ballinacloon, Crooked Wood, Clonhugh, Donore, Kilduff's Gorse, Knockdrin, Knightswood (or Delamer's bog), Knock Ross, Mornington, Poolnagorth, Tyfarnham. *Committee*.—W. M'Loughlin, Sir W. Nugent, F. Delamer, John Taylor.

No. 5.—Belvedere, Catherinestown, Carrick, Claremont, Downs, Dalystown, Dunboden, Griffinstown, Gaybrook, Gaulston, Lowtown, Tudenham. *Committee*.—Tenison Levinge, J. Watson Murray, R. Lemon, D. Fetherstonhaugh.

No. 6.—Ballyote, Bryanstown, Baronston, Crissauns, Castleoney Bog, Frewen, Irishtown, Killahee, Kilpatrick, Ledeston, Mountmurray, Portlomon (or Ballard), Rathconrath, Slanestown, Sonna, Tullaghan, Tuitestown, Tristernagh. *Committee*.—J. Grant, R. Hudson, M. J. Murray, M. J. Cleary, Wm. Murray (Mountmurray), Thomas Killian.

Nos. 7 and 8.—Auburn, Ballinahown, Ballintubber, Bellair, Benowne, Ballybroder, Ballinwyre, Corea, Castledaly, Crieve, Clarehill, Creggan, Carnpark, Donore, Dromore, Doon, Dorrington, Emo, Fairfield, Fox's Gorse, Glynwood, Glencara, Glasson, Hall, Jamestown, Killare, Knockdominy, Kilnagarna, Kilclare, Kilcurley, Lilliput, Lunestown, Littleton, Ladywell, Moydrum, Middleton, Mearescourt, Marshbrook, Moyvoughley, Moorock Newforest, Newcastle, Portlick, Rosemount, Reynard, Shinglas, Slangs, Tully, Whynian, Woodfield, Waterstown. *Committee*.—G. Nugent, E. Adamson, Theobald Fetherstonhaugh, R. Cleary, E. Quin, J. H. Locke, G. Reid, R. Daniell. This is some of the work effected by the Committee.

Part of the wild gorse on Gillardstown was fenced in to take the place of the famous old hill wood which had been cut down ; (it was a great loss to the neighbourhood, for besides being a picturesque landmark in the county, it sheltered a bleak country, and was a good covert). At Drumcree Lady Smyth graciously allowed a hunting-gate to be placed in her demesne wall, and the gorse covert to be planted up ; this wall had proved a stopper to many a hunt.

Messrs. Greene and R. P. O'Reilly joined in improving and preserving the laurels in Reynella "Church Wood."

A new gorse covert at Taughmon was rented and fenced ; it stands in a very likely-looking spot, and near the appropriately-named hill, Foxburrow, and cannot fail to hold foxes, being in a line between Crooked Wood and Edmonton.

Ballyote is a central position, and in a part of the country where foxes were in need of sanctuary. The four acres of gorse sown there in the spring of '97 is thriving, and will be of great use in the Mullingar country ; as will also the new Bryanstown covert, presented to the hunt by Mrs. Washington-Jackson. On the Delvin side hounds were always short of a draw if Rosmead failed to hold, and invariably had a slow day in Southhill, Mitchelstown, Clonyn, and Moortown ; so the covert committee fixed on Sheepstown as a likely place to make a gorse in an open country, and with Mr. Seery to deal with, they do not expect much difficulty in obtaining land for the purpose. Lying as it does betwixt the famous Kilgar country and Westmeath, this new venture ought to prove of benefit to both hunts.

Colonel Malone has made a new gorse covert near Castletown.

Ballinwyre has not been enclosed up to now, and as the covert is given rent free to the hunt, the committee wisely decided on putting up a fence, so necessary for keeping a gorse free from trespass.

When these improvements bear fruit, with due attention to walking puppies, and the co-operation of the farmers in taking down wire, Westmeath hunting must be in the ascendant if foxes are carefully preserved ; and whenever again the history of the hunt comes to be written, when the author of this volume has "gone to ground" his spirit will rejoice as the hounds run over his grave to think that Westmeath can take its stand as a first-class hunt.



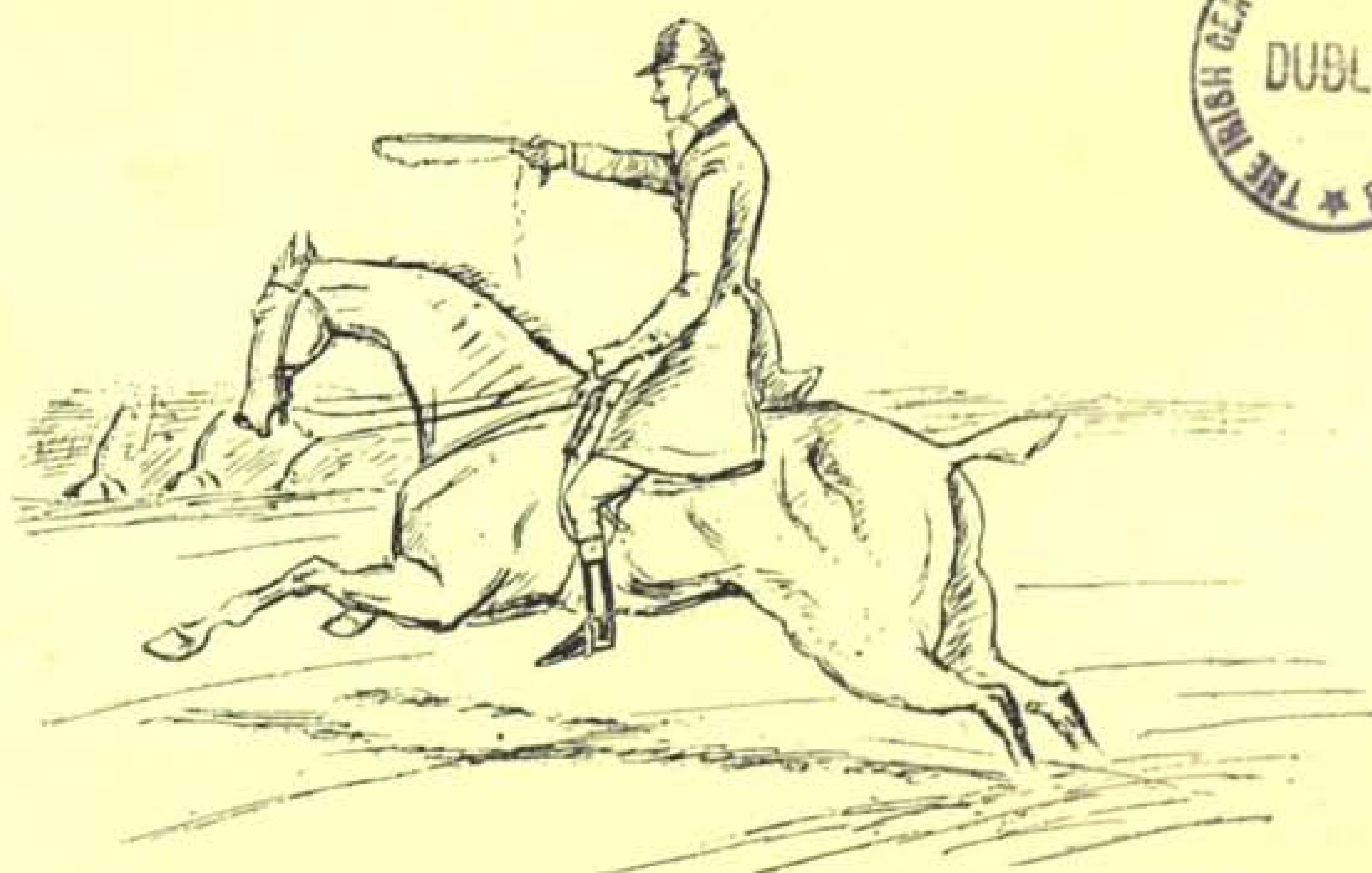
"SIC TRANSIT GLORIA MUNDI."

W. M. H. UP TO DATE (1897).

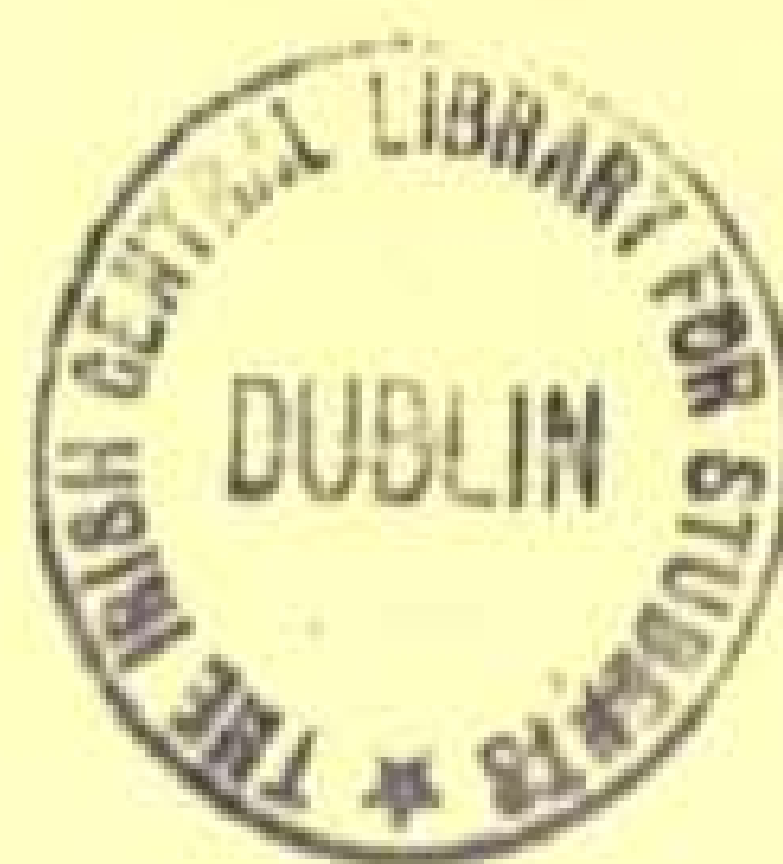
We have now got joint Masters of whom we are proud—
On all sides we hear of their praises sung loud !
Let the hunting community give them support,
For the Lord and the Honourable mean to show sport.



LORD LONGFORD.



HON. E. M. PAKENHAM.

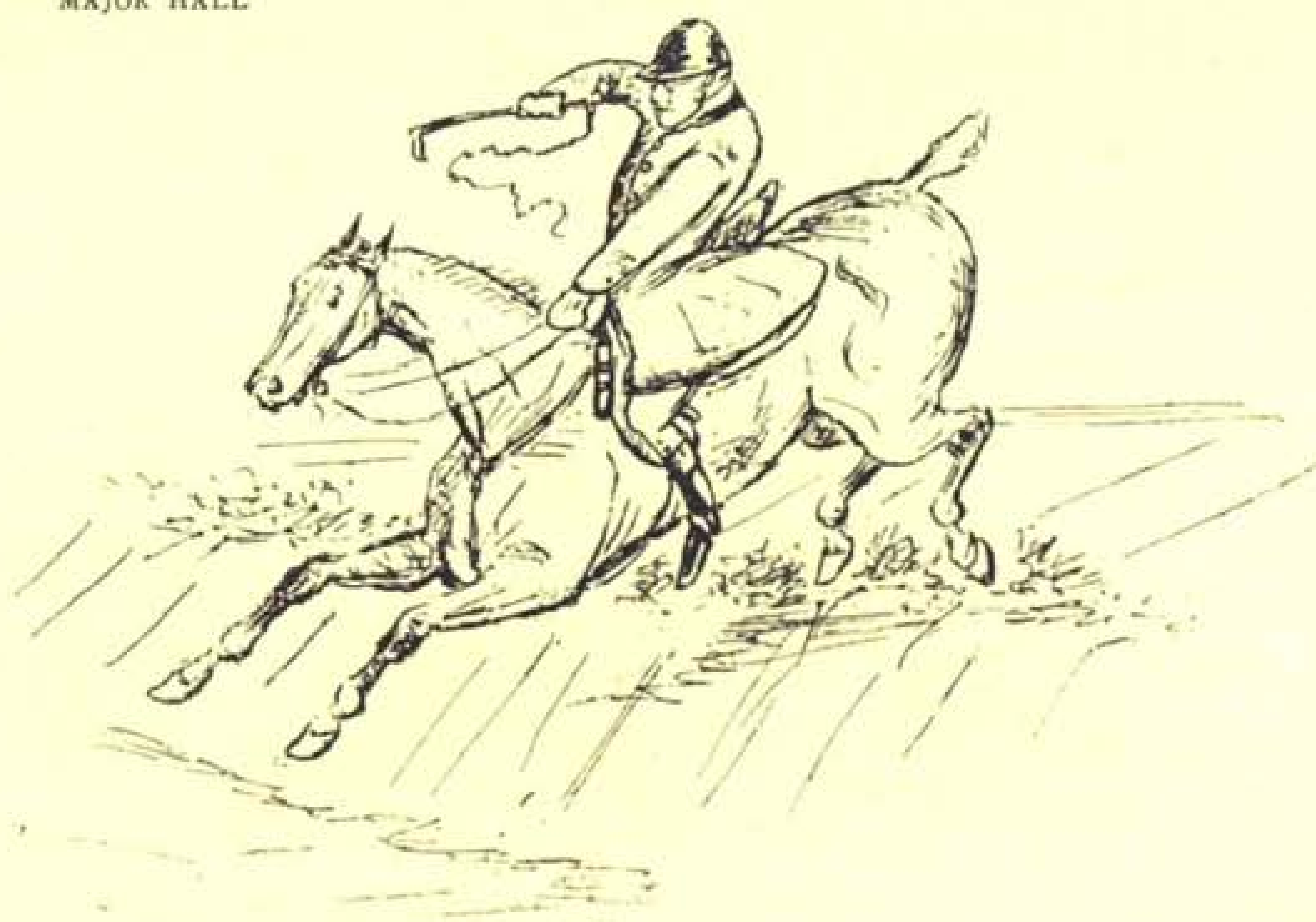




MAJOR HALL

Our Hon. Sec. and Treasurer, Major George Hall,
Is a topper at jumping a five-foot-six wall :
Better balanced on horseback than in his accounts :
At hunt-races he, therefore, gets plenty of mounts.

For twenty-six years we've been following Will,
Now he's fat, fair, and fifty, but hunting hounds still ;
And when the time comes, I may merely just mention,
Matthews can't leave Westmeath without getting a
pension.



WILL MATTHEWS.

Tom Jennor is gay, and is called "the geranium"—
Jem Sorrell is mournful, and has a grey cranium :



TOM JENNOR.

Though silent and sad, he in no way is silly ;
And Tom, in a bog-hole, was called " Water Lily !"



JEM SORRELL.



COLONEL J. R. MALONE.

There's an ex-M.F.H., who's the Lord of Clonhugh,
He mastered the country for years not a few ;
And three winters ago, on his giving it up,
The members presented him with a gold cup.

A Dames and a Nesbitt, from County of Kings,
Undertake the long journeys, as though they had wings;
In the east of the county we find Corney Hannan,
And west, Mr. Longworth, from down near the Shannon.

There are two noble sportsmen, who, let me explain,
Have a Kil and a Castle that each ends with Maine ;
Their paths are now set in a different sphere—
One hunts the Pau foxes, the other hunts deer.

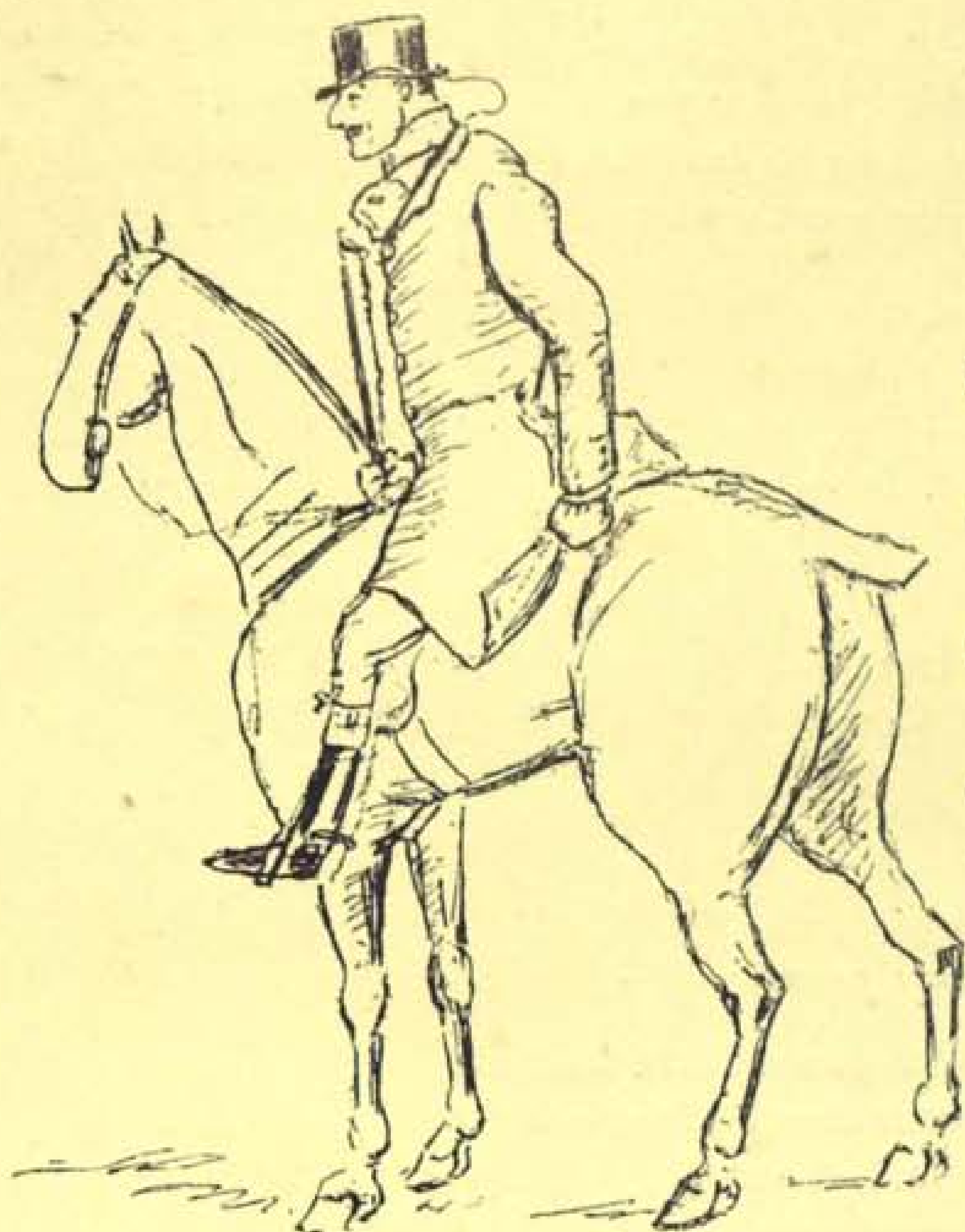
Dease is a name that is not unknown here—
His uncle was Master for seven long year ;
The Turbotston coverts, where fox-life abounds,
From August till May, are thrown open to hounds.

For his weight, our best man—and
he rides twenty stone—
Is, without any doubt, Colonel
Richard Malone,
Of Baronston owner, a fine-looking
man
At the head of his Rifles, or leading
the van.

Pollard-Urquhart, the Colonel, a right
good man he,
Besides giving coverts, provides
£ s. d. ;
If more men were like him, oh ! then
you could bet
The Westmeath Hunt never would
have a bad debt !

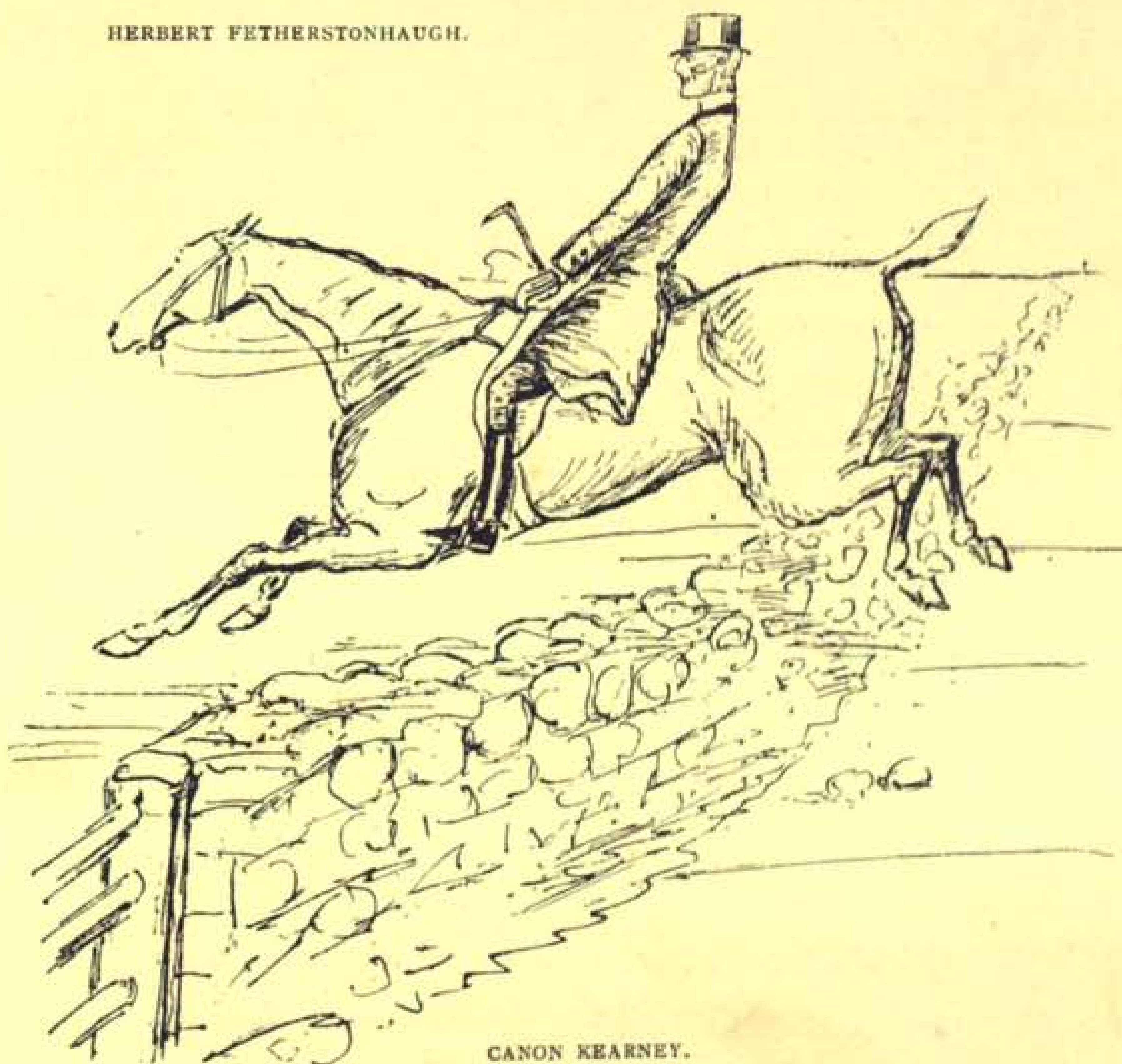


LORD GREVILLE.



HERBERT FETHERSTONHAUGH.

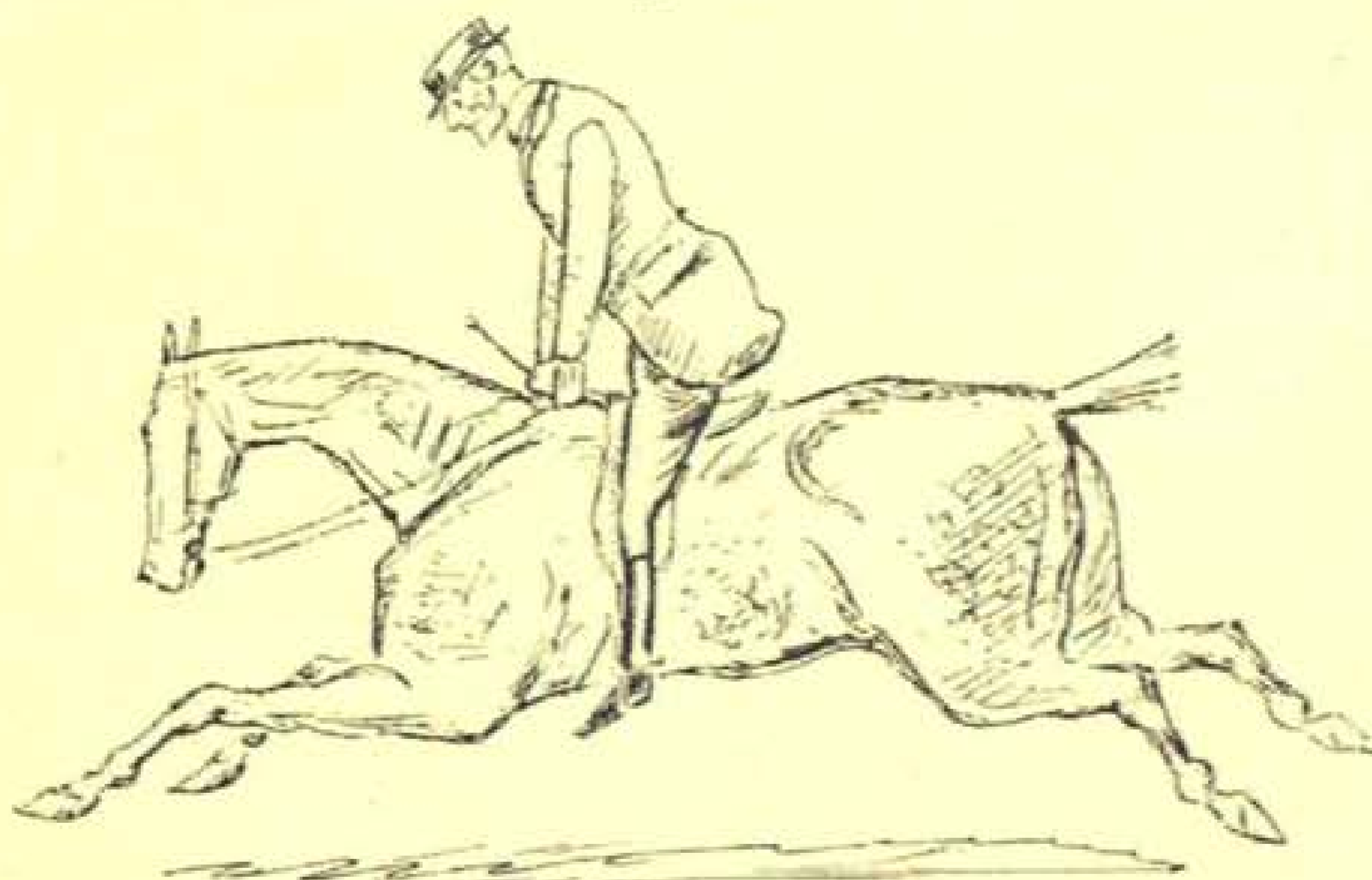
Herbert Fether is one who is all for a
start,
And Toby, of that ilk, is wild for a
dart ;
But the Canon "goes off" at the very
first note--
Our honoured and reverend pastor from
Moate.



CANON KEARNEY.



Good soldier and squire—philanthropist, too,—
 Let me introduce Colonel Josh Cooper to you.
 We welcome him out chaperoning his daughter,
 While her brother is soldiering over the water.



COL. J. COOPER.

Though Captain Tom Smyth does not join in the chase,
 The hounds still are welcome to draw his fine place,
 And when they are hunting in Ballynegall,
 A leash of fine foxes jump over the wall!



PHILIP O'REILLY.

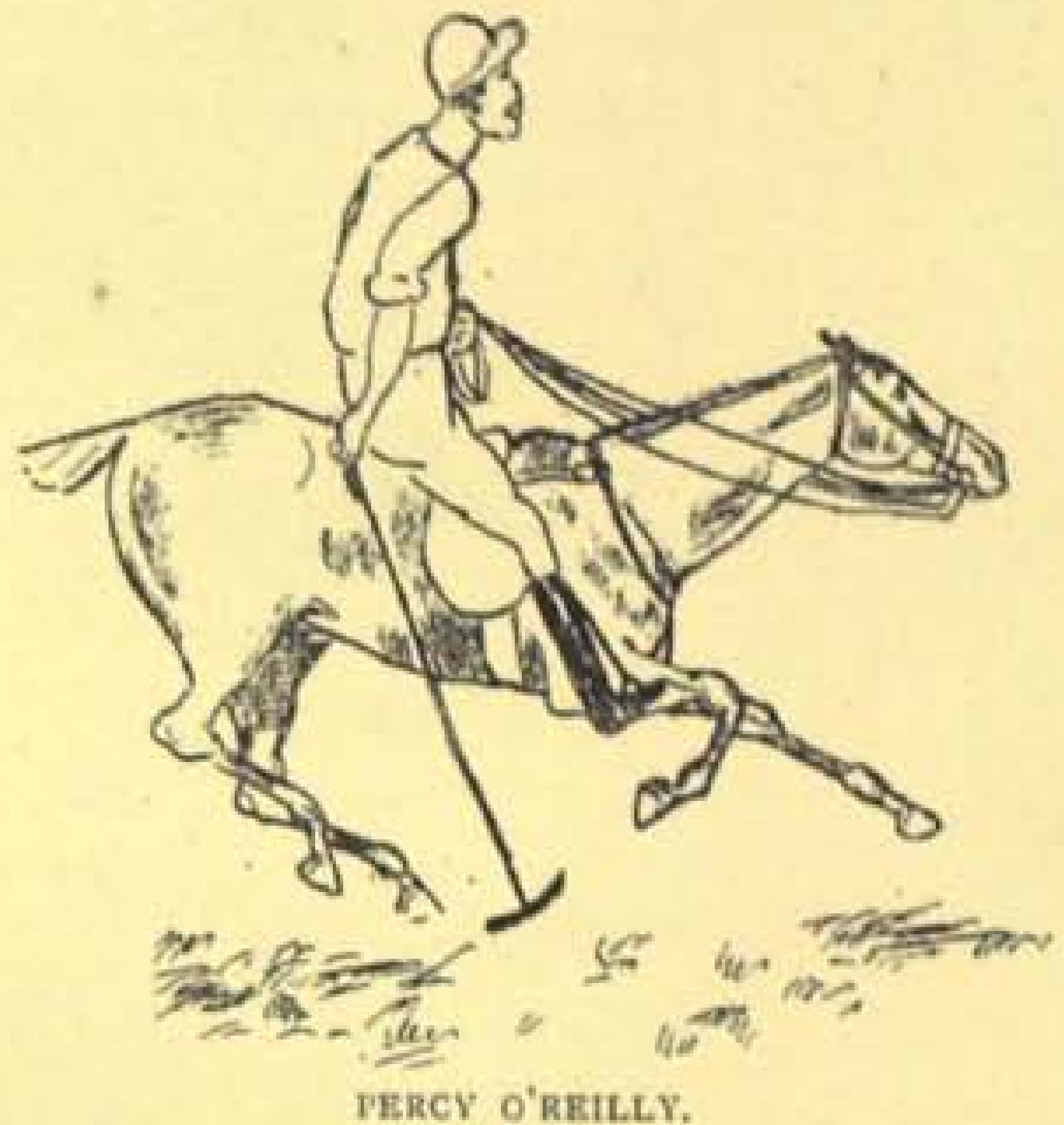
I'll make no distinction between the two
 Taylors,
 The horses they ride are invariably nailers ;
 For anything sporting they'll lend one a
 hand,
 And enjoy seeing hounds running over
 their land.

We've got Phil O'Reilly, good man without
 doubts,
 And if he's not there, why, he'll be there-
 abouts ;
 He is equally sure at a rocketing pheasant,
 His turn out is neat, and he always looks
 pleasant.

If that is the father, this next is the son,
A champion at polo, and good with his gun ;
He is fond of a hunt, but whenever that lags,
He'll change silk from scarlet, and ride twixt the
flags.

Another O'Reilly's, the one they call Dick,
It is generally voted that he is a brick ;
There's one thing I'll swear to, and faith it is this,
You won't go home hungry if passing Clondrisse.

There's Sir Montagu Chapman, and his cousin
Frank ;
But it's ages since I've seen them jumping a bank.
The years seem to come and go faster and faster ;
It's a good many now since Sir Monty was Master.



PERCY O'REILLY.

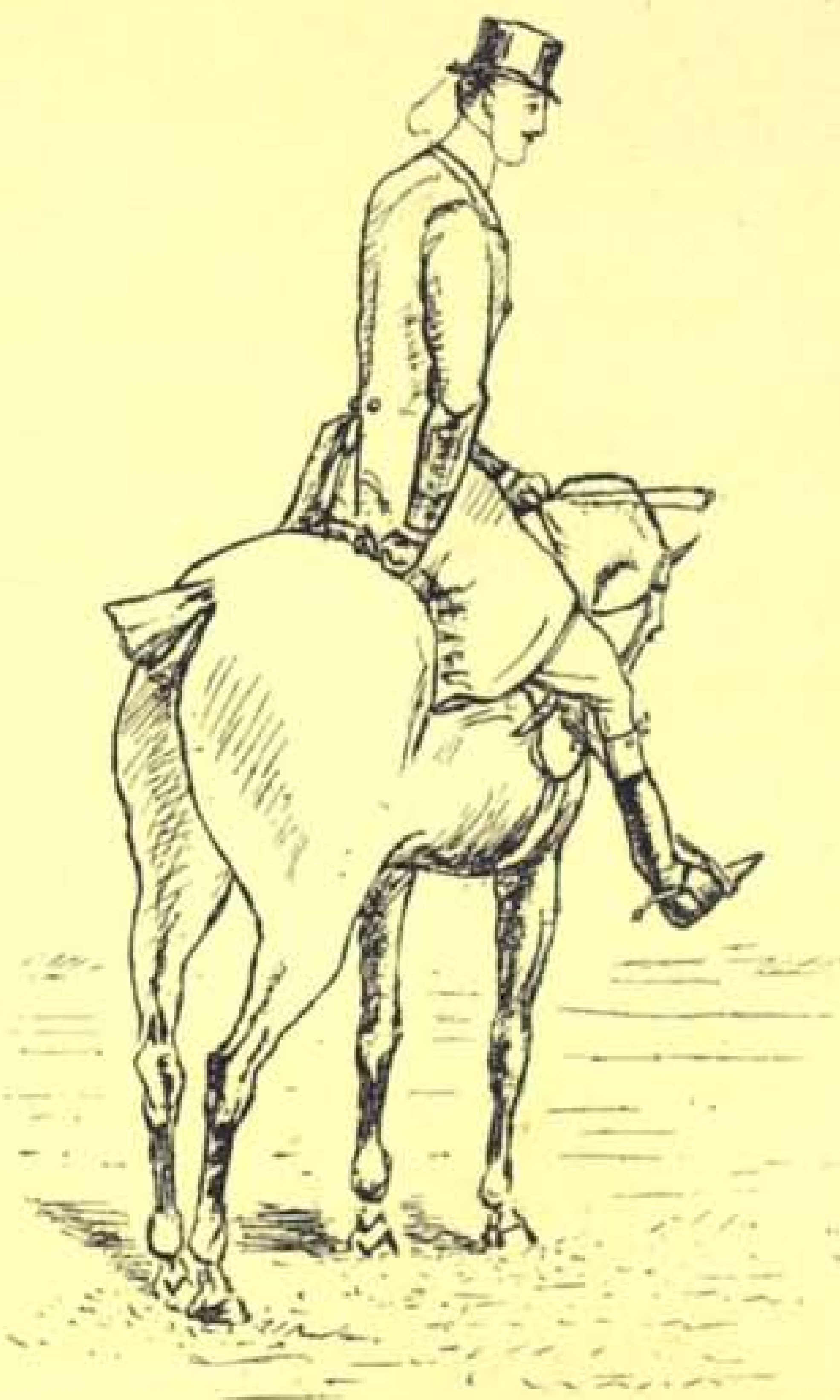
Of the old Palmer family, there's now a young
scion,
And we've Hope and his hard-riding sons from
Knock Ion ;
We had Charlie Lyons, who's now on the Rand ;
John Kelly of Temple, who is valuing land.

We've Daniell Newforest, and Pilkington Tore,
And the Captain from Bracklyn, called Fetherston-
haugh ;
A soldier-like seat has this Royal Dragoon,
And I hope he'll come back to Westmeath again
soon.

One seldom now Goodbody or Brabazon sees,
And Middleton's busy at earning his fees.
The hunt very often, too, misses Tom Maher,
And young Charlie Greville, who's now a hussar

Then at Reynella House, we find fair Mrs. Greene,
And she and her husband are both very keen.
Of that district fowl-fund she kindly takes care,
And you may be sure, she no trouble will spare.

True lovers of sport are the two Misses Reynell,
The puppies they walk are the pride of the kennel.
You never draw Edmonton blank of a fox
And they manage the payments for hens and for
cocks.



CECIL FETHERSTONHAUGH.

THE IRISH GENTLEMAN
DE

Miss Delamer, also, comes well to our aid,
 For chickens, and ducklings, and turkeys she's paid ;
 While Tenison Levinge, has something to say
 To fox depredations on fowl down his way.



TENISON LEVINGE.

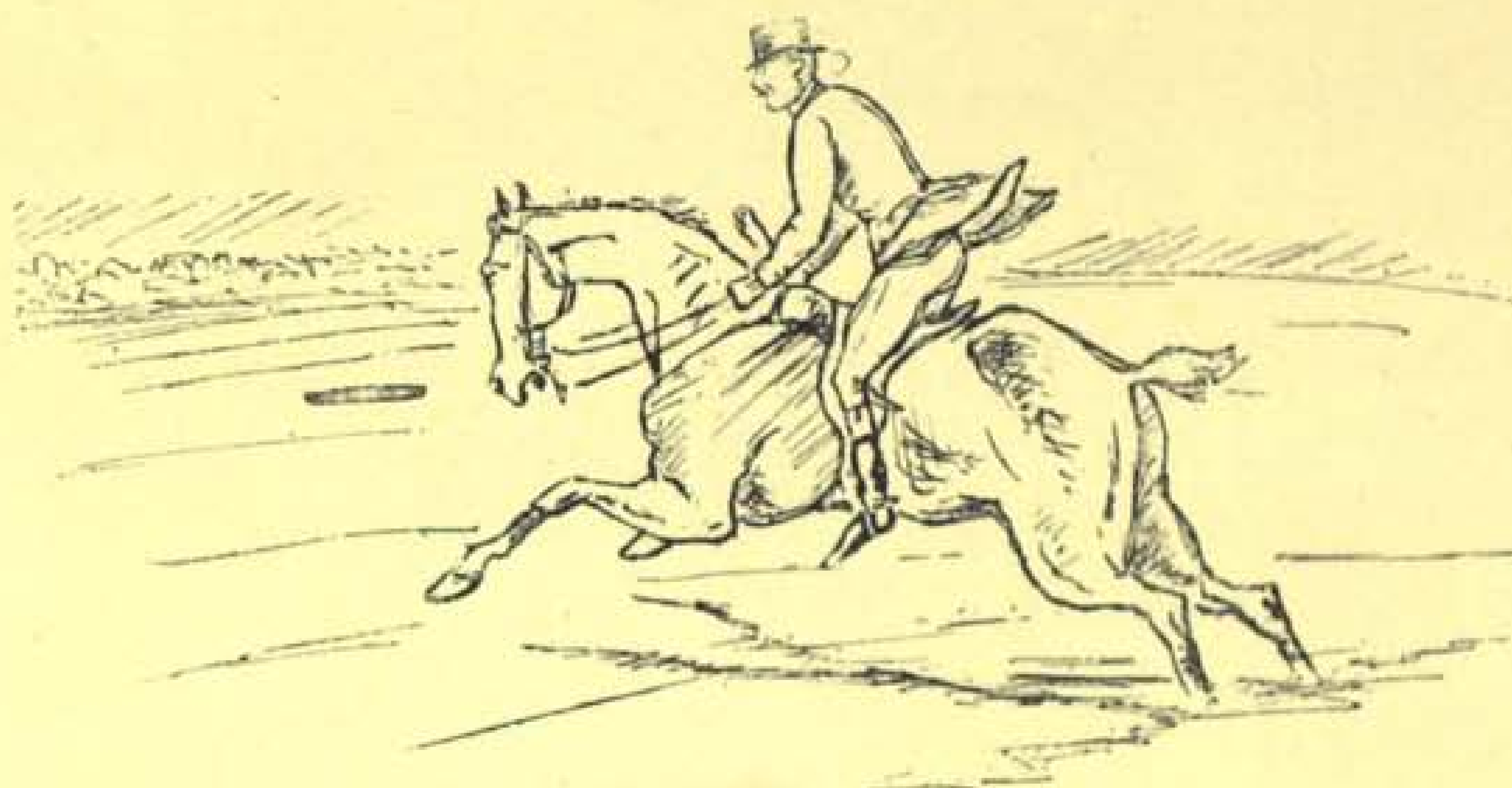
Another fund's managed by Mrs. E. Dease,
 Who tries the old hen-wives to manage in peace.
 To her and the others the hunt returns thanks,
 So for next season's funds, please send cheques to the banks.

Don't forget then the nice neutral woods of Rosmead
 (Where there's lots of barbed wire to injure your steed) ;
 There are Ballinlough coverts which both hunts can " stop,"
 Jack Nugent will over the fence neatly pop.

We've got Harry Bond, who lives over the bounds,
But constantly hunts with the Westmeath foxhounds ;
M'Cutcheon's another, a big welter weight,
Though I've not seen him out very often of late.

Our latest addition's a gallant young Bart.,
Who's anxiously waiting to get a good start ;
And when hounds are running I'm sure he will go,
If riding a bit of blue blood from Soho

No matter what country, no matter the pace,
I can tell you the man who will hold the best place ;
Your whalebone and latchfords will both go for nought
When catching the Major from out Jamestown Court.



GILBERT NUGENT.

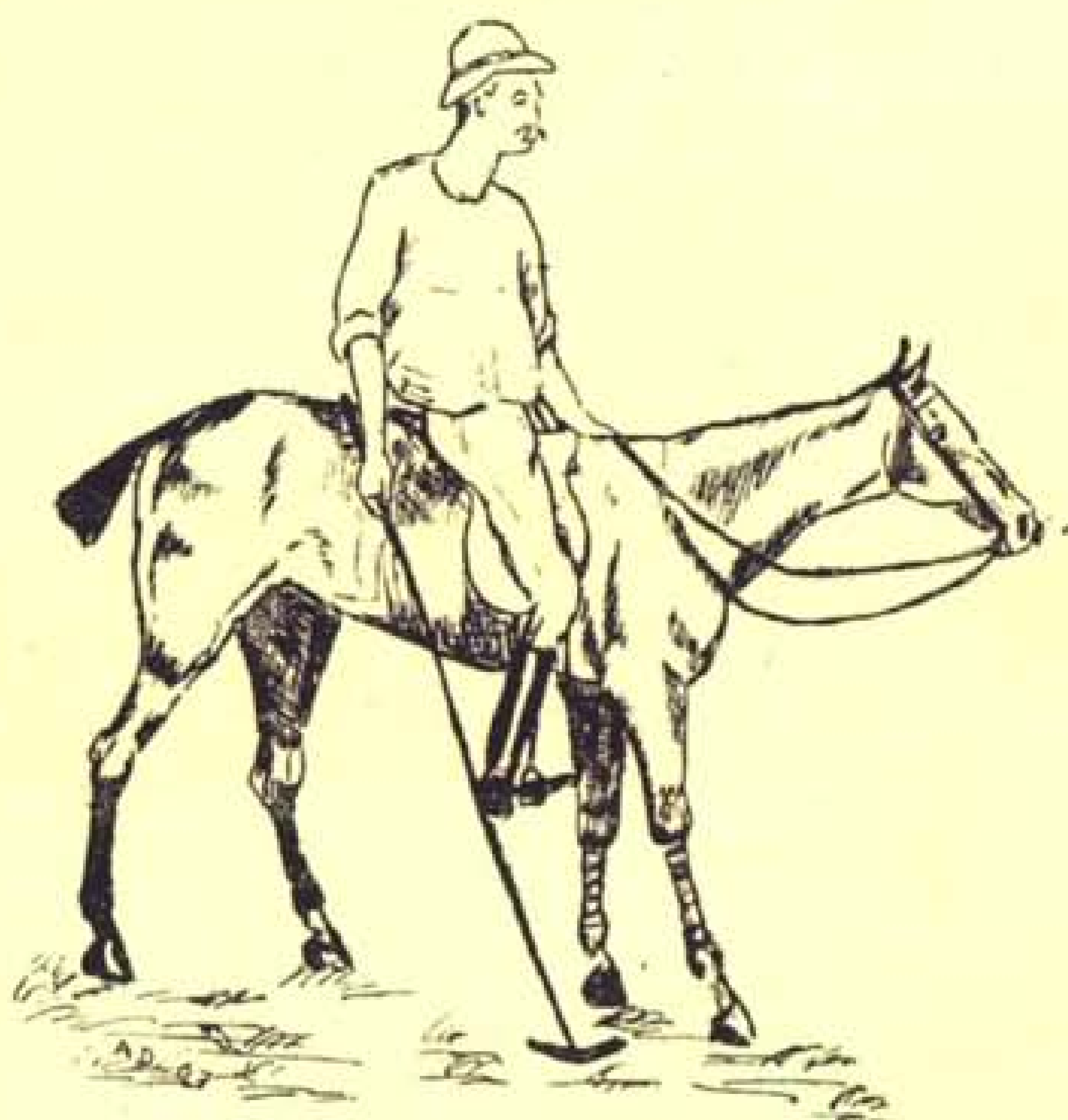
A neat little horseman is Harry Magill,
His motto is always " Be with them I will ; "
At the end of a hunt you will probably find
That his father and sister are not far behind.

James Seery, of Sheepstown, is a hard one to smother,
And then there's Pat Cleary, the V.S.'s brother ;
But when hounds run hard, and they really put pace on,
You must keep your eyes open, and watch E. E. Mason.

When drawing the laurels and woods about Sonna,
A Vulp will be found, you may bet 'pon your honour ;
He does not ride much, and is fond of a shoot,
But a good fox preserver is Henry Tuite.

An equestrienne fair hails from Middleton Park,
 Who'll follow the hunting from daylight till dark ;
 At a meet of the foxhounds at Castletown Station,
 There's no one can touch her when riding "Vexation."

Joyce, Lyons, and Finegan, too, can be found
 Either hunting the fox, or on our Polo ground ;
 Locke, Mitchell, and Pilkington, Dooley, and Shaw,
 Are all fond of hunting, but like racing more.



J. H. LOCKE.

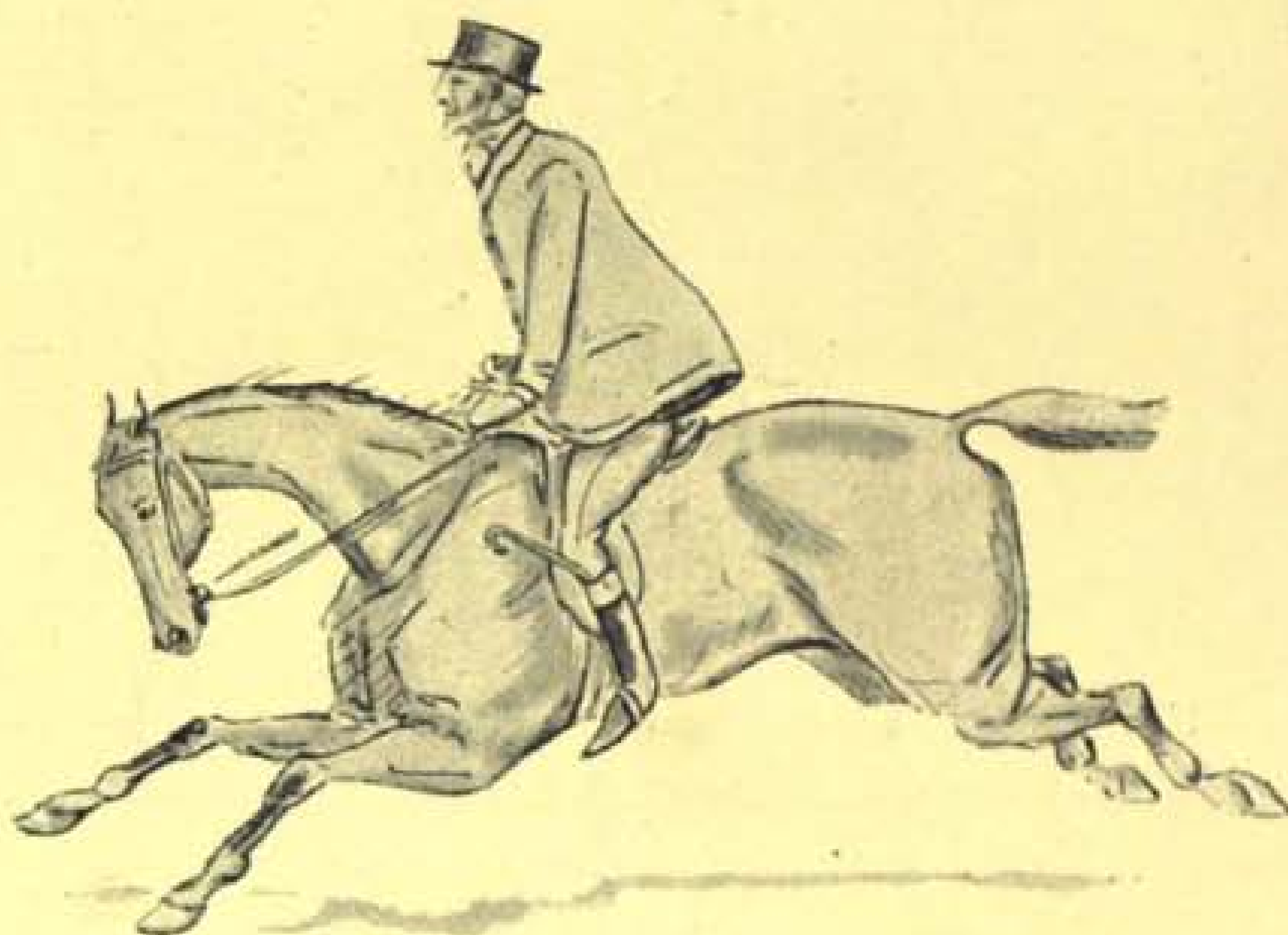
Glencara and Lunestown are pretty sure finds,
 For foxes are always in both owners' minds ;
 'Tis Major Hume Kelly owns one of these places,
 Mister Charlie is always the starter at races.

Knockdrin, those fine woods which are always the same,
 With plenty of foxes and plenty of game ;
 The Levinges are famed for their foxhunting bounty—
 A real good example to all in the County.

Captain Violetstown Lewis the field seldom graces,
 But contents himself rather with winning hunt races ;
 He don't go to fairs now, and so it is said
 As he can't go himself he will try "Lemon" aid,

There's no better colleen from Delvin to Clara
Than Mrs. G. Nugent, *née* Dolly O'Hara ;
She rides as well now, and has not lost her dash,
As when cutting them down on her mare " Scattercash."

Her brother's a sportsman we're all glad to see ;
A good fox preserver, and rider is he,
You've been sixteen years, or more, serving the Queen,
So come back to Mornington gallant " Paudeen."



GENERAL MEARES.

When hounds meet at Mearscourt, a matter of course,
The General's there on his handsome white horse ;
And though County Longford is miles from the kennels
The distance won't keep away Mr. L. Reynolds.

Of McLoughlin's good horses, indeed they were many,
Not one was as swift as their little mare " Nannie."
When hounds run their hardest they both keep good places,
And Patrick was first in the point-to-point races.

A good all-round sportsman returned from Tirhoot,
Who can hunt, and play polo, ride races, and shoot ;
Ah ! I bet he won't fall if his horse makes a peck,
And of our County Polo Club, he is *Hon. Sec.*



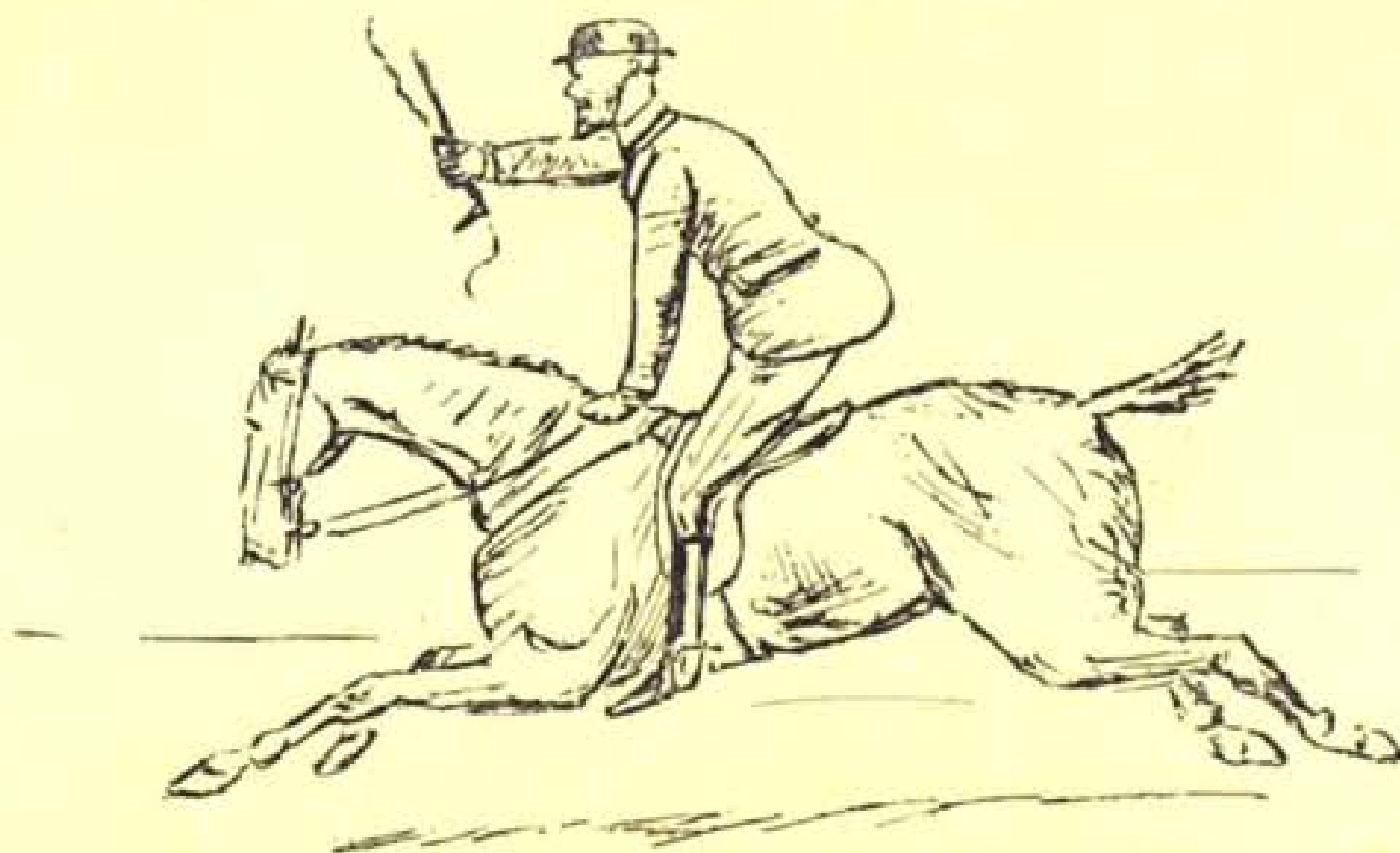
At Levington, Levinge R. W. C.

Walks a puppy as well as can possibly be.
For riding to hounds he has got rather stout,
So a sixteen stone bicycle takes him about.



R. W. LEVINGE.

Major Grant will do all that he can for the hunt,
And is never so happy as when he's in front.
Crisauns is his real beau ideal of a cover ;
But of Killahee bog he is also a lover.



MAJOR GRANT.

Of all fair Dianas who now grace the meet,
Not one in a thousand can boast such a seat ;
She sits like a statue both graceful and tall,
I'll not tell her name, for its well known to all.

In that lovely grass country around Lisnabin,
There are sure to be foxes to show us a spin,
And note we shall see there the father and son,
Both watching the hounds and enjoying the fun.

Bridges Lewis the Adjutant of our Militia,
To all sorts of sport is a constant well-wisher ;
His subaltern Barton gives proof on parade
Good soldiers are all in the hunting field made.



BRIDGES LEWIS.

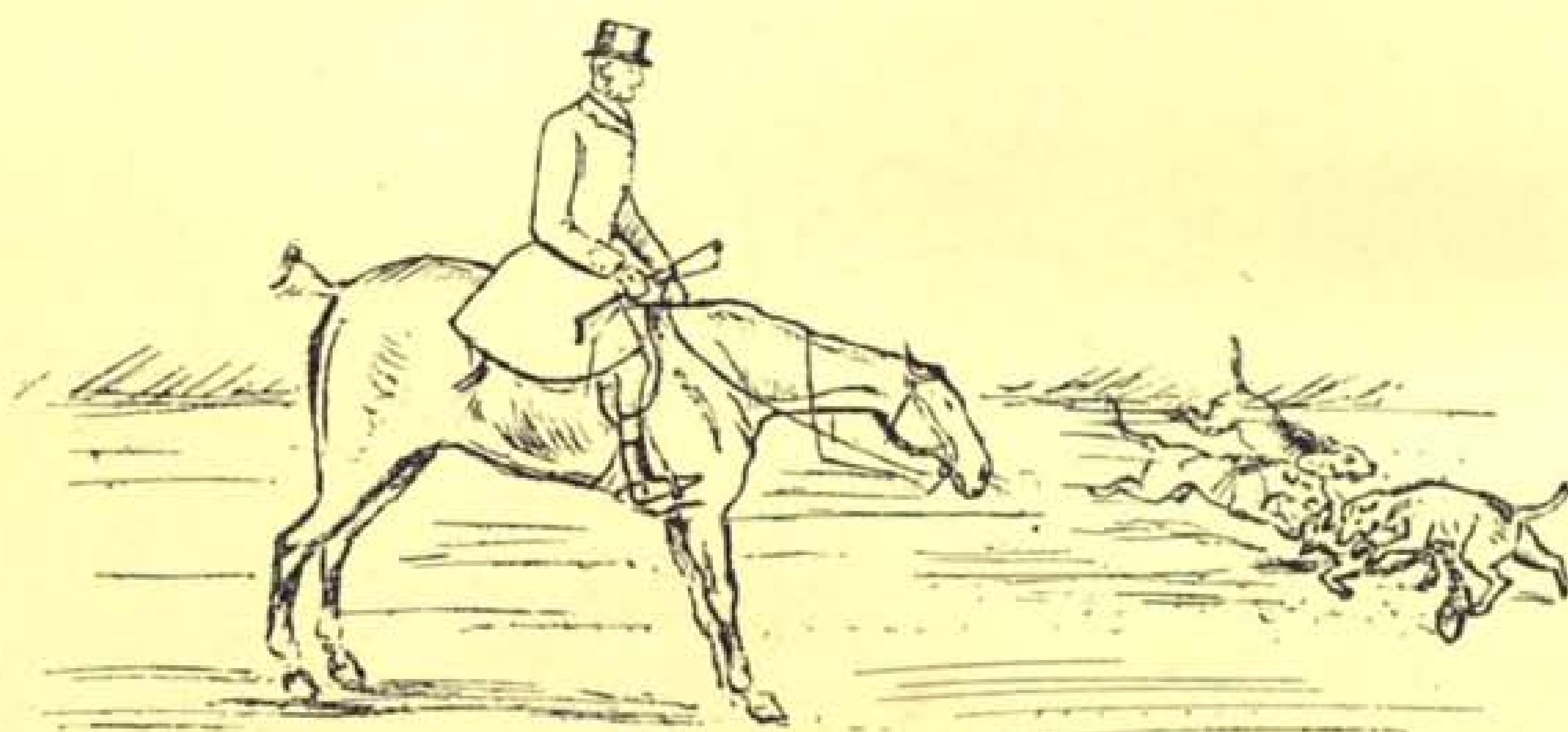
When O'Brien and Downes are discussing the laws,
They'd both be much happier if out of doors ;
Where riding to hounds gives them health cheaply bought,
Which is fifty times better than sitting in court.

To compare any fishing with hunting is gammon ;
But here is your choice twixt a Fox and Salmon.
As each in his element's real hard to catch,
Between these two sportsmen you'd make a good match.



As sporting a member as ever comes out
 Is Thomas M. Reddy, without any doubt ;
 He lent us a racecourse, he won a hunt cup,
 And let us the land to have kennels put up.

In a weight for age contest in riding to hounds,
 The youngest can't give William Evans three pounds.
 It's no insult to call him "papa" of the hunt,
 And a father is right to be right in the front.



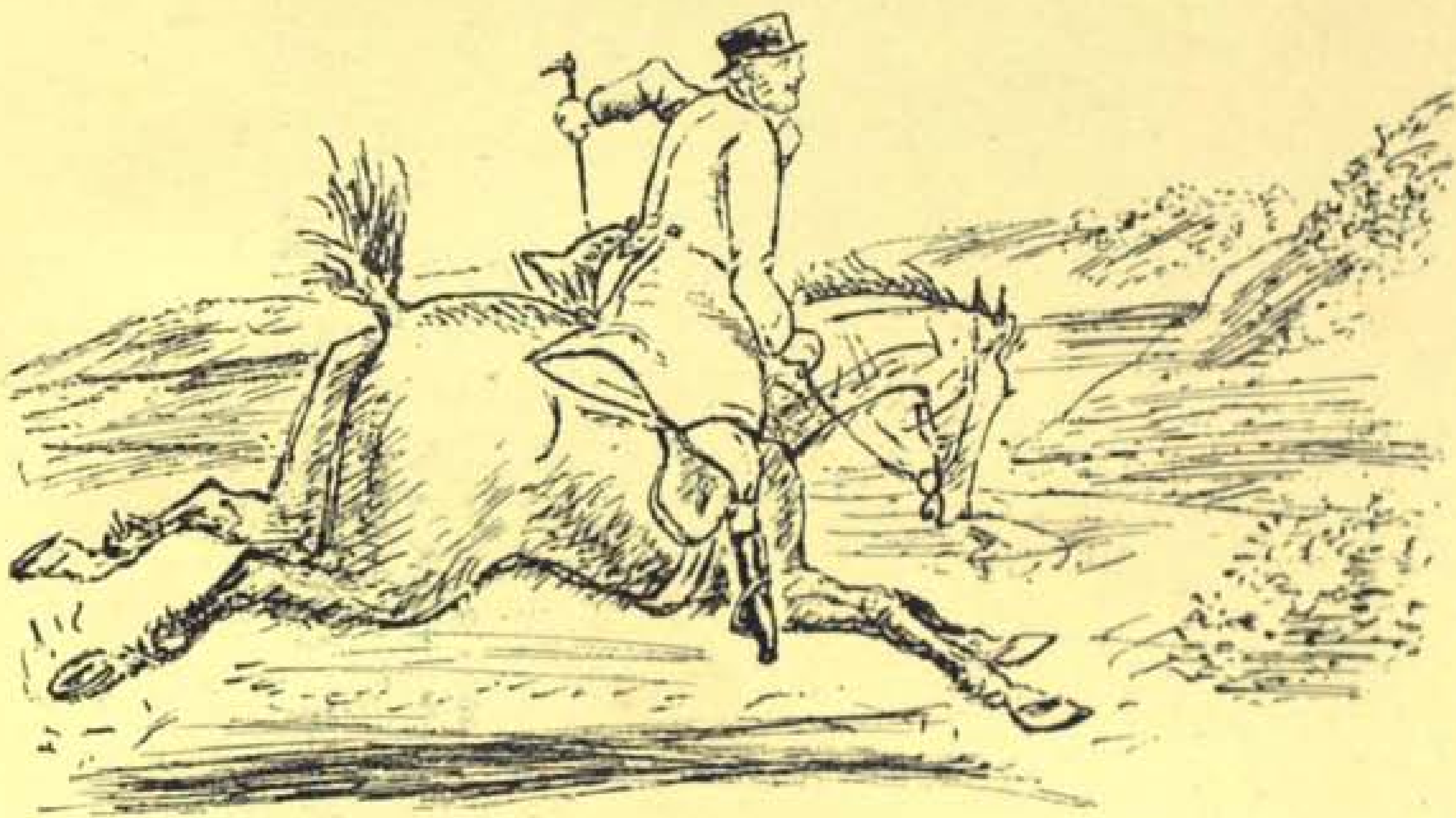
WM. EVANS.

There's John Radcliffe Battersby, sometimes looks sad
 At leaving the regions of Ballymacad,
 And the two other Battersbys come from Bobsville,
 Who are sure to be there, and well up at the kill.

Wade, Whitney, and Lloyd, Smythe, Marlay, and Dames,
 Though they don't go out hunting are all well-known names ;
 I may add Watson-Murray, a noted C.E.,
 Who would willingly give us his services free.

Take care how you sit, Colonel Smyth is about ;
If you've got a weak point he will soon find it out.
He notes what he sees, and I hear now and then
Puts his thoughts upon paper with pencil or pen.

How is it that Gordon has given up riding ?
See what a fine horse Ballesty is bestriding.
Another hard thruster who keeps a good steed,
And does it full justice, is Mr. G. Reid.



RODNEY PURDON.

Here's a health to our old hunting friend, Rodney Purdon,
For twelve hours on end, on his poor beast of burden.
If fences prevent him from getting to hounds
He holloas the fox, and his joy knows no bounds.

To finish the list it is time to begin,
But still not forgetting Fitzpatrick and Quin ;
Hugh Wilson has given up hounds for machinery,
And lives at Coolure, amidst beautiful scenery.

There's French on the Bay (think of "Shan Van Voe"),
 Who makes no delay (like the song long ago).
 Of any more members, I'm sure I can't tell,
 Except Robinson, Ronaldson, and Captain O'Dell.



FRENCH (ON THE BAY).

One Murray, from Dysart, and one from the Mount ;
 But of names of the members I've almost lost count.
 There's Gaynor the Coroner, also Kit Taaffe,
 Though I hope we shall all from an inquest be safe !

Finis.

9323

