

SPORTING NOTIONS



MARTIN COBBETT
("Gervant" of the "Referee")

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SPORTING NOTIONS

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OF PRESENT DAYS AND PAST

BY

MARTIN COBBETT

(*"Geraint" of the Referee*)

AUTHOR OF "WAYFARING NOTIONS," "RACING LIFE AND RACING
CHARACTERS," "BOTTLED HOLIDAYS," ETC., ETC.

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THE HISTORY OF THE

REIGN OF KING CHARLES THE FIRST



PREFACE

IN making this selection from my dear father's "Sporting Notions" in the *Referee*, I have tried to steer clear as far as possible of controversial matter, and particularly of all that might possibly, even now, give the slightest pain. Fearlessly outspoken though "Geraint" was, and continually called upon to deal with vexed questions, his work contained so little which could ever have hurt anyone's feelings that the latter aim was simple enough. But in articles that necessarily involve reviews of and judgments on complicated issues, it is not always possible to avoid a controversial attitude; if only that Martin Cobbett's scrupulous fairness led him to consider in detail all arguments put forward by those to whom he was opposed. Where I have decided to include any "argufying," it has been because either the essential problem is unaltered, as in his comments on the legal aspects of betting, or because the remarks have, so to speak, the historical interest of giving the situation and an expert's views thereon at a certain date, as

in his championship of compulsory instruction in swimming.

Writing on sport which sport devotees read is apt to be found repellent, if not unintelligible, by the non-initiated. Martin Cobbett possessed in a very special degree the art (a perfectly unconscious one—"no one more surprised than the striker," as he would say) of discoursing on such matters so as to appeal to all classes. It was, of course, in his descriptions of country rambles, such as are collected in "Wayfaring Notions," that this characteristic—perhaps it was his loveliness—came out most continually; but in a measure it was the same with all his work, and I have tried to choose out those portions of it which exemplify his faculty of interesting all classes of readers, and specially the "Refereaders," who were all his friends.

For permission to reproduce the following selections from "Sporting Notions," my best thanks are due to the Proprietors of the *Referee*.

ALICE COBBETT.

UCKFIELD, 1908.

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SPORTING NOTIONS

CHAPTER I

SPORT AND "SPORT"

WE are blessed in King Edward VII. with a monarch whose tastes in pastime have always been in unison with the nation's. His adherence has been of priceless value. It behoves us to seriously recognise the real benefit we have so derived, and to do all possible to make sporting pastime worthy of a continuance of his favour by respecting its traditions and keeping it clear of abuses. We start with a splendid record, built up during her late Majesty's reign. All very well is it to write and talk about the good old days. In most branches much of what was passed as *en règle*, and so considered correct, or at least permissible, when Queen Victoria came to the throne would be condemned now. The spirit of fair play was always predominant: so much I am fain to believe; but our ideas on that same have gradually been enlarged. Public opinion has grown into a stronger and gradually mighty power, and the voice of the people has, year by year, decade by decade—you may say, in view of the late Queen's four-score years, generation by generation—been operating towards cleansing

and purifying the country's manly amusements. Schools have arisen professing a morbid-minded humanitarianism, working hard to interfere with the liberty of the subject to divert him or her self as seems fitting in his or her eyes. These, greatly misguided in the main, have not been without good uses, in that there is occasionally a substratum of truth in their indictments. From these, wise controllers of our amusements have profited, making reforms from within, and one can claim with confidence a gradual all-round advance in the right direction. In some departments we have made wonderful strides—none more remarkable than in the last thirty years.

The greatest step has been in amateur athletics, which to a great extent have absorbed the classes who previously found their only opportunities as professionals, or at least in competing against those who pursued sport as their chief means towards earning subsistence. We may—in fact, we have beyond dispute lost supremacy we held in some respects. That is matter for regret in a way, but not altogether, because in the first place we used not to enter often into direct competition with aliens, and almost always where we have been beaten defeat has come from representatives of our old, our own stock. I make bold to assert that during Queen Victoria's reign the nation has been improving more and more in and through sport, and has attained a far higher average in efficiency and proficiency. Why would we not, when, instead of looking askance on the young man whose tastes and qualifications led him to seek distinction in foot-racing, boxing, swimming, and other ways, Society, more particularly the working section in

business and profession, warmly encourages athletics, and excellence in that same makes for advancement in the serious business of life, instead of being, as it incontestably was, a powerful if not a fatal, drawback. Whether we may in the next few years have to recognise that in some respects athletics—I use the word in its comprehensive sense—have been overdone and taken an undesirable trend, since a considerable percentage who, in their way, go in for sport limit their association to being spectators rather than exponents, we shall be told as the pendulum swings. But that by the way. Such details correct themselves, and such a detail does not count against what I take to be fact: our advance consequent on physical education in games and concurrent cultivation of the true sporting instinct which has been a notable characteristic of the great reign.

For many years I have not had liberty to attend a London Athletic Club dinner, an occasion of very great importance in the year's calendar of amateur sport, and exceedingly grateful to old hands because of the opportunity it affords for meeting veterans not often brought together. But as each anniversary comes round and I read the list of the company, always with great pleasure in marking the number of sound oldsters who gather, manifesting their still fresh love of athletics, and take the speeches at second hand, I feel that the speakers representing the club fall somewhat short of doing the institution justice, failing because of their modesty to claim its due. Anyone who knows anything of the early history of amateur athletics is aware that the London Athletic Club grew out of the Mincing Lane Athletic Club, and was, taking it with its parent stock, what for want

of better words I may call the pioneer of reputable amateur athletic competition, outside school and college sports. While the London Athletic Club was young, the West London Rowing Club paved the way for the change brought about in the business. I ought, perhaps, to give the West London Rowing Club precedence as the earlier apostle, but we will pass its merits in this direction by just now.

What I want to point out to the present generation is this—that amateur athletics, as they are now, were rendered possible, thanks mainly to the formation of the London Athletic Club and the influence it brought to bear on the great middle classes. This I am not doing now for the first time—I am aware of that—but a mighty upheaval tremendous enough to affect the nation's way of thought and life is worth reference more than once. "Respectable" can be made a very snobbish word without calling in as instance its definition in the Weare and Thurtell trial, where the murderer was so classed on account of his keeping a gig. "Respectable," however, is a Grundyism, and Mrs Grundy, who, in the connection to which I allude, had with her Mr Grundy and nearly all the elders, male and female, of that hard-to-please, dangerous-to-cross, widely-distributed, large family, used to hold public competitions in running or walking, boxing, swimming, and rowing outside a few clubs ('Varsity and, generally speaking, scholastic), as so far *unrespectable* that the whole clan had, not to put too fine a point on it, its knife into athletics. Respectability's knife was always kept sharp, and was dug in with great freedom and vim, so that, instead of talent on the path or in other cognate

direction being, as is now the case, a help towards a young man getting on in life it frequently cut off his chances of working up. When Tom, Dick, or Harry, fine young fellows all, came up for discussion, or their characters did, and the said useful lads were openly guilty, or only suspected, of aspiring to earn distinction, as say, runners, a very nasty "but" was the conjunction between an admission of their good qualities with commendable application of the same and this same dreadful reprehensible tendency: Sticks to work well, and all that; no fault to be found that way, "but"—here was the make-weight which bumped the scale against the unfortunate innocent culprit—I am told he is fond of foot-racing, and you know what that means, was the way the amateur athlete's character was summed up. It meant among the sapient, well-meaning folk that his favourite path was by no means straight and level, but a very broad one, all down hill, with a facile descent to perdition.

Seems almost incredible, does it not, to read this not-so-far-away history by modern lights? True all the same, though, as lots of old athletes will testify. Before the London Athletic Club brought athletics into good repute, of two equally well-qualified lads, applicants for a berth in a business house, one who had gained a little notice as a runner outside college and school races and that sort would scarcely hold a thousand to one chance against the non-athletically minded rival who, because he could or, at any rate, did not run races, must be the steadier and more respectable. The Club, by virtue of the powerful support it received from good City men, led the way towards abolishing this pernicious nonsense,

and gradually made the road easy for successive decades of our generations who have in great measure to be thankful for the opportunities they now enjoy. It has been a grand popular educator whose work brought about a reform affecting hundreds of thousands.

Mr Walter Moresby Chinnery's career may be taken as an epitome of this alteration's history. With great regret I heard of his death, in March 1905, at his beautiful place in Surrey, Hatchford Park, some mile and a half from Church Cobham. A fine all-round man was W. M. Chinnery, and a power in the land of athletics, for which he did very much indeed. Dickens tells us how, when he was small, he used to look at Gadshill Place and promise himself that some day, when the ship came home whose keel was scarcely laid down as yet, he would buy the quaint old house, with a garden on the other side of the Dover road, and made up his mind to work hard to that end. How the boy's hopes were realised all of us know. Often when passing Mr Moresby Chinnery's lovely holding on the edge of the big heath that runs up to Wisley Hut on the Portsmouth road I have in fancy brought to it youngsters athletically inclined and told them how they might some day own such a charming country seat as this if they would be good athletes and work hard. Without a word of exaggeration, the great Stock Exchange House, Chinnery Brothers, was built on athletics, and the edifice given an easy start, thanks to their credit and renown, the one first as a runner, the other, H. J. Chinnery, with boxing as his forte, but both devoted to all sorts of hearty pastime. The brothers came out just at the right time, when Mrs Grundy's husband, who was

something in the City and had replicas by the tens of thousands all over England who thought just as he did (which was the same as Mrs Grundy), was about to be converted from profound distrust of pretty nearly all manly pastimes. "*No good*" were young men who practised these pastimes after they left school, unless it was while they were at college, for athlete and black sheep were in respectable people's eyes pretty nearly exchangeable terms in those days.

However, transition set in at the period alluded to, and instead of proficiency leading downwards, it shortly came to mean—given worth and business nous, as well as ability to row, run, walk, box, or what not—a remarkably fine introduction for getting on and up in the world. Such men as the Chinnerys were lent a mighty lift because of their celebrity as amateur exponents of pedestrianism and sparring. They went on and prospered. With their prosperity they came to be quoted by such as favoured sport and pastime as set-offs against the old foolish anti-athletic schools, and without doubt their success in the serious business of life brought emancipation for thousands of decent-class young men. Before the tide was turned, in the days when W. M. was a great runner and St James' Hall was crammed on the occasions of H. J.'s boxing—he and Ned Donnelly used to have rattling fine bouts—you ran risk of getting a bad name if you devoted even your spare time to athletics. You must bear in mind too, that up to the period indicated, public racing was very much monopolised by professionals, and if a likely hand did not compete with them, he would get very few opportunities indeed of doing anything in the line.

Prejudice once overcome against athletics and a few amateur clubs launched, things went with a rush, though the start was difficult to engineer, because, as I say, business society rated the coming man "with foot-racing in his head," as I have heard the cult put, on about the same platform with the hanger-on at sparring booths. To illustrate this there can be no possible suggestion of disrespect for Mr Chinnery nor offence to the family in my repeating here my true little story of a happening to myself. Once upon a time I came across an old Mincing-lane gentleman who was seeing round the Ripley neighbourhood, and had come on there through Church Cobham, Hatchford, and along to Wisley. "The most beautiful part of all," he said, "is"—and then he described the house and grounds which Mr Chinnery had recently purchased from Mr McKenzie's executors. "Who lives in that lovely place?" he asked me. I told him Mr Chinnery—Mr Walter Moresby Chinnery. "Impossible," he replied—"at least, unless there are two of the same name exactly, and that is little likely. Are you certain?" Certain I was indeed, and told him so. "Well," the old gentleman said, "I suppose you must be right, but I can scarcely credit it now. Why, would you believe me that when Mr Chinnery was a youngster in our office he was always fidgeting on Saturdays to get through and away early to running grounds?"

The Chinnerys, keen as they were while actively engaged in athletics, did much to forward pastime after they retired, and kept up connection with their old clubs: but while W. M.'s views on the benefits of such pastimes remained unchanged his brother's altered a great deal. That came

after they so generously donated some thousand pounds it was, I think, or more to encourage sculling among professionals, and, I regret to say, found the endowment of regattas for this purpose pretty much waste of good money. Still, it was a fine sporting act to put down so large a sum, and almost unique. Perhaps the race in which W. M. Chinnery was concerned which caused most excitement was his duel with John Scott, who I have seen described as a Cambridge man. The two ran in very different styles, Scott erect and Chinnery with his head forward. There was a very high wind on the afternoon of their mile race at Lillie Bridge, when half the Stock Exchange turned up and gambled freely between the two opponents, plenty going against the "House's" representative. Against the breeze Chinnery made the better weather, but it was a fine race. Mr Scott was one of the few first-rate athletes hailing from Sussex till recently Shrubbs, from Horsham, and the Brighton amateur walker, G. E. Larner, of the Brighton and County Harriers, gave the county's credit a hoist. Mr Scott has for a long time been abroad somewhere in America, but visiting the old country every four or five years. He was another who benefited greatly through being good at sports, a unit in a number who can be cited to show how the same qualities which tell in play score in work.

Now, in connection with sport's popularisation, and particularly with its international relations which constitute a departure without precedent, there are ugly tendencies which no one who loves the grand monosyllable and desires to see it kept clean and bright ought to ignore. Take our present extraordinary craze for planting our own

defeats in the face of the world. Of course this is partly a revulsion from the too self-satisfied old-time sentiments—an inevitable swing of the pendulum: and I affirmed full faith in that remorseless mensurator's seeing everything come to its proper level sooner or later. All the booming in the world cannot secure permanent celebrity, which is more like notoriety beyond the people's own assessment of merit and importance. Still, time is required to strike average, and waiting for the right time to come we may see incalculable harm done. Here we are, through what ought to be our teachers and leaders—the Press—holding ourselves as being held up to the world as exactly the sort we used to quote as our very Antipodes. John Bull at bottom always cherished a mighty good opinion of himself and never showed his bumptiousness more offensively than when he went about, as we may put it, clothed in the pride which apes humility, labelling himself, as it were, "Not for exhibition," and managing to convey a clear hint that the reason he stood out was because he was sure to take all the prizes if he did go in for the show. All the same, if he had not so much of the virtue he assumed so ostentatiously, he did make out to be modest.

Where is our modesty now? Friends, readers, and fellow-citizens, let me ask you a little question, you good sorts. Did you ever in your lives see or hear of such conduct as ours was (on paper) during that terribly serious international contest between England and her South African enemies? I get into the way of reading everything through sporting spectacles, and not a bad way either, I fancy. Let us consider the matter that way. How did—good gracious me, *how*

did we not go on while England was playing the great game of war in Africa? A large proportion of our Press, especially the "contents bill" and "headings" departments, carried themselves like the scummiest of the prize-ring crowd. Never did I think to see the days when, with a match not half over, our corner—the presumably respectable partisanship—would screech and yell and call down the opposition because a bit of a lead was gained, or blackguard its own representatives if they got a setting back. There it was, though, just on all fours with the worst behaviour of a fighting mob. We, through our self-constituted mouthpieces, displayed most excruciatingly bad form. And, mind you, all the while the people themselves were right enough. Dear, dear! how would you, dear reader, like to be in the company of the Boer contingent now in England if present at a poster exhibition giving the history of the Transvaal War as indicated through those advertisements and the daily set-forth headlines. Blush!—blush is no word for it. The other side were worse? Perhaps they were; if so, they must have been awfully bad indeed; and what they did makes no excuse for us, who, at any rate, ought, as "a nation of sportsmen," to have known better than to make ourselves out such bad winners and worse losers as, on paper, we did. On paper, you say: our army lost and won in a real sporting spirit. True for you; there would indeed be something rotten in the state of Britain otherwise; but the stay-at-home ought to have behaved better. The form, or want of it, was shocking; and in the handy cant phrase, there was too much of it altogether.

Too much! We are living in an atmosphere

of too muchness, rendering sport often unwholesome—almost unwelcome—and we are bound to suffer accordingly. Over and over again the *Referee* has pointed out how international competition may carry far more harm than good, because of imported unnatural excitement and interest putting games on much too consequential a platform. We and our friends who engage with and against us need to be left alone a little more. Given less interference, the latent risk, now pretty patent, of costly differences arising through what are after all only trivial disagreements might be put aside. As it is, with every small hitch fully advertised and magnified and fomented to a degree persuading actors concerned that a trumpety debatable point must be of the most serious moment, real danger stares us in the face of most weighty troubles arising sooner or later. I have studied the situation and possibilities for years, and cannot get away from this conclusion. At home, while we play among ourselves, trouble is ahead because some sport has developed to unwieldy dimensions. Too much money is in it, and too much money required to carry on many of our pastimes, or games counted as such—that is to say, mere amusements. We will not talk about them now; I am looking at the Imperial aspect—a very unpleasant, unpromising one.

You see, I have again and again expressed somewhat unpopular sentiments of most pronounced Chauvinist type on International athletic competition and altruism. Great, glorious, and all the rest of it do some folk call such proceedings as our men going abroad to coach aliens in our sports and pastimes. "The true sporting spirit illustrated by pure-minded sportsmen," this kind

of suicidal mania is termed. Coach them, what for? We want to beat all comers so long as we can. Our games are good, jolly good, in their way, and not the least of their merits is the character they lend us quite incidentally for excelling over other nations as athletes, while perhaps—most likely, in fact—we owed our high standard of excellence in comparison with others to our going in for pastimes to which those others are strangers. Is it wise policy, then, to gratuitously be at pains and expense of various kinds in educating foreigners into form, warranting the heretical faith in their being man for man as good as we are—or a bit better?

Pardon me, readers, for growing a trifle warm once I start preaching from the text which at one time and another we have discussed, but what I say wants saying. Now and then I grow very sore and feel almost equal to doing something desperate watching us Britishers standing idly by or, as frequently happens, paying, actually paying freely to have all manner of aliens exploited at our folks' expense. Hundreds, thousands of pounds, I might say, have we subscribed in the last few years to inform all the world that any mortal import—Rooshun, Turk or Greek, or Prooshun, any nationality will do that a True Born Englishman ought not to be tempted to belong to—is too good for Johnny Bull. That is the new patriotic line of sport, with altruism a sweet decorous thing, and proper pride in your country of no account at all. Dear, dear! how did we, in our Rule, Britannia, Britannia-rules-the-waves, old-time, cock-of-the-walk mood, use to handicap the foreign nations! Modestly enough, we lumped two skinny Frenchmen and one Portu-

gee, and told everybody that one jolly Englishman can lick 'em all three. That was about the size of it. And now our people hire themselves out to let alien wrestlers beat them at so much per night or day till foreigners must have pretty well wiped us off the map, as efficient in strongmannism, and by consequence as individuals of importance, militarily speaking. Hideously, repulsively wicked is the idea of English wrestlers making a trade of acting as foils to travelling showmen from abroad. And when the same kind of tradesmen—all of them English champions, of course, on the bills—go touring in other lands, wrestling chopping-blocks for star artistes, when—well, when I see what goes on I feel mighty mean.

Think of the moral force conveyed in these pitiful exhibitions. Could a better, surer way to lower our athletic and all other status in the eyes of nations be devised than this? Fancy William the Masterful letting Teutons perform at so much a night in alleged trials of strength, their side of the contract lying in being beaten to order by, say, French or Russian trained star performers! Or just try to imagine that potentate smiling on Germans so keen on a sport in which the Fatherland stood out by itself that they must compass sea and land to give away the tricks of the trade. What rivals can take we can't help going out of our hands; but give! I am a bad sportsman—at least, so I must be if some of the prominent amateurs are built the right way. Still I see my side of the argument, and honestly I wouldn't set any man or company right who might be going a longer way than was necessary round to meet my representatives. Not by any means would I tell him or them wrong if asked the best way to go,

but of my own motive not an inch would I save for the opposition.

Another undesirable symptom is the exploitation of sport for wholly alien—not to put too fine a point upon it, trade—purposes; to which international competitions seem peculiarly liable; and which would seem by definition to take such entirely out of the category of genuine sport. The English-American sailing-matches make a shining light of example and warning in this direction. I could take no interest in them. Beyond that I want our side to win always, and never do subscribe to the sentiment and toast, "Let the best win," except on a certain understanding, I never cared a twopenny damn which took the Cup or which got most out of an unhealthy struggle overloaded with advertisement. This business is just the very exact spit, cut, clip, sample, specimen, or what you please to call it, of the realisation of my idea of sport gone wrong. Such nasty, unwholesome, epidemic, overdone, feverish, artificially-manufactured excitement, mis-called enthusiasm, is good for nobody except those who roll logs and get their ends served. To me the affair has the wrong ring, being an open bid for notoriety, with a cash value hanging to it—such latter consideration to be made, with a little suggestion and encouragement, the main motive of such enterprise, and sport merely a necessary vehicle. Taken at its very best, and putting the "performers" out of calculation, such fireworky high-pressure is no good to sport, and never was. In most walks of life a boom is followed by a slump—almost surely if the former is procured, and mostly with certainty if evolved from natural conditions, also, in our pastimes

always. We of the *Referee* do not admire this brand of commercial sport, and booms in pastime make us uneasy because they are not good for the community at large. Now, there is commercial sport, also some quite other under the same heading, and with the institution's welfare at heart one can welcome some of moderate dimensions while objecting to greater. Let me make an example. The practice of tradesmen donating prizes of their wares for local athletic sports makes for good. First, because of the committee being aided so materially to attract competition; again, since the donors are almost bound to come to take interest in the meetings, no matter how they (the givers) began, and further on account of the small benefactors' favourable attitude encouraging certain classes. So far so good. Sport comes first—though other interests are served, they do not overlay it. But when you find meetings got up entirely by one firm or person, or racing conducted on like lines, you, while you can't counsel abstention to those who might benefit from going in for the prizes, do not sympathise with the promoters as sportsmen, though free to admire their business perspicacity.

What riles me is the forcing an estimable pastime into carrying unduly weighty issues. Apart from the "ad." features, too much is made of the business, and that latter comes to be the word where amusement used to fit exactly. I am a stickler for rules to save chance of disagreement, and hard-and-fast observance of the code, whatever it may be; but due regard for regulations need not involve the sort of suspicious, seeing-that-you-are-not-bested spirit in which,

according to reports, each owner's dealings with his craft were watched.

An old-fashioned yachtsman would probably have said, under like conditions, "If we are to be as particular as all that, I do not care to bother about the game." I never have been quite able to express in words the feeling I have about these businesses. When you do wet-blanketing, as I seem to do now, it appears that you kick against pastime that ought to enlist your sympathies. The feeling I have anent the yacht race has been stirring in me for a long while about other competitions, and I do not know how to record it on paper. I lament what ought to rejoice a fervent lover of all sport, and that is the hold it takes on what I beg to call, with all hope of avoiding giving offence, outsiders—people who are not concerned in the battles save by way of clannishness or patriotism. I cannot write as I would wish. I cannot even rehearse satisfactory formula to myself. At each turn I can see myself challenged and beaten by an objector who may quite legitimately pin me down to a categorical statement. All the same, the faith that is in me says that somehow much of international sporting competition is a mistake, a dreadful mistake, and that the enormous growth of home pastimes is, in a way, unhealthy. Such a lot of party feeling is imported into games from those who are only partisans, and who invariably take the place of the oft-quoted barrister who, holding a weak brief, abuses opposing counsel, only here both lots—the outside bearers-up for plaintiff and defendant—play the same way. The issues of international sport are made too big, and the loser's corner are too partisan and too bitter. The

principals seldom make the bother. But bother there too often is. The trouble comes from the crowd, who, without practical knowledge make a personal matter to themselves of alleged unfairness.

The long and the short of it is, that this "Mammoth" sort of race does not appeal to me as would a match between a couple of Thames sailing club's little yachts, not to mention for a moment a set-to between a couple of row-boats. It strikes me as being too artificial, and not redeemed by the party most concerned being an absolutely active factor in the fighting. If you ask me whether I object to builders and riggers and sailmakers and all getting higher and higher in the development of their arts and crafts, what can I answer but "No." What have I to say against the best part of a hundred picked mariners being engaged to do the laborious part of navigating a craft which, if she were a cargo-carrier, would be worked by about three men and a boy? What have I to say? Nothing, absolutely nothing. Cross-examined as to whether I hold with rich men spending their money on this sort of business, I must reply that it is calculated to do many people good. Do I allege any suspicion of the unsportsmanlike in making ships faster in themselves and sailing them to the greatest advantage? How should I? You might make out a long schedule of examining queries to which I must return answers always cutting the ground from under my feet and clearing away the platform on which I stand. And yet I, though quite willing to be convinced, or to convince myself, can't help being of the same opinion still, just as I am about cycle racing.

There is such a confounded lot of artificiality in it. In the old days I would go to much trouble to assist at cycle racing, but now I would scarcely cross the road to look on at a championship with a result depending more on the pacing than the principals' pedalling. I was reminded of some of these through seeing notices of the Keen testimonial now being organised. His were the good times of cycle racing. We have gradually gone back since Keen and Cooper were in their (racing) prime, and I do not for a moment expect that we shall ever get back again. As the times have been reduced, so has the tone. Can professional cycle racing ever regain its popularity? I do not think we can hope to see such gates as were taken in the Midlands—at the Old Molyneux Grounds, Wolverhampton, for instance, the manor house domain now mostly appropriated by the football Wolves. Thousands and thousands would gather there, and all well-behaved, too. A wonderfully fine spectacle they made ranged on the terrace and about the hillside. At first sight I took a great fancy to the professional cyclists of those days. They must strike one as mostly men of superior gifts, not only as athletes devoted to this particular branch, but with an inborn turn for mechanics, and frequently the inventive faculty strong in them as well. There was the thoughtful look of the eye and the peculiar form and action of the hand you may note in clever people of the engineering order, for instance. Many of them got on wonderfully as manufacturers after the amateur crowd came and spoilt professionalism as a profession. Most were bound to do so, because they started on a booming business with inner knowledge of the

manufacture of the article and its user's requirement. Some, as I say, did well; some were unlucky. John Keen was one of those who did not take their good luck when it came their way. He never lost his friends, but he didn't make money.

John Keen—"Happy Jack"—I was pleased to number among my friends. He was a fine athlete in his line, an amiable, good fellow, plucky and clever, a born mechanic, who, had fate moulded his lot so as to throw him into the company of a hard-headed business partner, strong in the qualities in which John was weak, might have been a rich man indeed. A beautiful rider Keen was in the earlier era of cycle racing, and certainly as knowledgeable in the art and mystery of construction as contemporaries who, taking fortune at the flood, ran up with it to fortune, while he, somehow, seemed to steer only into slack water and eddies, and was to great extent left. A student in physiognomy must see in Keen the peculiar traits and tricks of feature and hand marking the inventive faculty which Charles Dickens caught so perfectly to picture Doyce of Doyce and Clennam, in "Little Dorrit." What Papa Meagles made Mr Doyce out to be—*i.e.*, necessarily an indifferent man of the world and business, because he happened to be an inventor—might have been written word for word as a faithful letter-portrait of my friend, who used to dispute with Fred Cooper for the cycling championship. That sort of racing appealed to me far more than does its succeeding developments. The man did the racing then, before banked tracks and pacing were introduced, and the public found the sport far more attractive

than they have since—at least, so it seems to me.

In Keen's palmy days occurred some of the most wonderful athletes to be cited from any generation, and all with him to be associated with the Surbiton district. Keen himself was what country folk call careful in his habits, and went to work on lines you would say were best calculated to enable a racer to do himself full justice. But with the others—Cortis, W. G. George, and Fred Elborough, whom professors best qualified to judge declare to be the finest runner at his distances that ever might have been, if only he would have trained, accomplished wonderful feats, living in style to break the heart of a professional trainer—who can say whether their happy-go-lucky methods suited them better than following conventional systems? George will forgive me for mentioning him in this way—what I write only goes to prove how marvellous a runner he was—did once consent to put himself in expert hands, though he mixed it a bit. History tells the result. The world has not yet produced the equal of his mile record. Maybe his 4 minutes $12\frac{3}{4}$ sec., set up at Lillie Bridge in the memorable match against Cummings, may be pegged back. Bests do get cut as more water flows under the bridges, but George's has stood so far, and will need a power of beating. Splendid as it was, he then failed by a good bit to run up to his trial form, which I believe made him do a mile in some 4 minutes 9 sec. In the *Referee* office is a tradition that George would not have gone on to make his classical performance so brilliant as it was but for our good confrère, whose loss we still mourn, the big-hearted all-round sportsman, Mr

H. B. Bromhead, who ran up to the Worcester champion (who was easing after Cummings stopped, played out) and told him how little more he had to do to cut world's record.

Some few years ago, reading a report of International inter-'Varsity sports, I came across the following somewhat remarkable passage. "It was a pity that the grounds were not more private, as several hundred people saw the sports from outside without paying a sou." Now if one, who by virtue of position is quite the opposite of the pro., said, "Fortunately for a great many who (probably) could not afford to pay, several hundreds saw the sports from outside, and the performers were very pleased to be able to give them a treat gratis," I could go with him. I will be hanged if I can see where an amateur ought to grieve because outsiders got some sort of a view for nothing. My experience is that almost always the folk who lay themselves out to go on the cheap would be put to it considerably if no mean between Hobson's choice and evasion of toll were impossible, and my notion of amateurism as a worthy condition would include the gentlemen's being glad to find poorer brethren in the fun somehow. Amateurs and others with a keen eye to gate often worry themselves quite unnecessarily. By no means does it follow that because you plug up a peephole in the fence the peepers will consequently pay to go inside. They get something for nothing, those who must be satisfied with "seeing the 'oofs of the 'orses," or "words to the effect," under the circus's canvas. Not being able to get crumb they go for the crusts, but would much prefer being well enough off to take crumb at the market price.

CHAPTER II

BOXING

AN ancient scrapping story was brought to mind when in our very big scrap in South Africa Mr Confidence-Trick Kruger announced his magnanimous offer to "make it a draw." The said Mr K. was a marvellous man, you know, a very big one indeed, and a fine sort to have in your corner. My word, what a second he would have been at the old raw 'uns game, being up to anything from pitch-and-toss to manslaughter with intent, and a splendid sea lawyer as well! Charles Dickens, I believe, knew 'em all every time before they happened. He had the lot in his eye, no matter what size, weight, or colour all or any of 'em might be. "The Inimitable," I note, justified this view by forecasting an Oom Paul in "Pickwick"—that great work almost always underrated, because most who enjoy its humour fail to mark the philosophy. Samuel Weller—who is to me a profound student of human nature, as witness his remark on the caged bird in the Fleet Prison: "Vheels vithin vheels, a prison inside a prison," says Samivel—was given the job and caught the subject to a T, only that he made him a her. Let us take that popular middle-weight scrapper—Sam, you know, served his time in the

Dark (and other) Arches, and must have been useful, as witness his spiling the beadle at Bury St Edmunds. What was it Sam said about the husband who bolted because he couldn't stand being tormented at home any longer, and was advertised for? If I recollect right, the advertisement ran that "if he returned to his loving wife and family, all would be forgiven." The Kruger of the future—Sam's future—ages must have sat for the portrait of the forgiver, and is given us "all over to the life."

Excuse my straying into the Dickens country—I always do if I am not hobbled—when I wanted to write about the Book—its apostle Kruger, that is—and the Ring. What struck me so greatly in the connection was the wily Paul's bluffing in true P.R. style. His man is getting beans or socks, toko, or what-for. Either will do for example. His fighter did the challenging, was prepared to have a go, and did start business, while t'other was pinned by the arms in taking his coat off. He was to play hell and break things and all. T'other chap was not only to be beaten, but knocked or kicked out of the ring. Instead of which—fine old instead of which!—the good thing boiled over, and the loser's engineers calmly offered to make it a draw and save stakes and bets, also unbeaten record. I can give you a P.R. parallel in the particular as well as in the general. The illustration, appearing pat, relates to a young party as oak as they make 'em. "Oak?" Qu'est-ce que c'est cet oak? Let me tell you that oak is, to those who are really au fait in rhyming slang, the key or cue to flash. Over and over again you read samples of rhyming

slang as she is supposed to be spoke. But these are made as longhand is to shorthand, and for conveying what experts would actually say are altogether misleading, because they almost invariably give the rhyming word as well as the cue. Some who ring in the lingo err purposely, so that they may be understood of the people. They sacrifice accuracy to make matters easy.

Rhyming, with most of the others, particularly back slang, is meant to serve a double purpose. Experts seek to render themselves mutually understood and to be at liberty to converse without letting outsiders understand what passes. If once an outlander catches on to the idea of rhyming slang and is slangily inclined he ought to find slight difficulty in hitting the missing word if the full "reference" is presented. "Very oak," says the man who knows. Now, you may go on rhyming with oak from now till everlasting and not get so much as warm in guessing what is indicated. The graduate in the unwritten language has heard all he wants. "Very oak" extended would be "very oak and ash," and no rhyming dictionary or other is needed for coupling flash with ash. Going right out with this argot does away with its value, but you will find that this is done in the great majority of instances by writers who want to "show clever," but know little, as also by graduates in the patter, who fill in the direct cues to help their readers. You will never hear a professor say "round the houses," which last word is by special licence selected to rhyme with trousers—I mean trousers. The artist stops at "rounds." In smart print, however, "round the houses" would be set forth as correct. Just the same with "left," a peculiarly

apt indicator of fight—"left and right" is good, is it not? better than "read and write"—and with "cherry," "battle," "plates," "daisies," and so on and so forth. But while I am descanting on what is very nearly a study worth following up, I have failed to get on with my yarn about the very oak party whose oakness and ashness landed him in much the same pickle as Oom Paul.

The great Mr X., flash as Newgate Knocker, however flash that may be or has been, happened at a ball to come across a lady who proved very pleasant company indeed. So much did he appreciate her charms that, despite hints from another gentleman, Mr X. monopolised the fair person's society, thereby rousing the other gent.'s ire. Shortly a row was begun by the said X. landing one on his rival and daring the injured personage to come outside, which locality proved to be no place for X., who was hammered all over the place. "You are a good man," says the by now unfortunate gallant, "and I give you best. Shake hands." Devil a shake of the hand was for the aggressor, who had taken on in the first place a P.R. celebrity's wife, and was now being taken on by her husband. "*You've* had enough," says the pug., "and want to stop, *I'm* going to stop, too, when *I've* had enough. You began to suit *yourself*. *I'll* go on to suit *myself*, and you'd better take it standing, because my boot is harder than my fist." With that, as the old chroniclers were so fond of putting it, he larruped the mistaken would-be warrior till that party was black and blue.

Talking of boxing matches in the past and present, it is just as well to remind the new

generation how well off they are. The good order kept is really wonderful. What does someone say? Oh, that referees are occasionally obliged to be very stern in calling for that silence which ought to be but is not observed. Certainly I hear of people frequently breaking the rule ordering that remarks must be reserved till after the break—I mean round. I am quite aware of that. So am I aware that at certain times almost everyone is a transgressor, or very nearly so. Undoubtedly there is something in boxing which arouses sympathy to such an extent that you feel you *must* help your man if only by jollyng. What is more, nine hundred and ninety-nine and a bit out of a thousand are apt to be noisy under excitement, though they will swear they do nothing of the sort. Only long training can bring a company such as you see at the N.S.C. to be really silent.

The worst offender I ever came across was a hard-and-fast stickler for the rules, read in their strictest sense. "Can't help it?" said he once to a stranger who had been betrayed into calling out "Go it!" to his fancy. "Confound it, sir, you *must* help it, or go out. Do you suppose we are going to be annoyed by you? Be silent, or clear off, to save my putting you out if the officials don't." Very right and proper, was it not? Yes, but this very particular protester's turn came right along. Next week quite a bobbery was being kicked up. The "morum censor" happened to have paid a lad's training expenses, and arranged a trial for him. You never—well, I won't go quite that length—you seldom found one man make such a noise as was raised. And all the row came from the

purist, who, being requested to desist, swore hard and fast that he had not said a word nor illustrated the strokes he wanted his protégé to play by battering the back of the very indignant gentleman—a sore old sportsman he was after being plugged—in the row before him. What is more, the peace disturber thoroughly believed what he affirmed, and got dreadfully cross because friends wouldn't agree that he was most unjustifiably insulted by the officials and the protesting spectator who had been "copiously" punched.

Certain stories there are which somehow lose their savour of wit or humour if you Bowdlerise them, as, for instance, the episode of the boy, the old lady, and the forty buns. Make that altogether fit for publication, and you take out the fun. Possibly, if you cut the cackle in putting an old-fashioned mill with the mittens on the boards you might spoil the picture; but risking so much, I *would* like some day to see a representation on the club stage of an old-fashioned glove fight for money with both sides keen. I touched on this theme last week, but am not sorry to return to it. You could not put the turn on the present boxing stage at the National and give the sympathisers proper prominence, but you might manage all right with a small ring pitched on the theatre stage, if permission were obtained from the neighbourhood to have as much noise made as would be necessary for the occasion. Even then the job would not be easy, as, for instance, there must be, if the set-to is supposed to take place in a room, windows to be smashed, very possibly as a signal by one side to the police

to raid the place because their man was getting the worst of it. Not infrequently both parties would guard against defeat by laying on discreet constables properly informed as to what would be required of them in passive or active pursuit of the duty they were paid for. Again, provision must be made so that uninvited guests could drop through a roof or apparently spring up out of the floor, and sufficient camping ground reserved to array the strong mobs of sympathisers in waiting to rush the ring to order and cope with the opposition brigade held in reserve for like object, or to repel the enemy's attacks, as circumstances required. Any stage or ring would serve for "presenting" assaults accomplished or threatening violent death for the referee. The ardent partisans who filled the office of seconds might safely be left to go for each other, be the space at command never so narrowly limited, because they could chew and knee and gouge with no greater scope for action than an egg-chest.

So far as I recollect, the West London Rowing Club originated the first amateur Boxing club. I had the honour of voting to that effect. We gathered—what a fine lot there were of all-rounders, and what a terrible number of those present at the Star and Garter—44, Pall Mall, we used to put on the note-paper, because the address so defined read better—would be missed now if the roll were called! Old Jack Tyler, hero of a thousand pretty and appropriate sporting speeches, was in the chair; the night—I believe that was the particular night—was awfully foggy; Latch Hall—very useful in a bout with the the mittens or fists—was one of the attendance

who voted "aye" on the President proposing that a West London Boxing Club should be formed. We went, or endeavoured to go home, those of us bound towards the East, in good order, and, for mutual safety, proceeded, after finishing with the Star and Garter, as well as the 44 Pall Mall section of the establishment. The 44 didn't do it, nor the Star and Garter, but the devil of a fog was in it, and if we three, with one or two others, spent a minute at the base of the Duke of York's column, we were there circulating, as the French say, an hour or two, or three at the most. More deceptive fog has never fallen to my portion. By hook and by crook we worked to beyond Charing Cross and so to Southampton Street, in dense darkness, making for the old Welsh house, where they sold Edinburgh ale as made in Wales—the Bedford Head in Maiden-Lane, kept by a direct descendant of the crowned heads, also decapitated and deposed Stuarts. I dare say you, old readers and new, can place Rule's and the Bedford Head, the latter, curiously enough, for years headquarters of the West London Boxing Club. I give you my word that up to Rule's the fog was so thick that you could not cut it with a knife, while at the Bedford Head all was clear above up among the stars and in our alley.

The club's first practice quarters were at Nat Langham's. I almost forget whether Nat was alive then, or whether his namesake George reigned in his stead at the pub. in St Martin's Lane, but I remember that the saloon was very small. You approached it through an avenue of in- or out-of-work scrappers, most of whom had no desire either for work or for scrapping, and

you were offered wide facilities to encourage sport by taking tickets for Young Somebody's benefit to celebrate his defeat down the river, or Nobby Something Else's complimentary night commemorative of his defeating the aforesaid juvenile. So between the two you could be done both ways. Besides these were a noble array of professional connoisseurs, very few of whom screwed past George Langham into the saloon, all anxious to put the novice amateur up to wrinkles and to an odd 'un most disdainful of the appointed schoolmaster's ability as exponent and instructor. Also these philanthropists were in a general way anxious to get a bit out of what was really astounding want of common-sense, for plenty of good men—I mean able-bodied, plucky, and prepared to take punishment—were absolutely afraid to set about a lesson-giver. In the first place, they were told to spar, not hit; in the second, the amateur was understood to be at the mercy of the professional roused by getting a hot un'. That is only ten minutes ago, roughly speaking. Times have changed vastly since then. I have no down on the old-style pro.; many of them were on my friendly acquaintance list. Still, I do not go beyond fact, I think, in ascribing to the craft traditional practice of doing something nasty to the pupil who landed to any effect in a practice spar. As to the majority, an amateur who hit hard generally was made to repent getting on the pug., who wouldn't be particular in getting more than his own back.

By contrast with this business was the Gentleman v. Pro. set-to at well-known boxing, dog-fighting, and all manner of drums, where

many a fine swell has shown good form against celebrities of the Prize Ring, and where the opponent has done splendid work, more or less (according to the gentleman's ability), not appreciated by the majority. A really first-class fighter with a record, and no mistake about it, would set-to with "a friend." The Master of the Ceremonies (who, at the close of the proceedings, went round with a cap for himself, and might perform that operation several times during the evening) always styled the amateur "a friend"; the sporting papers wrote him up and down as a Corinthian, or aristocratic patron of the Magic Circle. The "friend" was not to be knocked about, whatever happened, because the essence of the contract lay in *his* friends being able to go away saying that Charley, or whatever his name was, would be sure to beat any pro. at his weight if he went in for it. And the "friend," say he was extremely good, was treated according to pocket possibilities. He was allowed to take liberties in proportion to what he, in short, was good for and was expected to drop. The swell known to be safe for a couple was most artistically exploited. You did not run then into paper as in these later days, when a boy expects more for training exes. than a useful, seasoned prize-fighter would consider a fine stake to go for. The "friend" would be drawn out to do really wonderful things, his skilled opponent creating opportunities all the while. That is how some of our old-time amateurs before the days of boxing clubs gained their reputations. Plenty of really good boxers were to be found among them. But it was the pro. who put all the gilt on the gingerbread on purpose to be knocked off. That

was where beautiful art came, and if you caught on to the superior operator's plan of campaign, you could get a rare treat out of his artfulness.

Shall I ever get to the few words I was wanting to repeat? I have said them many a time before on our A.B.A. up-to-date. Perhaps I shall, despite being sort of compelled to wander along with the more ancient phases of glove business. As a rule, if a gentleman and a bruiser were in opposition, with company looking on, the coup de théâtre to bring the show to a conclusion was a very fast rally with no guarding, all hitting and no punishment intended. At it the pair would go hammer and tongs, the hands drawn back for another stroke almost before the original impact was accomplished. This rapid dual duel act always brought the house down—at any rate, if the house of itself was not demonstrative that way, the claque of hangers-on were pugilists on the host's list to be matched if customers were findable, and meanwhile playing potmen or waiters in consideration of being allowed to go into the ring and try to earn a shower of "browns." This little lot started a cheer quite infectious.

Not once in a blue moon do we now see an old-fashioned, real rally, and that is simply because, while in the older age a man who swung about would not be tolerated, and so holding was was out of the question, nowadays blows impracticable almost for fighting make the major part of a boxer's repertory in strokes. As I recollect some of the mighty men before prize-fighting, as such, was knocked out, they, as sparrers, went for cleverness in straight hitting, and, unless there was "needle," never tried to hurt. That would be no good for glove competitions, I admit, which

constitute serious warfare. The old gladiators, as they were called, worked three times as fast in the number of strokes placed per minute and were ten times better worth watching.

Now at last to my respected friends the A.B.A., whose honoured secretary has so fine a balance-sheet to show, I put forward a very old proposition in asking whether, if the A.B.A. is constituted to promote the art and science of boxing, it cannot see its way clear to be a little more national in its operations and look beyond its annual championships with London for fixed centre. Far be it from me to suggest making the championship meeting a feast movable from the metropolis. But centralisation can be carried too far. All roads lead to Rome and London, and, as we are aware, the A.B.A. policy in compelling competitors to take one or other thither does invest the annual festival with extra importance. I am aware, moreover, that competitors think more of showing at the headquarters than at others. All the same, let me put a case asking whether if the A.B.A. would institute departmental depôts, say, for county championships, the said roads with finger-posts "To London" might not have more well-qualified travellers to their big meeting ganging along?

In February 1903 died Mr Henry Woods, more widely known as Woodstock. Harry Woodstock, a man with a remarkable inner history, was one of the survivors of the *Bell's Life* connection engaged in sporting reporting and other writing before *Bell* began to go fast downhill towards what was at last an altogether unnecessary end. He was a very useful utility

artist among its staff, but scarcely a star at any time, though he had a wide range of athletic knowledge, was very smart in handling business in which he or his paper might be concerned, an almost inconveniently indefatigable worker, and gifted with extraordinary patience and perseverance, not only in noting events as they passed but as a chronological recorder. Mr Woodstock, who was seventy-four years of age when he died, and had seen much of the sporting life which *Bell* for long made its almost monopolistic speciality, would have been a very valuable assistant to the right man to write old Nunquam Dormio's history, a work for which is a long-felt want among such as were interested in its doings during the period of its best success. This right man for the business has never presented himself, and never will now, I fear, more by reason that, moving so fast, the world has enough to do without looking back as it used, and is more inclined to wipe the slate clean as it goes along than to bother about the past.

Our present generation could scarcely be persuaded to believe in the great power *Bell's Life* was in the sporting world mainly because of its being the accepted authority on prize-fighting. I do not say that the Turf was weak, or what are now understood as athletics either. Horse-racing went strong indeed in the paper's heyday, and has not been handled much better since, although times do march; more capital, many fold, was embarked in foot-racing among professionals than could be dreamed of now; boat-race matches were plentiful, and professionals' regattas many; money was about galore for all sorts of sports. Over all these *Bell* reigned to a great

extent, being stakeholder, arranger, or manager through its staff appointed to act in umpiring or refereeing, but was far and away greatest as pugilism's accepted head. It was a bad day for fighting, as for all other professional competition, when *Bell's* power began to drop, and the high hand was no longer to be played because authority had become divided.

Sorely has old sturdy *Bell* been missed from the land as a controller of sparring able to enforce its penalties. Other times other manners. What the once all-powerful sporting paper might do in the interests of fair play required no more than taking an independent view of the rights and the wrongs of a case quite apart from financial consideration, such as proprietorial interest in circulation, loss or profit through paid advertisement, prestige, however much or little that may be, attaching to holding match-money, being appointed referee, etc. If *Bell's Life* fell foul of a pro. deserving of censure, or an amateur, for that matter, the paper was in position to outlaw and practically wipe him out of existence. Advertisement, the breath of life to the public performer, was cut off—at least, all worth having was—since such as were marked in its pages "d.d." were out of the world as well as out of the fashion. *Bell* on occasion declined to insert challenges from recreants or challenges to those déclassés, to mention their presence on sporting occasions as spectators, assistants, or performers. They were taboo—dead to sport though able to come back again to life after purging themselves of their contempt.

I often, as do many others, no doubt, cast back to the *Bell* traditions and wish that

competition among newspapers dealing with the ancient paper's specialities had never been invented, or (what is quite impossible of realisation), that a bond might be entered into among them to mutually exclude from notice performers whose room is preferable to their company among sporting personages of the day. Of course, I am aware of the idea's futility. Nothing of the kind is possible, because of the news agencies, the associations who have no interest in anything except making copy out of it. All the same, carrying the plan out must do a lot of good, and be absolutely safe, because the method is quite free from libel, seeing that no more than negative action would be taken. You can't well sue for damage to character because you are severely left alone and frozen out. Seeing the announcement of Mr Woods's death had prompted me to make these lines about *Bell's Life*, its days of independence and power, which to an extent might, but for a peculiar blend of interests and accidents, have been prolonged to the present age. Speaking of the once great paper as a past institution, I do not forget that its goodwill and connection *were* transferred to the *Sporting Life*, so I wish to be understood as treating of its decease only as a separate existence.

Never has there been a sporting newspaper occupying so strong and dominant a position as *Bell* had. Thousands of copies dealing with one pastime and another are sold nowadays where one of the great sixpenny was sent out; but now influence has been widely divided and nothing in the line stands out as by itself. Nor is anyone likely to come into such pre-eminence, seeing that the greatest motive of all is defunct—viz.,

prize-fighting—of which its editor was king *ex officio*—an estate fitted for individual government. The ring was the greatest promoter of circulation ever known in the sporting world. We have no ring now, though boxing there is, one of the P.R.'s relations carrying on the old firm's business under the only conditions practicable in a changed condition of public sentiment. Perhaps we are better off than formerly. Again, we might have done just as well, and a bit better, if knuckle-fighting was permitted or winked at (there must, you know, have been a tremendous lot of queer-sightedness among the police at various times, otherwise the fancy's pitches would scarcely have so often escaped being queered). Personally I very much doubt whether doing away with the old style *was* a good move, considering only the nature of the encounters. Still, the game had to go because of the inside and outside villainy attaching to it.

Except under police or really authorised control, the fringe could not be kept in order, and unless it was to be legalised the Prize Ring was bound to go, if only because the hangers-on were preventing the money coming to it. Taking the practice as it was, never was such a paper-seller invented in sporting journalism's interests. What I set down here may be, probably is, beyond the ordinary citizen's belief, but still, in my opinion, true enough of public taste, which is, in short, a matter of taste. Here is my case. If it be possible, let a genuine old-style fight between two well-known pugs. on the same platform as Tom Sayers and John Carmel Heenan be arranged to come and be brought off now in England. They have their

date for fighting, one clear of all other sporting events. For another day arrange that the Derby *and* the Oxford and Cambridge Boat Race *and* the Amateur Athletic Association's championship meeting shall be decided. The British public would, I steadfastly believe, purchase more accounts of the fight than they would of all the other attractions put together. Perhaps they might not now that we have been so long out of the way of prize-fighting, but before the ring dropped from our list of recognised institutions it stood far away by itself as a draw on the contents bills.

Every now and then the *Referee* has asked is it time to try an experiment?—viz., to see how a competition would go with the gloves on ancient P.R. rules, half-minute time, and no calls of "Don't hold!" "Smith" (Jones or Robinson, as the case may be), "you're holding again!" no referential warnings of this sort, because holding would be part of the game with the muffers as it used to be with the raw 'uns pickled. The time does not nor is likely to arrive, I suppose, because this would be fighting as it used to be all but the mittens, or, rather, with the mittens extra. Possibly, too, if we went in for the experiment, it might be successful in an altogether undesirable way—i.e., causing the authorities' countenance, at present extended to regulation boxing, to be withdrawn from that, and so making an end of the lot. Still, you know, unless wrestling does come in, boxing misses a great part of its logical *raison d'être* as the peaceful practice of war waged without artificial munitions, for so sure as you fall to real fisticuffs you pass to felling

by clicks and other strokes. Some of our young chaps, I mean the boys who do box nowadays, talk or think to themselves of what they would do with the "fistes" in a street row. Very likely they would do a lot, possibly not so much if they fell into roughing and tumbling. The other man's presence is always to be reckoned on and reckoned with if there is to be fighting, and experience teaches that the sort of stray customers run against, often literally run against, who will stand up to give and take do not readily chance their luck unless they think they have some sort of form to go on. Heaven help the boxer who *is* only a boxer who gets into a real fight with a chance antagonist who can scrap a bit and wrestle a good bit more. A cow can beat a man at wrestling, some of the old ringmen used to say. Never mind about the cows, only let the useful gentleman able to illustrate a few falls well on an opponent get hold of one innocent of the art, though very clever with his fists. The latter would speedily recognise where his fighting education was defective. Wrestling, you know, was always fair in the ring so long as holds were above the waist, but the ground sort was barred so soon as a man was thrown. A lot was done, though, by the uppermost man in a fall, who made his weight all he might in coming down on the other; and, according to tradition, some of the swell fighters and all the Gippos could pretty well kill anyone with their knees as they dropped after felling their enemy. Maybe those who understand wrestling are ever keen and enthusiastic on the sport. A not very liberal-minded community is theirs—at least, so they have appeared in

my experience—because votaries of each variety think so little of the others, or used to when I was about among the fraternity. Cumberland and Westmoreland experts, Lancashire catch-as-catch-can, Devonshire and Cornwall catch and kick, and all the rest, out of which various genera have been developed, believed very much in their own game and thought very little of contemporaries, rivals or opponents, whichever you please to call them.

If folk care to go in for the sport, well and good; the more they do so the better. In the Border counties their style will no doubt be perpetuated, despite immemorial practice among the best exponents, who made themselves a gang of conspirators who skilfully cut up all competitions worth bringing into arrangement. The Northern laddies who rough each other in up-and-down tumbling will carry on, not particular what damage they do nor how they do it. Along West Cornwall, Devonshire and Somersetshire should, I trust, maintain many of those traditions associated with the districts. All these, at least, for a time. But, I take it, wrestling's major *raison d'être* was wiped out when knuckle-fighting was made illegal to the extent of being genuinely attacked by the authorities, and its only chance of survival in amended form was utilised to make latter-day boxing quite clear of throwing. In prize-fighting wrestling played a very great part indeed. The very existence of Queensberry rules scrapping depends on its marked and recognisable difference from the old style. If you carefully read accounts of old fights you find that most of the rounds ended with a throwing tussle. Then what

the ordinary British citizen recognised as fair wrestling, with the hold not below the waist, and tricky play with the legs and feet permitted, was an essential part of the game. Now, if you want to be disqualified, or desire to have your man ruled out in a boxing bout, a little bit of throwing will surely settle the business. I should be pleased to see wrestling take its old place—not the stuff we are treated to on the stage; but the major incentive for “playing” it has departed so far as professional fighting goes. And yet the art or craft, in one variety or another, *ought* to be cultivated for its usefulness in self-defence.

CHAPTER III

BOXERS

ONCE upon a time at a Brighton hotel I had a most interesting experience with an old courser, a *very* old gentleman, who, as I had thought, was dead and buried long ago. A fine, upstanding, elderly, rather distinguished-looking individual came into a room where I happened to be waiting for dinner and asked the waitress how soon he could have something to eat. Naturally, I suggested his joining me, at which the waitress smiled and the other customer laughed. "Thank you," says the late-comer to me, "for the offer, but I only want one joint for my dinner to-day, and I am going to eat all that myself. And then to the attendant: "Tell the cook to do me a nice cabbage." Rum, wasn't it? This stately, hale, hearty veteran, with great big limbs and a deep chest, a neck that ran straight up from his shoulders to the back of his head, a man well over seventy, but bright and quick, quite nippy on his feet, was a faithful (you can't say bigoted, can you?) vegetarian. No one could have looked better on any diet than my chance acquaintance, who made me jump when he told me who he was—a very celebrated prize-fighter.

I should just as soon have expected to see Cribb or Belcher or the first Gentleman Jackson as—no, I'm not going to mention my friend's name, and I'll tell you why. Many of the old fighters "got on" after turning up the Ring and cutting its associations, and their families are apt to wish their name left out when anybody talks fight. Some relatives of the ex-bruiser in question are in good positions, and, rightly or wrongly, forget all about that part of the past wherein ropes and stakes, rounds, first bloods and knock-downs, and fubbings, and all manner of things occurred. Please be satisfied to take it from me that my vegetarian *had* been a great celebrity, and was a most entertaining companion, especially when, under such stimulus as a cabbage grants, he fell into talking shop and told yarns of ring doings in the early years of last century. Like fairy tales they seemed, coming from an actor who had helped make history of very long ago. But, no mistake about it, there was the narrator in the flesh, with his record in "Fistiana," and a son-in-law proprietor of what was then among the largest hotels in Brighton, and he had seen—actually seen—or taken part in some of the battles he spoke about. I felt about as might you, dear reader, if a prim, white-haired, distinguished-looking gentleman, with a deferentially polite sort of stoop from the shoulders, and a big bony-bridged nose, calmly sat himself down in your hotel coffee room, and, letting on that he was Boney's bogie, *the* Duke of Wellington, proceeded to give a full, true, and particular account of Waterloo, with some details of the Peninsular War.

Quite uncanny the business seemed at first, till I made excuse to slip out and get the landlord to tell me that I was not being humbugged. Then I took all the lot in, most delighted at my luck. The elderly gentleman not only fought some battles over again in words, but acted occasionally, being a sight more lissome than most lads, and able to do all manner of things with his arms and legs. I daresay a few of my readers will recollect Mr Baily, of *Baily's Magazine*. At quite an advanced age Mr Baily could stand on one foot and put the other straight up by the side of his head and do all manner of tricks calculated to puzzle a young 'un. So could my novel acquaintance, who told me that shortly after his last fight he took an hotel and the pledge simultaneously almost, and had gradually cared less and less for meat, until, finding he fared well indeed on a vegetable diet, he give up all animal food, though he went in for an egg now and then. A pug, he disliked greatly was Gas Hickman, and the one he admired the most Tom Winter Spring, of whose young days I already know a goodish bit from a well-to-do West countryman who worked with him as a lad.

What a small place the world is! At a quite recent National Sporting Club's-house dinner I accidentally foregathered with a gentleman who, I discovered, lives in a little village a few miles out of Hereford. Not very extraordinary, that. Well, no; but wait a bit. That week was announced the death of Mr Henry Haywood, of Blackmere House, Herefordshire, a great greyhound breeder and courser, whose Waterloo nomination I backed for some five-and-thirty years

right on end. Now Mr Haywood came in as junior partner in coursing to Mr Racster. All their dogs used to be named with an initial R, and at Ashdown and some other meetings you found Mr Racster as nominator. Each had his own kennel and trainer. One of their most celebrated greyhounds was Rebe, who ran up in two successive years. But I believe that as a matter of fact this beautiful bitch really belonged to Miss Haywood, to whom she was given to make a pet of when only a few weeks old. Mr Racster lived in this very house now occupied by my brother diner, and left to Mr Haywood on the senior partner's demise, and on a Sunday in the churchyard next door Tom Spring had his first fight for money. He took on the local bully, and give him a jolly good hiding.

My fine old friend was born in the nineties. The nineties of the century before last, if you please. Someone who heard of this adventure of mine, no dates given, kindly pointed out that I must be wrong in making the person quoted dislike Hickman, otherwise known as Gas, because the said bruiser was killed through a trap accident, returning with a patron from a fight between Josh Hudson and Tom Shelton, at Harpenden, and this happened so far back as 1822. Of course this was presupposing that the experience I related must have occurred recently. When I say that the subject was born in or about 1790, you must see that if I met him—and I did—we must have tumbled against each other a long while ago. If you please, I don't want to make myself out more aged than I am. That sort of thing does not pay. You don't get so good

a chance of earning your living if you look old, which is a reason why I shall get myself up youthful directly I leave off being taken for my eldest son's younger brother. Still, while appearances must be kept up in one way, so must they be respected in another, and to do myself justice as a truth-teller, I must explain that I had my chat with the ghost forty years back.

Another pugilist, Tom Sayers, not to put too fine a point upon it, may be reasonably be associated with Brighton, having been born there. That tough customer, in his clothes, had by no means a striking personality, and was only a middle-weight in poundage. As we talk of weights classically, Tom had no weight. He was Tom Sayers. To hear our latter-day scrappers haggling about odd pounds as one might with carats in diamonds makes one smile casting back to the 11 st. or less bricklayer's labourer, who did not mind how big the other man might be so long as he—Tommy—might have a go at him. He came to be described in "Fistiana" as born in Pimlico, near Brighton, and those who do not happen to know better have repeated the misinformation. Apparently no one has taken the trouble to look up a gazetteer and see where Pimlico, near Brighton, may be. He wouldn't find it, but that is a detail, and one, moreover, which in relation to other spots has frequently occurred to me even when I was after a real live place that was on the map. As a matter of fact, this was a very slummy slum, which could be described as an alley but for its being more of a court—a very dirty, insanitary court, too, mainly populated by a colony of fishermen, whose families, when they

cleaned anything, mostly fish, cleaned the offal into the court for the children to play with. Certainly this pestiferous hole was near Brighton, being, in fact, in the street next to North Street, but you might as well call the Grand Hotel near the town as so qualify the happily defunct Pimlico, long ago superseded by Tichborne Street formed on its site. One used to mind P's and Q's in writing of Tom Sayers, his habits, haunts, and belongings. Once upon a time a good old friend of mine, Mr Arthur Hunt, well known on the Turf, read something I had written about the long boots Sayers loved to wear in the days of his topmost fame and popularity. Unfortunately, I said that they had painted on them: "Tom Sayers, Champion of England," and made a most serious mistake. Mr Hunt good-naturedly wired to me as soon as he read the blunder, so that I might correct it at once. The letters were worked in white silk by an admiring bootmaker, and I took the reading for paint! Mr Hunt, I recollect, was one of four or five who clubbed together to make up Tom's stake for an early engagement—only a few pounds; fifteen or twenty—all told. Instead of which, novices want more than that towards training expenses for a fifteen two-minute rounds go with the gloves, and the loser's end of a purse, itself enough to keep a decent working-man for half a year.

Sport, so we are taught to believe, takes a deal of knocking out. Apparently this must be very true indeed in boxing's case. Otherwise it would by now have been deader than any number of door-nails—that is, the American sort would. If ever a section did try hard to kill their

opportunities, to wilfully destroy their means of earning easy livings and growing rich out of all proportion to skill and labour involved, the U.S. boxers are guilty of the folly. What induces them to make fights as crooked as rattlesnakes when plenty of money could be made on the straight by giving big crowds who pay gate very liberally an honest show for their money? People do stand a wonderful lot of robbing, but there must be an end to all things. Surely the end must not be so very far off when robberies are engineered inartistically and croaks give the game away to mugs. J. L. Sullivan was not "all lavender" while he was here, but that very remarkable man had certain points which made those who saw enough of him to read his character try to forget the bad for the sake of the good. Please understand that I do not use the expression in chaff in saying that there was nothing mean about John L. the Great. He had a very high and mighty opinion of Sullivan, which was perhaps too lofty to suit the rest of the people who did not happen to be Mr J. L. S. Besides taking a wide view of himself and his prowess—mark you, in his day he was far and away the best man at his particular game—he was quite above the pettiness which later celebrities show. When at Amiens his party were wrangling over twopenny-halfpenny points with Mitchell's representative, objecting to every proposal made in the hope of getting the match decided, Sullivan had one say; that was all, and sufficient: "Tell Mitchell to find the place and I will come when and where he tells me."

I have, I believe, mentioned some time ago necessity for a writer being careful how he deals

with such celebrities as old fighters—old in the age traded on most by more or less veracious history retailers and manufacturers who, the late Mr Sydney French being pioneer, created with old fights a long-felt want in a certain class of journalism. If I have let off the yarn previously, I daresay it will be fresh to a good many unaware of the long-forgotten celebrities' or notorieties' habit of bobbing up serenely when they ought to have been dead long, long ago. A chronicler wanted to finish off some scrapper after following his history in the British Museum, and, getting tired of the subject, he wound up something in this fashion. "After the defeat, Smithson's patrons began to tire of him, and in the history of the Ring his name occurs no more. Like many another hero of the hour, the man who had basked in the sunshine of prosperity was unable to endure adversity's cold shade. He fell into bad courses, and shortly died in poverty and disgrace." Mr French soon had reason to think he might just as well have made him end nicely, like the children's princes and princesses who married and lived happily ever afterwards and kept a pig, for hardly was the paper given time to circulate before, behold you! Mr Smithson, in the flesh, and no end of a swell carriage and pair, called at the newspaper office to explain that, so far from his falling into bad courses and dying in poverty and disgrace, he wasn't dead at all, and happened to have a very-much-alive solicitor who was prepared to do all manner of expensive legal things.

Strange, is it not? the dearth of boxers above quite light poundage—strange, I mean, that they do not come along? Nothing strange

attaches to such men's lasting only a little while, because so frequently one fierce battle will settle both combatants for life as scrappers of class. Plenty of examples can be quoted of this. Light men can take hiding after hiding from opponents with whom they are well matched physically, and apparently be none the worse for their beatings. In the days before glove matches superseded old-style fighting with the bare knuckles, and the only point of any account was the winner's making the loser give in, fights between light-weights might be protracted to almost extravagant lengths. Though hard hitters for their size and weight, the little men's powers of punishment were so limited by comparison with their weightier brethren and their own resources of endurance that two good light fighters might strive for hours, being busy all the time; not like the heavies, who would occasionally be merely wasting time. At the end of a long bout the bantams, if properly trained when they started, would be little the worse as regards punishment, though perhaps terribly exhausted by their own exertions. Big 'uns very frequently go off for good or bad in consequence of a single engagement. Neither Peter Jackson nor Frank Slavin was within stones of the old form, after that tremendous set-to at the National Sporting Club, the most determined affair with the mittens I ever saw—a deal more punishing than it would have been with the knuckles, because of the long rounds.

I wonder whether Ben Jordan of Bermondsey—a prettier lad in build, poise, and action I have not often seen—would have been as good a man for boxing if he had come from anywhere else, and not participated in one of that suburb's (a

great part of the place was country within the memory of by no means elderly men) leading industries—tanning. I am informed that his work used to lie in a tan-yard, labour which calls for unusual—you might call it eccentric—muscular exercise, leading to special developments, as do puddling and old-fashioned manual brickmaking, now being so fast knocked out by machinery. Anyone who looked Jordan over must have been struck by the wonderful show of muscle he has on the epaulettes. The divisions between the deltoids and biceps are marked as if with a tightly-drawn cord. Seeking cause for such abnormal display, and to that end inquiring as to occupation, I was supplied by a friend with the description as above. Perhaps my friend was right, and so the explanation is easy—at least it seems so to me, for if a man has much to do with moving the hides in the pits, or scraping either, I can readily understand that certain muscles may be very specially educated. Old rowing men will recollect what extraordinary chests and shoulders some of the Newcastle professors had. In their clothes they appeared pretty much hump-backed. When they stripped you found that what suggested curvature of the spine was a lump of muscle, the result of puddling. Another class I alluded to, the brickmakers, used to have extraordinarily fine deltoids. Whether that surprising extravagance, as it might be styled, came from digging the clay, moulding or otherwise handling it, I cannot say; but I do know people who, twenty years ago, would spot a brickmaker by his make if he were among a dozen tradesmen in different lines. I am writing more particularly of the brickies with whom I came on terms, say,

thirty years ago. Though I say thirty, I mean forty, but do not want to give myself away as old 'un, a patriarch, at the period when our gallant correspondent, Commodore Robert Frost-Smith, was assimilating forecastle folklore, chanty songs and yarns already garnered as a shellback, with points in the study of human nature to be picked up in the chief metropolitan home of brickmaking. That last is an industry which from time immemorial lent itself to scrapping sport, brickies being always game to box for love or beer, the one or the other, both or neither, out of friendship or cussedness. When Mr Frost-Smith does what I would much like him to do and gives the B.P. an autobiographical sketch of his experiences as a cosmopolitan athlete, I would be pleased (if invited) to contribute a chapter on brickies.

I am scarcely alluding to the fine strong fellows with whom, down Ealing and Southall way, our H. A. C. friend used to foregather and take on catch-as-catch-can for the sake of sport, as Dick Roberts and his brother Alec did each other when the former wanted to know how good Alec was, and so ran him a trial to a finish with the raw 'uns. My notes would be more of the hard life the old sort had to lead. At the period when some of our friends amused themselves by visiting Southall and getting up a scrap for fun, with themselves chief actors, brickmaking had travelled into scientific territory, and hands were in great degree subsidiary aids to machinery. But I recollect when almost the whole process depended on manual labour—cruelly hard it was, too, for all concerned. The men, heads of families, laboured like demons while on the job,

being paid by piecework at so much a thousand, and the one who did the moulding operated in a miserable shanty—little roof and all draught. He moulded the clay which was to be made into the form of bricks—awful work for the wrists. His wife put the moulds between slats off the table on to a barrow, and frequently wheeled the load single-handed to the rows, where they were stacked to be dried in the air before being baked. And what children were with them—little tots six or seven years old!—some staggered along helping with the barrow-loads. The whole family would start at sunrise and go on six days a week till sundown, barring the times when the lord and master, not unjustifiably discontented with this life's dull round, sought welcome, warm or otherwise, at an inn, and got drunk, illustrating, without knowing he was doing so, the words of the old Frenchman who distinguished between *pour me distraire* and *pour m'amuser*. The others made the best of a sordid existence and felt lucky if they were not knocked about.

As a means to an end in athletics, I have tried several branches of labour for training. I have in mind a once eminent pug., whose hands being soft underwent a course of blacksmithing. I am sure that was a clever lead, and that for certain branches of athletics you can do no better than go in for appropriate industrial labour. We know that amateurs forfeit their status in case of engaging in manual labour for pay, but labouring manually an amateur is another thing. I can recollect spending much pocket-money in beer for sawyers, subsidising them to let me pose as top-sawyer—the pit man comes in for terrible dose of dust in his eyes and

ale down his neck. So you are better up on the top; besides, the action is freer. Loading and unloading of bricks makes a beautiful exercise if you take the "hands" en bloc, and do not become the victim of the handful's becoming disengaged, and the loose brick catching an edge of your palm. So is deal-carrying. All this is fine industrial training for athletes, and also getting ballast out of the river—a game Mr R. H. Labat, skipper of the Hibernia, will remember being told off for while under the advice of his captain, Mr Gulston. Grand training for rowing, that is physically, and more morally, because while you stick to principles and do the windlass or winching and lift the dredge, you contemplate the professional gentleman sitting down very hard like bargees at their best imbibing the ale, which is not included in your curriculum, and is so very tempting under the circumstances. When you come to think of it, there is a good deal of sense in the manual labour clause of the Henley definition. I mean to say that, apart from other such as social considerations, a lot can be said on fair play and the way in which the regular worker for a livelihood can be getting a pull over the other sort.

I have been taken to task for styling the late Peter Jackson "Gentleman," cause for reproof lying in the fact of the title having been long ago bestowed on the white man Jackson, knuckle-fighter, champion, and gymnasium proprietor, who flourished in the days of George IV. I *was* fairly well informed about the First Gentleman in Europe's gentleman pugilist and his being Lord Byron's boxing

instructor, also the compliment conveyed in the prefix conventionally accorded him, but that has not in my eyes constituted any reason why the black who deserved the style or title should not be given it. Besides, if I recollect right, I was in the habit of alluding to Peter as "this" Gentleman Jackson. I wonder whether anything will be done for his memory similiar to the tomb of first Gentleman Jackson, which I have not seen for many years. It is at Brompton, a rather elaborate affair. I wonder whether he would have understood the "Victor cestus artemque repono" permanently quoted in the stone. It hardly seems altogether apt, does it, seeing that the great fighter would not have wanted a tomb, or an epitaph either, if he had left off a winner in his last bout with Death, who kings and tars dispatches, also champions of the ring. One seldom, if ever, hears that last phrase—champion of the ring—nowadays. Why, did it drop out of use?

There was another pugilist's tomb I often used to come across—namely, Tom Cribb's, which, I believe, still adorns Woolwich Old Church graveyard, and was certainly thought a mighty deal of by the fancy when set up in 1851. It was not very old when I first saw the monument with its big lion. *Bell's Life* gave a long description of the edifice. "The design," says *Bell*, "is simple, but grand in its conception. It represents a British lion grieving over the ashes of a British hero; for, putting aside all prejudice, Cribb was a hero of whom his country might well be proud. Mr Timothy Butler, the sculptor, appears to have been a disciple of Landseer in conveying to other animals human

expression." Complimenting the artist on his lion, the writer avers belief that a more beautiful specimen of animal sculpture does not exist, whether regarded for the exquisite proportions of the figure or the deep expression of sorrow expressed on the countenance. This was not an easy subject to treat without sliding into the bathetic. The paw of the lion rests on an urn supposed to contain the ashes of the dead, over which is lightly thrown the belt which was presented to Cribb as the Champion of England. He was born July 8, 1781, and died May 11, 1848—a fine run for a member of his profession. Somehow it seems far longer ago than 1848 since his death. Of course, he long survived his days of active service, but when you read or talk of Tom Cribb you feel as if you were dealing with one belonging to a very remote period. I grant that 1781 is a good way back as it stands, but Cribb's long life bridged the distance in a way. There was more money for such purpose than would be available now for memorialising a champion pugilist. Cribb's lion of colossal size—I am quoting *Bell* again—stands on a rock. The whole was sculptured from a solid block of Portland stone weighing twenty tons, and is placed on a plinth which elevates it among the surrounding tombs, rendering it visible even from the River Thames. That might have been so in 1851. But Woolwich has grown and altered since then. Some day I will give myself a holiday to go to Woolwich and look at Cribb's grave again. A reader most kindly sent me a photo of the burying-ground, which I should not have recognised without special information. The graveyard has, so

they tell me, been altered and made into a garden. In effecting this, most of the monuments were moved, some broken up. Cribb's was preserved, and, what is more, was a couple of years ago thoroughly cleaned and renovated at the expense of some Woolwich admirers. You can still see the river from the churchyard, thanks to the houses *not* intervening. Next to Cribb's was, so Mr "J. B." kindly informs me, the grave of Thomas Griffiths, killed in a fight with Paddy Gill. His gravestone has with others been removed.

A most unromantic-looking place Woolwich used to be—a sort of twin to its not far distant relation; the three towns on end are Strood, Rochester, and Chatham. Curious, is it not, that another trio, similarly concerned in Army and Royal Navy affairs should present itself in Devonport, Stonehouse, and Plymouth? Still, if only for the romance of war, plenty of material is at hand in Woolwich for the right sort of chronicler. It shows the naval, military, and marine tonings which make for some of us such a charm in a garrison town which has a dockyard as well as barracks. Someone ought to do for Woolwich what the late Sir Walter Besant did for Portsmouth, in "By Celia's Arbour."

When, if ever, I do get a day's chance, I must certainly go trapesing in my own way about Woolwich, Charlton, and the outskirts of Eltham, not forgetting Plumstead; and my method of addressing myself thereto will certainly be by river, from the pier of London Bridge. Come to think of it, this must be a big job for me, what with the journey itself and with going over, in

memory, some of the many voyages of the past, starting when halfpenny boats ran between the bridges, and river steamboat captains signalled instructions from the bridge to small boys planted handy to the opening into the engine-room, tick-tacking with their fingers instructions to be passed on to the engineers, so that the youngsters kept up a running fire of orders.

Not for years had I called to mind that primitive wireless telegraphy with its code of "back her," "stop her," "half a turn astarn," "go on ahead," and all the rest. The river is not what it was, I fear. They have cleared away a lot of the picturesque old waterside London which clustered overhanging the tideway by the Harbour-master's offices down by Limehouse Hale. I do not suppose that the chatty communicative fellow-passenger breed is about now to act as volunteer guide and point out objects of interest such as Deadman's Dock by Deptford, where the pirates used to be hanged in chains. Regarding this said cheerful post-mortem operation, has it ever occurred to you, gentle reader, to ask yourself how the business would be done? Say that you wanted to hang somebody in chains, what would you do first? It sounds simple, does it not, given three important factors—opportunity, chains, and the hangee? But unless you got the tip from someone up in the business, you might not think of slobbering the subject's outward covering in thick coats of tar, and binding him round and round with scrap-iron bands or other artistic details. A novice in the gibbet business would find his human scarecrow's moral influence of short duration because of its—it, I presume, is

the right pronoun—tendency to fall all to pieces instead of long remaining an object-lesson—what an object!—in honesty's being the best policy, and the possession of virtue—or at least virtuous tendencies—quite sufficient reward to make one respectable.

You couldn't afford that—not the honesty or virtue's own reward, you know, but the executed individual's quickly dropping to bits—because to do any good (which the system never did, quite the other way about) you must keep up a continuous supply to adorn the gibbet, attract ravens to croak and gruesomely creak the subjects in their joints—I mean chains. I never witnessed a “remains” on show in this manner, but I have made personal acquaintance with a real gibbet. We have only given up using these tale adorners and moral pointers since the last ten minutes lapsed, and all Marryat readers can always see one when they want, by the simple means of making the very voyage we are now talking about, because of his old Tom and young Tom, and Jacob Faithful and Jerry Abershaw, Putney Heath, the keeper, the dog, and all the characters which river quayside old London brings back to students of the breezy Captain's fine works. Can't you, dear old boys, call them up as the steamer takes you by the more ancient wharves, and picture old Tom being lugged skywards by the crane from the lighter to the high warehouse floor, and young Tom, the mischievous, hanging on to his father's wooden leg? And the Dominie—we must not forget him; nor must I forget to quit this discursive excursion. At this rate I would never get to Woolwich, to land at Charlton Pier first, nor attain to Cox's mounds (are there any now?) nor to the

skirts of the barrack-field, where they used to manufacture drummers and buglers by the simple process of setting them to tootle with trumpet things and play "daddy," "mummy," on the drum all the livelong day. As for doing the Gunners' cricket ground, or fetching so far as the Military Academy, not to dream of making the ascent of Shooter's Hill, or seeing what the dockyard is like now (I have seen record line-of-battle-ships—wooden ones; teste the Royal Albert—put together there), or reaching the churchyard—all that must be out of the question unless I spent a month or so about the job, which is what you may call a beautiful dream.

CHAPTER IV

RACING REMARKS

IN the accounts furnished of the speeching, always a star item in the entertainment, at a certain Gimcrack Club dinner, which did not take place exactly in the dark ages, the chairman of the Race Committee gave a specimen of what was considered a joke, a rare, quaint, merry conceit, received as such by the assembled company, for "(Laughter)" adorns the reports. I can't quite believe that this laughter was of the sort in which all joined, as is the case with a legal funniment rich enough to amuse the Bench and occasionally a condescending prisoner also. Still, there it is—laughter in parentheses. The shorthand gentlemen responsible for the telegraphed despatches surely wouldn't put it in their notes, and far less into copy to be wired and paid for at so much per hundred words, unless the merriment *was* there at the time. Now, what do you think, readers, this good thing was, to tickle the diners so?—a gem that in the long ago might have been considered smart enough to be "sent to *Punch*," considered by some the official dumping-place for all witticisms, new or second-hand, pungent and lively or flat and vapid. Here it is; but I'll be hanged if I can see where the fun comes in. The

official jester or official jesting was made to say that "the committee aimed to promote good racing, so that everybody, including ladies, might attend them as they would go to a garden-party." Surely the Gimcrackers must be off their heads if they call this a thing to laugh at.

I am not going to start being a prophet of evil, nor go out to meet trouble and injustice, not half a step. At the same time, possibility of trouble at the cutting off of a great part of racecourses' revenues has to be considered by those who can look ahead. Not in my day will Englishmen put up with being prevented from backing their fancies on racecourses. Scarcely in my day can our British public be educated into making horse-racing so truly and exhaustively *the* national leading sport—which it is not at present—as to ensure its enduring on the strength of its being far more widely patronised than it is now. Still, the first may happen before development of the second is sufficiently advanced, and then the Turf may be in a parlous way. Why? Because if you stop wagering you could not expect to maintain entrance charges to the reserves at half the rates now obtained, and to make up for loss at the high-fee gates you must cater for an increased quantity or number of customers. The required connection is not to be made at short notice, and loss of revenue must mean reducing attractions for owners and breeders.

This orator talked of ladies going to the races as they would to a garden-party, and was considered amusing. Not once, but for more seasons than I care to count, I have urged—being in dead earnest—that racing in this

country can never be considered properly carried out until it is made a family recreation, pretty much as you may see it conducted on a Melbourne Cup or other great day, when popular prices are charged; and paterfamilias who will not take the family to Flemington is deemed on a par with the head of a house who declines to treat his belongings to the local flower show. At present pater can be well excused from introducing his people to English racing, unless he has a very long, also well-filled, pocket, because only for such is fitting accommodation provided—viz., in the clubs, which, for purposes of the illustration and comparison I have earlier put before readers, shall rank as the stalls of the racing theatre. In these ladies can (except on crowded occasions) enjoy sport at ease, and with protection available in case of bad weather. I wonder how many fold has the regular attendance of ladies to metropolitan courses increased since the club system was inaugurated?

We have seen that grow from units into hundreds almost, effecting an enormous increase in racing's revenues, because the ladies make the men go racing. But, unfortunately, provision for the fair sex stops short at what we have called the stalls. Grades corresponding to dress circle, pit, gallery, are left to rough it, and consequently do not rough it, because they do not go—the lady folk, I mean. Further, they could not afford to attend often, because they must pay ring-fee rates instead of being franked at quite moderate season-ticket terms. As I have said before I now repeat, that what we want is graduated accommodation in the interests of the purely pleasure-seeking sections of the community at

prices commensurate with other entertainments' charges. They should be given covered tribunes and promenades where they could see and be seen, and not be mixed up with (possibly annoyed by) the business of the course. Well carried out—very difficult it must be with some old-fashioned establishments—this scheme would increase the Turf's clientèle marvellously. How much? Well, I believe in five hundred per cent. at least, and wouldn't be afraid to take slight odds about multiplying it by ten. As it is, the whole of our Turf army, regulars and occasionals, is wonderfully small all told, and will so remain till reformation is tried. Remember, the reason why we stay as we are is twofold. To the general public and his wife, also the rest of the family, gates are too costly and, so far as the more-to-be-considered half is concerned, fitting accommodation non-existent. It is regarding a quite necessary step in the right direction that the chairman of an important racing committee—York's—laughs, and with him laughs an extensive auditory. Yet intelligent attention to this very subject may some day mean the difference between the Turf's going to pieces or being tided over a bad time and restored to prosperity.

Interest in sport is so much stronger and more general than over here, in the land where pater of familias is not asked if he is to take mater and the girls to see the Melbourne Cup, because he is understood to be making all necessary arrangements; these and the paying part of the enterprise are left in his hands with every confidence on the leavers' part. Mind you, the old man, also the young one who wishes to

conduct the young lady, is not called upon to pull out much, and, what is more, he and all paid for get infinitely better value for money than we do. Putting explanation of the fact aside, let me repeat that the effective strength of supporters of sport in the Colonies makes a very much higher mark on the population than does ours. Let me give you an instance. Take the Melbourne Cup and the population of Melbourne to London's, or of the Australian Continent to Great Britain's. How many people go to see the English Derby? A million used to be the conventional figure. Later the estimators dropped to a modest half-million, and subsequently reduced their census to a trifle of 250,000. When we have three times more railways that now run into Epsom from anywhere and four sets of roads to the lot now available we may talk in these big figures—not before. Such a tribe of people as are lightly mentioned could not be got into and out of the place in one day. I very much doubt there ever being 150,000 on the Downs for a Derby, and would not bet on 100,000. Let the Derby crowd be what it may, its percentage to the country's population is trifling as against what the Melbourne Cup's would make on the Australian census.

Two very important departments for helping sport run smoothly, to spectators as well as to those more intimately concerned, are the commissariat and telegraph sections. The former has always been a vital component in a day's enjoyment where pastime or anything else is concerned, but, perhaps, great as is our consideration for it, we do not give it quite so high a place as did our forebears. If you can judge by contemporary accounts of old-time amusement—

such, for instance, as coaching and field sports—eating and drinking overlay all the rest so as to pretty nearly smother them out of notice. Instead of being told about the country the Corinthian tooled his tits through, you had to be satisfied with recapitulation of good things, solid and liquid, consumed or lamentably unprocurable, cackle on these being cut so late as to leave no room for the 'osses, and to a great extent other branches were viewed through a glass of something with or without a snack or a serious meal. We are in that respect a bit better, I think ; still, no one can deny our having a very wakeful eye on the refreshment department. Such use is now made of the telegraph system as to make proper provision for a rush of business at important meetings an absolute necessity, and when either of these businesses is insufficiently equipped, enormous inconvenience is caused. Now, please understand that I make no complaint against refreshment contractors who do all possible with the accommodation allotted them, nor against the Post Office department's gallant operators, who in masterly fashion struggle through stress of business too great for them to satisfactorily handle, with the promptitude almost invariably characteristic of their skilled labours.

I have for years been endeavouring to persuade managements to wipe out an arrangement idiotic as can be imagined. Why on earth do we have our telegraph offices, where the special staff is laid on, fitted with a shelf in front of a pigeon-hole? These wretched apertures are usually planned as if rendering communication between the deliverer and recipient of a message handed in should be as difficult as possible.

That is bad, but fancy a sane person concerned in this trade sticking a desk for writing purposes—that is what the shelf amounts to—right bang in front of the service hatch. Naturally people go there to write their telegrams, and insist on remaining in possession while a crowd of harassed would-be senders of messages, with time a vital essence of the contract in their transmission, are snarling and grumbling and groaning, without moving the man in possession one little bit. At Kempton Park you will find in use any number of little portable desks hung round the telegraph offices, each of them carrying a wad of forms. The initial cost of these is a matter of halfpence, and they make not exactly an efficient substitute, but a far superior alternative to the fixed shelf that causes so much trouble. This is a little thing of my own, and mighty convenient.

Without entering into detailed reasons for my own likes and dislikes in re the mechanical starter from a racing point of view, I may say I am dead against it because I believe it makes bad racing, and am quite confident of having a large majority of practical followers of the Turf with me. All I purpose doing for the time being is to express faith that unless we find better illustrations of the barrier principal or go back to open starting racecourse property must suffer. Of that I do feel quite certain, because unless speculators who back horses are relieved from the high average of mis-starts which obtain now, destroying horses' chances, the backbone of latter-day racing's finance must be disastrously weakened. Of course I fully agree with pretty picture-painters' dreams of perfect sport as it is to be conducted on the happy hunting-grounds, with

filthy lucre, vile dross, out of the question, a small pinch of salad for the Victor Ludorum, holder of the Millennium Championship, nothing costing nobody anything, and exes. simply blowed if such a relic of barbarism might be remembered and mentioned. Cost must be of no consequence under those ideal happy conditions. All concerned will race for love of the enterprise. While principals, such as owners, breeders, trainers, jockeys, and officials, put sport first and all other considerations nowhere, need to call upon spectators to help keep the mill going by bringing gate-money grist to it cannot exist, since all is free, gratis, and for nothing, except, perhaps, the cost of the testimonial salad wreaths and crowns.

Such a condition of affairs, only too desirable and lovely, is, I fear, yet a long, long way off, although we do hear optimistic theorists babbling of green courses, scenes of the highest possible class horse-racing, with, at any rate, no betting in it. Unfortunately, we poor mortals have to take things as they are, instead of as such politic artists depict them—which is to say, as they ought to be. “Exes.” we have always with us. The spectators’ fees make up-to-date racing possible. Chief contributors towards the necessary revenue come from the higher-priced rings. Analysing the classes most regular subscribers to the high poll tax enforced all over the country, we find, first, the professionals who in one payment cover the cost of a stall in the betting market and privilege to see what goes on, and next the well-to-do trading classes, men who make good money in their businesses, are keen on sport and speculation, and by force of habit—

they would not be able to afford racing if they were not cute—clever judges of value for money. Tattersall's (otherwise styled reserved) ring fees are the mainstay of horse-racing, and, judging from what I hear, the non-professional patrons of these rings say such revenues are bound to be reduced because of the gate. So long as they get value for their risk these all-round practical hands are game to go on. At the same time, they are not built to follow any sort of play which offends their better judgment. As between racecourse proprietors and their customers the crux is: are the latter satisfied with their pound-per-day's worth, or possibly more? My informant-bookmaker's answer to the question is unfavourable—decidedly so. The volume of betting, so they assure me, decreases wofully as between them and the public able to pay their way—men of the world who have a reason generally for their wagers, but good customers all the same, because they only bet out of their incomes and not from their capitals. Why are these retiring, as they undoubtedly are, in appreciable numbers? Why? Because the gate sickens them. A few good things come undone because the barrier is in fault; or, let us put it, the selected animals cannot get on with the gate—which is to say, off by it; they, the disappointed, begin to ask themselves questions, and sooner or later—generally sooner—turn the game up.

Poor sportsmen, does someone say?—poor samples if they cut sport because they can't gamble more or less mildly and to their own satisfaction. Certainly I grant that in idyllic Turf doings no one would ever be trying to

get a bit, nor care for betting, but only for looking the horses over in the paddock, as some of the most money-grubbing of greedy fellows assure you, or to watch the racers' action and note how strains of blood tell in action, stamina, and so on. But before that good time comes the gambling instinct must be extinct. As we stand, we—well, let me be complimentary, and say that though most of us would go through much for the simple pleasure of watching racing on which we did not and could not wager, we would far rather get our fun in two ways—looking on at the game and backing our opinions. Anyway, the latter are the big crowd's sentiments, the valuable connection whose sovereigns per diem make the mares and the other sort of horses to go, and these promoters of such goings are going themselves out of the institution's goodwill and connection. Used they not to be influenced by their selections being left under the flag arrangement? Why, certainly, but in the first place such mischances were of far less frequent occurrence, and again, being left then and being left now make two very different accidents. With the field going away at varying rates from the flag you never, or at least very seldom, gave up hope for the unfortunate bad beginner till the ball had done rolling or the winner's number was up. Now if you see your fancy left you reckon your risk on the creature as a total loss, for being left is practically synonymous with being doomed to certain defeat. Next to your choice being disqualified after a nominal victory, nothing does so crab one as its being disqualified at the starting end of the journey

because it is too docile at the barrier, and dwells after the webbing moves, or is tiresome and does the wrong thing instead of the right, or other horses get away all sixes and sevens and put this rival out of court. I can depend on my informants as to the falling off in their clientèle of non-professional punters; besides, I remarked the same before the incident was brought to me. Unless my friendly bookmakers and self are mistaken, here is a fact very strongly against the gate, and one calling for serious consideration by shareholders in racing enterprises.

Permit me while complaining to have a go at the card nuisance. Where hawking these in town is allowed, you generally find yourself worried as if about to be broken up by the pack of keen, hungry hounds, otherwise irregular practitioners, eager, poor things, to get a bit if they can. Now, please understand that I would not on any account cut into anyone's chances of making a living unless they did more harm than good. More particularly am I always careful not to move in the direction of depriving poor workers of such opportunities, because of the teaching embodied in the sermon of the "Pitiful Man." Again, long experience of the racing army's camp-followers has taught me what peculiarly interesting folk these card-sellers really are. Many classes have their queer histories. Trades—i.e., handicrafts—do not provide so many, but "last resources," such as card-selling, cab-driving, and, I nearly wrote, soldiering—which shall come in, too, but on a higher platform—are stocked with them.

The card-sellers who somehow get about to the meetings and live their lives at the business are not in my category. Theirs is a regular all-the-year-round occupation. The sort who at certain meetings, Midland and Northern, are such nuisances only take up the traffic in race programmes just when the game is played in their part of the country. There is as much difference between their methods and those of the recognised old-established hawkers who "follow racing" or "go the meetings" as between a hansom cab-driver's attention to customers from the stand in Pall Mall and the body-snatching collar-you-and-chuck-you-in proceedings of the char-à-banc touts at, say, York, where you may be caught, forcibly shot like coals into a vehicle, and furiously driven "coss wee," which is by interpretation course way or station way, before you know where you are.

The regulars have most of them a private connection of patrons who pretty well know where to find their caterers as where their caterers will find them, at each meeting. Some of these, too, have periodical settlements with clients instead of receiving on hand-to-mouth lines. Most have seen far better days. Not a few were really well off but came down. Here and there one knows of card-sellers who reversed the process: went up and stopped up. I used often to meet an old friend who as quite a young man was a Sussex County magistrate. He went wrong, took to card-selling, and wouldn't and couldn't be "helped out of it." You could write books and books *and* books about the craft if you might only be told the outlines of a few of their histories.

A common trait accounts (probably) for their being obliged to go for their bread in so precarious, uncomfortable a trade, which has one attraction—viz., its free life. That is the one which explains why so few of them get on, though they do make good money, taking one week with another. Gambling is in them, and gamble they must, backing horses by day and card playing o' nights. Gambling keeps them short, but I do not think their "playing" of sorts is all bad for them. I won't venture to say whether the one propensity is the outcome of the other, but I can record that these small gamblers are like bigger brethren who go racing—viz., very ready to help each other. The poor, says the proverb, always do help the poor. Poor enough in all conscience are the folk of whom I write—I know nothing about the occasional school who are so rough—but very willing indeed to give a lift to those of their crowd who are most down.

After this explanation I shall not, I hope, be misunderstood as being against the fraternity—only against the irregulars who make all the trouble. It is a sad fact that you can't ding sense into some people. For instance, at some venues a strong body of residents do not favour horse-racing, or, at any rate, are opposed to the holding of such sport in their neighbourhood. Do the other sort interested in the Turf sit down and consider how to make the business in its accessories as tolerable as possible to the opposition? Devil a sit down do they sit for such purpose: the deuce of a consider do they consider. If being so pestered to purchase programmes worries the ordinary business-

going racing man, what sort of an offence must it be to the local who for conscientious or other reasons can't abide the 'Turf? And how trying to ladies! Now there *is* no need for setting the card market in the city. Move it to the course and then you would not be taking out of the sellers' hands any chance of getting a bit. Just as many programmes—no more, no fewer—will be bought on the course as on the streets.

CHAPTER V

MORE RACING REMARKS

I WON'T apologise for reproducing en bloc my remarks re the Lords' Commission on Betting of 1902, because the general situation there discussed is perennial, having to do with human nature. Nobody's standpoint or arguments change in the least. Laws do; but laws are the outcome of opinions, also prejudices, and so the thing to go for is to get these accurate and cleared up respectively. The Duke of Devonshire's was fine representative evidence. All connected with our racing world must agree in feeling grateful to so great an authority for putting the true facts plainly before the public. Unfortunately among the mass of blow-away stuff submitted for sifting by the Lords' Commission on Betting only little sound material seems to come their way. What strikes those in the know is the massive ignorance displayed by part of the Commission itself, equalled only by the cheek with which a witness now and then pulls the noble, grave, and reverend seigneurs' respected, respective, and collective leg. In all probability the outcome of this solemn inquisition into a business of which the promoter does not seem to be able to formulate a definition good

enough for a dictionary will be as marketable a commodity as the frequently-quoted crop from shearing pigs—all cry and little wool. And the tiresome part of the show is that while in the main it means dreadful waste of time, real good might have been done if the matter had been taken up by different and competent hands. I could pick a committee in five minutes who not only understand what is wanted (because they know what *is* done in racing betting) but would only need a free hand to nearly abolish abuses. You can't expect to quite clean the slate, because fresh wrong 'uns continually come along.

One wants to drop the business and let it run its course, hoping that the Commissioners may furnish a majority equal to keeping things straight, but from time to time something crops up that makes one feel obliged to have a say. Really one of the very best witnesses was the advertising touts' spokesman and advocate, who put their case strongly, fairly, and rationally. Those conversant with the working of racing's machinery are fully aware that a select band do take great pains to furnish customers with correct information. Many also understand that the straight tipster who lasts must be trustworthy, because his market is, perhaps, more sensitive than any other in the world, and if he cannot give money's worth, his connection cuts him more sharper. Humbugs and swindlers can command profit out of catchy advertisements which in the quite recent past were permitted to disfigure certain sporting papers. But though the crooked school kept going by "ringing" their names, these were in a way subject to the same laws as their well-meaning contemporaries, who

wanted to do the right thing if only out of instinct for self-preservation. The B.P. is at times easily gullible, but is not so much to blame when done by lying, thieving, tipping advertisers because it "sees" their advertisements in the papers, and, though education progresses, we are only beginning to get over regarding such appearance in print as a sort of guarantee. At the same time, John Bull has sound enough judgment, and no matter what those winner-finders who only send him losers and fill him up with excuses may assert about their successes, he drops them as quickly as if they were physically as well as morally red-hot.

Out of school the wrong 'uns will tell you how soon they are found out by the majority and share the same fate as the well-meaning who happen to lose form. I believe that Old Jack Dickinson, who tried very hard to make punting profitable for his patrons, could at times show some wonderfully startling differences in the amount of subscriptions he received. Business would fall off to the extent of representing loss on expenses as luck went against his selections. Let him have a good week or two, and the money would come rolling in. There, again, can be marked our Public's cuteness. Greater truth was never written than "Nothing succeeds like success." No one plays his game so well as a winner, and without question there come spells when luck goes with you, and (more's the pity) others in which you can't do right. Mr John Bull very smartly tumbles to the situation, and declares for the lucky—i.e., the winning—party. Here is an instance. Ask the starting-price fielders about jockeys' mounts. They will tell

you that general custom comes always for the riders who happen to be in form, and directly these jockeys begin to make unprofitable averages their backers dry up.

In recent evidence a great point was made of advertising tipsters. The crowd who only seek to attract purchasers for their tips can do little harm, because, to put the case in a nutshell, they must be able to do their customers good if they are to make their own business pay. In any case, unless the newspaper proprietary is aware that an advertising prophet is a lying one, there is no particular merit in refusing to print such advertisements, more especially as the paper itself will, if a sporting one, keep a whole string of tipsters of its own. I can recollect when three acquaintances of mine engaged on a neighbouring paper went into the advertising prophet trade. They pleased themselves and made money so long as they put patrons in the way of doing so, but why these latter preferred to pay a pound or two per week when the best of their informant's stuff was on sale with all the rest of the paper's contents, was hard to understand. They "did in" their salaries, drawing from the editorial department to pay the cashier the price of their advertisements.

Where real merit, sadly lacking in certain quarters, does come in for a newspaper proprietor is in severely scrutinising the list of commission agents who can afford to pay fancy prices for their advertisements. Any price in reason they can stand. Pretty much all money put on with them beyond small sums is profit, being legitimately retained when horses named lose and as religiously held when they do come up. Most of

the crew who do this sort of work are easily enough identified, but that has made little difference to their facility for plastering some sporting papers, and almost any ordinary ones, with their cards and terms. They are known to make a regular trade of methods which got Kelly, Burge, and Co. into gaol, but "Non olet," say some proprietors. "The money itself does not stink," and so they deal and wax fat on the proceeds.

Why did the Commissioners mix up gambling and betting as if the words and acts were identical? I suppose reason for so doing exists, and perhaps when we are told why the ordinary newspaper styles everyone not a backer a bookmaker we may be given explanation of the first mystery. Our poor dear Bishop of Hereford appears to believe that the backer gets into the hands of the bookmakers and must be sucked dry. I wonder what his Right Reverence would think of his informants if he took a turn in the ring when one or two of our professional backers were pretty well primed with information, and had their betting boots on. Witnesses keep on saying that wagering has increased. Well, perhaps more little people bet, though of that I have strong doubts; but I do not know one swell—as swells used to be—who lays out any money to speak of. The new rich do, but they want full value for money, and make the Turf one of their businesses. Here are a few items at the service of the Commissioners, more especially those who are in the opposite corner to racing's friends :

Horse-racing has plenty of faults in running

and betting, some of them easily remediable ; but it is far and away the straightest business of all where money comes in.

Licensing bookmakers might do good in stopping certain classes of swindlers, but legalising wagering so as to make betting debts recoverable by law would be better. The licensing system is open to one serious objection in that it tends to create a monopoly and cramp the market.

The greatest good of the greatest number would be most advanced by requiring nearly all betting to be on "R. M. D." lines.

Ordinary welshing is not hard to stop, being merely a question of laying on sufficient police and a few *very* wellpaid expert agents.

To purify running, engage stipendiary stewards.

A general inspector who has been through the mill, and not some friend of "headquarters" who happens to be out of work, should be appointed to look after arrangements and be paid a handsome salary — somebody who would get enough out of his berth to keep him straight.

The people who really could tell the Commissioners where things are wrong and how to put them right, value peace and quietness too much to come forward.

If such authorities as I could name occupied the place of the sitting Commission, only politeness would prevent their telling a fair proportion of the witnesses that they talked nonsense.

Men who go racing every day know all about the abuses and the reason why some of them flourish, which is that the question Quis

custodiet ipsos custodes? is not answered satisfactorily.

In 1904 the South of the Thames Commission Agents' Protection Association (a fourpenny-halfpenny title by telegraph) published a "say" in the matter of criminal crookedness "blamed on to" betting, which say was in effect saying ditto to Mr Justice Bucknill, who had recently directed an inquiry into the allegations made by a convicted person that he had paid out £4000 in betting transactions and not been paid when he won. A person being so robbed is feasible enough, because, as I said, very many newspapers permit opportunities for the swindling operations of alleged bookmakers. But the usual reason for the found-out speculators seeking shelter behind the plea of betting is that such excuse is conventionally passed without examination and needs no substantiation in accounts. Did you ever hear of an alleged winner from a defaulter in the dock or before bankruptcy commissioners being called upon to produce his book? I never did. Besides say that were done, then I fail to see how, if all put forward could be proved true, using other people's money for betting or any speculations need cover a multitude of sins. Still, why should every and any vagabond expect to be more or less whitewashed on account of having (whether he did or not) made off with his swag in this instead of some other direction?

Just now I said that I never heard of a legal defaulter's betting account in detail being placed before His Majesty's judges or magistrates. And that is so. But I know of a solitary instance where one of the gentry who cry, "Please, sir, betting did it" scheduled his employer for a

considerable amount of pilferings, treating them as a debt. His explanation of the "unpleasant position" was getting into the hands of book-makers and, an innocent lamb before these shearers, being shorn of his all, everything, including a lot that wasn't his'n. "Blaming" backing horses with the wicked bookies was a supposed equivalent to making a clean breast of it, with forgiveness to follow. But the actual sufferer, to whose money he helped himself, was the wrong man for the tale, since he happened to have several irons in the fire besides the concern out of which his manager took heavy toll, and one of them a big bookmaking business. Under cross-examination the culprit, who was, of course, unable to recollect details and naturally had lost his books or never kept any, gave the names of the men who fleeced him as the cause of all his sorrow and troubles. Respectable responsible fielders these alleged monsters were, and well known to my friend. The latter, interviewing them, was shown their books with all dealings in which the poor victim was concerned. He had been a remarkably clever, fortunate backer, this strayer from honesty's narrow path, a good winner on the balance, with specially nice turns on each of two weeks recent before the one in which exposure in his employment overtook him. In the final account he had lost well, as they say in the ring, but made no offer to settle with his betting creditors, and if he had dropped ten times as much he wouldn't have been a penny the poorer, because what he lost he did not pay. "If you go before the court and plead losses by betting," said the lenient master, "you go also before the criminal court for embezzling my money. Instead

of being robbed, you have been robbing the bookmakers, as you drew when you won and owed when you lost." This, if you think the matter over, would be about the programme for a fellow who made a habit of helping himself.

When the Jockey Club deals with a suspicious affair they follow lines which make them as a tribunal a cross between justice in an English criminal court and ditto in a French one, where the judge acts as agent provocatif—at once arbiter and advocate. So far as the outside world can tell, the Jockey Club method is comparable to that of the Gallic Judge Advocate in that the accused is confronted with accusation-carrying problems arranged to persuade the accused that the judges know for certain a very great deal of his ways and means, his tricks and his manners. People talk a deal about the Club and what it does or does not do. What the first may be I cannot say. But that a fairly extensive system of espionage is kept up is certain, because the Stewards could not hope to do their duty without mouchards, noses, and the like. The best-informed of the British Public believe in some culprits who come to grief at the Jockey Club's hands being convicted and marked for punishment before they were pulled up. They fell because of general character revealed through constant, diligent investigation when the suspects little dreamed of anybody's being on the look-out.

The system has been denounced, as also the Jockey Club's method of hearing cases in camera. I believe the accused has no opportunity of examining witnesses. Un-English this is styled, and so it is, but the nation's court

of justice and the Jockey Club's are two different articles altogether. In the former, evidence is privileged. But when you come to Jockey Club criminal courts you strike different metal altogether. Libel, libel, libel stares one in the face all the time. Any witness present to answer the simplest aye or nay question in good faith can be brought in as defendant to a costly legal process. How are you to get witnesses if they are to be on a real good hiding to nothing? All information must be between the Court and the informant. Ill might be wrought no doubt because of the Stewards' disabilities. None could more regret a miscarriage of justice than these gentlemen—a word to include noblemen, being as the greater to the less. An awkward system this—but what other is practicable? Besides, the Stewards' honour is beyond question, and they see that a defendant does not suffer through harsh interpretation of testimony. It has been debated whether owners and the rest are ipso facto bound to obey the Stewards or not. Personally, I put all concerned with racing in the same position as members of a club. Being in the club they are bound by the club's tribunal. The new-comer to Turf life has the Rules of Racing. He knows or ought to be aware of the Jockey Club's powers over all, and is practically “signing on” by entering horses. Only one Cæsar stands to be appealed to for good or ill, and that the committee—Cæsar in the concrete. A permanent board of referees is appointed, and if you have no confidence in them, or are unwilling to risk contracting yourself under their jurisdiction, do not talk about remedies, go for

prevention—i.e., do not bring yourself under their government.

When going racing in a fog one can but admire the ingenuity displayed by the industrious division intent on "getting a bit." According to the rules of betting, wagers made through information conveyed by signal are not binding. But, as we all know, the needle-pointed division do not mind much about laws if they see an opening to gather profit; and, moreover, while chancing being found out, take little real risk because proof of bush or other telegraphing is hard to establish. Just as likely, too, the only reason why those laid out are sufferers instead of the other way about is that their own signallers happened to be a little slower than their natural enemies'. Absolutely at Kempton one could on occasion stand in the ring with back to view, which was no view at all, of the field, lost in mist over on the other side of the Park and very nearly read the races by punters' offers to back and some bookmakers' tenders to lay. Where these latter offered liberal terms you might be quite certain that all was very unwell with the children—or competitors—mentioned. Per contra the rush for and on account of animals whose doings might fairly well be assumed to be wropt in mystry, away off in fogland, told you as plainly as possible that the selected goes were making good weather of it.

I much enjoy occasionally getting in a little Paris racing between shutting up on Saturday and taking the shutters down on Monday. This you can manage well enough by the excellent S.E. and C.R.'s route (with sea voyage

all too short, I always find it) from Dover to Calais, and then on by the Northern of France's comfortable railway carriages, and make a bit of overtime to possick about the city, both before and after attending on the course. Last time I began well on arrival, taking stock of the sportsmen with their dogs preparing to start from the Gare du Nord, and shoot, in a general way, anything. We do delight so much in making game of the French sportsman, always represented as counterpart of our Cockney Mr Winkle. Now to take those waiting on a Sunday morning at the Northern of France's Paris terminus, they seemed to me to be most workman-like all round in get-up, personal physique, and bearing, and their dogs. Many of the latter were fine pointers and spaniels, with crossbreeds—mixed setter and pointer, &c.—intelligent enough to look at. The gunners appeared to be going out to the country on their own, as one would guess, with intention to earn what they might get by way of bag, very much in the old-fashioned style affected by Englishmen of humble means and a taste for shooting, who take pleasure in the work for themselves and dogs. Anyone who sized these French chaps up as the sort to be ignorant couldn't be at all clever himself, for obviously they were of the kind able to do all manner of things for themselves, and rather fond than otherwise of being independent in that way.

Here, round about the railway stations at six o'clock on a summer Sunday morning, you mostly find any number of folk coming to meet friends from the country—an attention conducted with great ceremony, good manners, and

rejoicing on either side ; or themselves preparing little outward excursions which are made occasions unmistakable in character to the observer hardened with incessant knocking about, who must envy the light-hearted natives able to derive so much innocent gratification and make such polite fuss out of so little. Dressed like little Sally, and on their best company manners, too—all objects of admiration, without a tinge of ill-natured envy, to those they leave behind them to mind the business, but with a turn to come later. On leaving the railway station when you arrive this way some travellers start for an hotel ; a great many old hands, even if they do put up somewhere later, have the Hammam for first stop, more especially if they have anything to do with the Turf, as that is a recognised rendezvous for both English visitors in the line and settlers, trainers, Jockeys, English, American, and otherwise. It does not cost you so much for the bath and a long sleep—say, five hours over all, making to set you up, as it would for the use of a bedroom and trimmings. This time myself and companion were a little bit too early and a little bit too late, because we got through the shampooing process and plunge before the localised contingent came in, and woke up and walked off while the celebrities were having their turn. However, we did ourselves well, looking at the people and admiring the traffic and the shops, especially the fruit and vegetable shops myself, and my friend the charcuterie, also compatriots whose ideas of doing in Paris as the Parisians do was illustrated chiefly by drinking English beer or English whisky outside the cafés so as to get properly

acclimatised. Note that your Parisian cab-driver, an object of great interest to the fair critic, is a much-maligned jarvey, content with very reasonable fare and invariably civil—at least, I find him so always—so long as you respect traditional *pourboire* observances.

I am not quite so gone as some are in believing that racing things are ordered better in France. As a matter of fact, they ought to be, because the two great establishments at Longchamps and Auteuil can earn big revenues barred to English courses—to say nothing of their being geographically pretty much as Bayswater is to the City, and certainly as handy for access. I am not too much gone on their courses, excellent in their way, but, thanks to artificial watering and cultivation of grass to the exclusion of other herbs (very useful in making turf elastic and wear well), weak in texture, and easily rendered dead and holding. The going, my friends—quite different from our training grounds, and unlike the majority of our tracks—is what upsets form so much and so often—that and a climate enervating till one is used to it. Still, we must remember that when we send our horses to France to race we take conditions as they stand. Claims are made that you find the largest racing concourses over the water. I differ. Aintree when a Grand National is on is the greatest sight in the way of an assemblage of sporting folk to be found anywhere, and makes, probably, the biggest gate. Perhaps more do pay at Longchamps for the Grand Prix de Paris, or at Auteuil when the Steeplechase de Paris is to be run, but the majority are done cheaper there. I suppose that we have the pleasure

of more Irishmen's company in England at Liverpool Spring Meeting than at any other time of the year. According to ancient authority, Liverpool's is the coldest racecourse in England, I do not agree with this myself. As a matter of fact, I would back the South to find one against all-comers or selection.

Accidents, we know, will happen. This we see proved in re the horse and his rider often enough, goodness knows. I believe the leading jockeys hold preference for, when they come a bad spill, being taken right away from the scene of accident to a regularly constituted hospital, instead of putting up in racecourse infirmaries. To this end a bank has been organised supported by a voluntary tax per ride, and this method will, I hope, be given further effect—viz., to form a provident fund, out of which disabled jockeys and those who, having outlived patronage, find the world hard to them, can be cared for. I am not going to preach about that nor dictate to individuals whose business public side begins and ends with them riding professionally. Still, one cannot help being informed more or less as to celebrities' personal affairs, and jockeys *are* celebrities. Each rider should be his own provident fund. Some are prudent in management; some never get a real chance of making themselves safe against bad luck and its consequences. Anyway, those in good case might well contribute to a club without missing their subscription, while the less well-to-do, with necessity for guarding against getting left brought more before their eyes would naturally feel impelled to put by in the mutual insurance office. Were this done by most jockeys "out of their time" and by

apprentices' masters, the craft would soon be getting on towards independence in case of misfortune. Considering the enormous income that passes through the hands of the profession collectively, some of the superfluous jockeys most of us can remember have not made spectacles too not edifying. Bringing about providence of this sort is hard work, as a rule. Still, if a few of the bigger men started, they would soon command a following almost universal so far as their brethren are concerned.

Sporting falls remind me of Bob I'Anson, who used to be rather fond of bad accidents, and had a notable purler at Croydon—I think it was at Croydon. Bob, as a man with great experience of the racing world, was quite aware of the means frequently adopted to restore animation or assist nature by the men of the hour or the moment who always rise to the occasion if a bit is to be got. If they happen to be handy, and somehow they always are absolutely on the spot, if they have to shoot out of the ground in star-trap fashion, the first thing they do is to attend to respiration. Jockeys, some of them, have a fancy for certain valuable scarf-pins which they consider lucky, and wear them in racing. For fear that such articles may interfere with the fallen horseman's breathing, it is customary for "the boys" to at once remove this jewellery and then give the patient air by removing themselves. Bob came down badly. Fortunately a pal in the shape of a fighting man came to his aid and most honestly took care of him and his property, of course, putting the "prop" away safely in the jockey's interests. He *was* going straight, so do not take this as written in jocular vein, as was

the remark about respiration. Mr I'Anson, as he pulled round, felt to see if his pin was gone, didn't find it, and at once pitched into the friendly pug., who rose to the occasion. "Hit straight," he said, after getting a mighty thump in the head, "not round like that. Let out a bit, Mr I'Anson, it will do you good." And so it did. After landing Jack a few more he was quite right. Jack hadn't minded at all, though Bob *could* hit, and when he came quite to was much obliged for the kind attentions.

For some years I have tried to show cause against holding Good Friday meetings, and I must say that I hope the time may be far distant when our Jockey Club will permit racing on that day. No harm was done to anyone while the whole of Passion Week was left blank, or with only the Nottingham fixture in it. I thought I saw the makings of a great deal of harm when Windsor used the Saturday after Good Friday. No harm would be done to racing's estate and clientèle if this particular week were "close," because we have plenty of sport as it is. To treat of a religious subject from a secular point of view is not altogether seemly. In dealing with this one the religious motive must be always prominent, but I will touch that as lightly as possible. As regards abstinence from amusement at this time, that is a matter of conviction and observance according to conscience. The fact stands that happily a very great proportion of our people do still look upon it as a period in which sport should not hold place, and act up to that belief. In so behaving they in no way interfere with those of different views. Now, if only from the poorest motive—viz., to make

friends of those about whom you do not care, but who may be useful to you—it is surely worth while for sport's sake to avoid doing anything to set a very great section against it. Again, what I take to be the great characteristic of a sportsman is a desire to avoid giving annoyance to others while taking pleasure yourself. Surely, to put aside all question of religion, and simply recognise that a great many will be pleased if sport is not brought prominently before them on Good Friday and are hurt when this is done, then there is adequate reason for letting them have their own way. The same may be said for Saturday in certain cases. Give and take is a sportsmanlike motto. Giving, and giving cheerfully, Good Friday—that is to say, counting it out of the working calendar—means very little, and is worth very much; and, as a matter of business, giving is as nearly as possible absolutely necessary, because if we do not give in considering other's feelings, we are likely to make opponents of them.

Let me tell you a little story about a friend of mine, a very plucky little chap, who left us not long ago. He was a sportsman who would back his opinion, and was not to be stalled off. On the day the poor fellow died, the doctor, after seeing him and giving the patient hopes of recovery, flattered the invalid's brother with similiar good reports. The brother came back to the sufferer with the pleasing report that after all things were not so bad and a cure was possible. "He's only guessing, and I *know*," said the little man. "Now, look here, old chap, the doctor isn't out of the house yet. You look sharp and go and bet him two hundred to six if

he'll take it, that I don't see to-morrow out. It's a pinch, and you may just as well get his six quid." Alas! the layer knew most, and it *was* a pinch. There was no to-morrow on earth for the man who knew and was not guessing.

CHAPTER VI

HORSES

No more favourite subject than our National Decadence on most comprehensive scale is ever handled by a certain class of writers, who do so with gusto warranting belief in this being a theme so sympathetic as to make them quite rejoice in believing in the truth of all the nasty things they say. With them our "going to pot" being an established article of faith wholesale, they treat us to subdivisional heartrending retail detail, articulating, as one may say, the decomposing body. While all is so vile, we are fortunate in being permitted degrees of degradation, so that if, at any rate, our best are bad, some *are* less worse than others. In the sporting department of the great crying and calling down industry we hear most disparagement, I think, against our horses, with for lowest depths plumbed steeplechasers as a class, and somewhere in those unfortunates' remotest foundations the plating variety of the species. You cannot convert the ruthless crew, but you can now and then pull them up a bit. For example, here is a puzzle for these authorities who, without any trustworthy data, "cast" our latest productions for not being up to the imaginary

standard of the goods bestridden by Captain Becher, Jem Mason, Osbaldistone, Horatio Ross, and Co. Our despised racers, mere racehorses, you know, are not at all the same thing as the grand old-fashioned hunter-chaser (when a champion it could scarcely have done better than win a selling plate, as some of ours go—at least, so I believe) who never went so fast nor so far at any pace to be called a pace, nor jumped so big or so wide or so often as our poor thoroughbreds, and was coarser and altogether less classy than such as we see nowadays. Let that be; what we want the ancient school's praisers—who many of them never saw one of the old 'uns, have never learned to ride, and if they did haven't been over any sort of jump—to tell us is how such bad horses manage to get the Grand National course, carrying the weights they do, in such excellent times. In Moifaa's year the winner galloped about 4 miles and 856 yards and took thirty jumps, in 9 min. 58 3-5 sec.

Very good that is and convincing to reasonable persons, but let me, as a horse-lover who hates to find him or her belittled, put in a defence for the much besmirched plater mentioned just now. Is any word too bitter for this hardworker, a parish prad deservedly doomed, one would guess, according to the commination service read at him in season and out, to lead a dog's life till he goes to the dogs in a knacker's cart? No earthly good is he allowed to be except as an instrument of gaming while he lives, too tough for the hounds, unless much boiled down, when divided up in his death. Is he not a very byeword and a reproach to

miscalled civilisation, an unmentionably poor relation of a blue-blooded race that has seen better days? I am apt to get a bit warm on matters like de-haut-en-bas criticism such as this, more particularly from unqualified preachers, the most peremptory of all. I hate to hear any living creature associated in man's life treated with contumely, and I do not mind telling you that I would like to pet up any horse there is from Cup class to broken-down old cabber not constitutionally vicious, and at that I should expect to find the latter badly sinned against by cruel handling before it took to ill-temper. A wonderfully good—as we speak of children—animal is the horse, and I consider it is downright blackguardly to despise him for misfortunes far from being his individual fault. Now, what I wanted to say when I ran off in defence of a faithful old friend is this: The hard-hearted, who won't admit proper excellence in our best, select the selling 'chaser as the dregs and lees of the lot, partly because of their infirmities in eye, wind, and limb. Take the *Calendars*, and look over the list of aged warriors who for months on end almost are racing and racing and racing, frequently hustled along all the while they are going. You can't expect the best to stand such an amount of work and not show its effects; but they *do the work*, these hard put-upon slaves. Are we not justified in turning round and saying, "Yes; these are our failures, who come down to hard labour, or never rose above it. No matter how you class them, there they are, and that is what they do, and are able to go on doing. Is theirs a bad show, and if it is not, where are you

with all your superfine criticism?" But they are not sound many of them, does one tell me. They are sound enough to stand a tremendous dose of hard, quick 'chasing and hurdling, and if it comes to that, what piece of machinery is there warranted to steer clear of wear and tear? I should like to let the vet. go over the two-legged critics who have no mercy for other animals, and see how these judges would like to be written at and down because the examination precluded a warranty.

To those who overdo the crying up of old times at the expense of the new, it should be demonstrated, and it is demonstrable, that sprinters have their uses as well as so-called stayers, and that a good case can be made in favour of the fast ones as specimens in physique, constitution, and value for breeding. This is a text on which I often write and read and think a lot for myself like Sergeant Topping, not, as a rule, finding many to agree with my Notions. Nor am I likely to do so, because I never am able to come across an opponent or supporter who will put up a satisfactory definition of a stayer. That seems easy at first, but generally I knock my own models down as soon as I squeeze them into form. Of course I know well enough what is meant; but until someone will give me an explanation of the flat-racing-steeplechasing puzzle, I shall fail to find satisfaction. Here we are, most of us, full up to the top with stories about grand old-fashioned stayers and useless sprinters, informed liberally too, why France can beat England—which, I may mention, she only does at rare intervals, where play is fair. And nobody can

tell you why the contemptible flat-race creature—no good at flapping with 5 st. 7 lbs. to carry on a five-furlong course—shall go and do a longer steeplechase journey than there is for any flat-race in England, carry 11 st. up to 12 st. or more, jump goodness knows how many times in the National, and make average time per mile not appreciably below cup horses'. Surely that is staying, is it not? The writer in question, too, noted the fact that for National Hunt work we do best with recruits from Jockey Club ranks who are not good at long flat-races. As a rule, if you want to make a hurdle-racer to go two miles you will get on better with a moderate six-furlong horse than one who could win races at a mile.

The point as to physique and constitution, also success at the stud, is a very excellent one, which has not been sufficiently exploited—one would very much like to have it well thrashed out by an old timer conversant with past path-running history, to be followed by a student of the thoroughbred in his developments. All manner of interesting data could be brought into consideration, and striking theories built out of them, with probably almost certain justification. I suggest such a topic being taken up by an oldster, a follower, as the word is, of professional running, because in the days of which I speak the business was, so to speak, in a small compass. You might well keep within your ken pretty nearly all the leading peds., sprinters, and distance runners, holding, perhaps, personal knowledge of if not acquaintance with the celebrities. So far as my recollection of both sorts, also amateur, goes,

I have strong impression that if men were to be put into shows like horses there would not have been many among the long-journey division who could take prizes while the flower of the sprinters were competing.

This is not for a moment to say that the distance brigade did not furnish fine specimens enough for their size, but as a rule they did not run big, and were nothing like so powerful customers for all-round work as some of the flyers. It seems a kind of axiom that to go a long journey you need very little top hamper; per contra, most of us can remember plenty of sprinters very big in the chest and powerful in the shoulders, remarkably "fine figures," who seemed almost to get their pace by dint of sheer strength above the waist. I do pray that I may not give offence in declaring admiration for one class over another as a model. If anyone does take umbrage, let me clear myself from his wrath by professing perfect faith in handsome is as handsome does, and for long work want of size is most frequently an advantage with horses. What the little lean kind will do, carrying disproportionately heavy weights for extended periods, is wonderful, almost inexplicably so; and we must bear in mind that on the path the little men have not only done in notable instances wonderful things for their size, but beaten the big 'uns too. It is a long while since I was able to take much professional pedestrian sport, but in the days when I never missed a chance of assisting at a big race I do not recollect many "great" stayers. Deerfoot was a big 'un, certainly, but he was an exception. The brilliant coterie in

which were W. Lang, the Mills brothers, Jock White of Gateshead, and White of Norwich, with plenty more, were all of moderate to small height and bulk, while some of the Sheffield Handicappers were remarkable for frame and development you would associate with capability for heavy work of almost any sort. In these days of physical development and mournful deplorings of the nation's falling off in size, strength, and stamina, what a boon it would, perhaps, be if we might sort out the offspring of the stayers and the sprinters and frame rules for improving the breed on them!

In a great deal of the scientific preachments on horses and blood, nearly all plausible enough and many of them carried through on sound logical lines, I take little stock. I may be prejudiced, but a great deal of this business appears to be engineered like the French detective and mystery stories, whose authors begin at the end with a fact accomplished, or plant one in the middle of the book, and then work up all their conditions and incidents to dovetail in with what, in theoretical scientific treatment of the Turf, would be the conclusion. Some day, perhaps, man will take the useful noble animal's part, and instead of harping persistently (not musically) on its defects, first set him- (or her-) self to work to bring the horses' good material and qualities into relief and put the disabilities as much out of sight as possible. We all do it—I mean to say we do not do—what I was just proposing. What we *do* do is to be led away, forgetting that the fine art of criticism is not finally satisfied by finding all the fault you can. I never should make a



good critic of horses, like hard-hearted habitués who count them as only so much or so little money's worth, because I am so fond of the lot of them, and it often makes my teeth grate to hear experts, not perhaps better informed, denouncing an animal as a brute. "What a brute!" they say, because his shape displeases them. You know all the time that, in all probability, these critics, if they had the same creature they call a skin or hair trunk, or something of that sort not at all pretty, or a horse the exact counterpart of the animal being verbally blackguarded, and had it brought up well groomed and saddled to their own door, their estimate would be that it was a very beautiful horse indeed, which their friends must naturally admire, or stand confessedly ignorant. I never yet saw a horse I could not like. Some are not so good as others, that is all; unless they are savages, and that is more often their attendants' fault than their own.

No one unfamiliar with the ordinary boy can believe what devils they are to the horses they "do." As to mere looks, I grant that, as regards dressiness in horseflesh, the way a thoroughbred occasionally appears to go back and lose quality when put to 'chasing is often wonderful. Of course he carries more coat, and will not have the bloom on which some stables pride themselves. That you can quite understand. What is difficult to realise is the style in which the frame seems to grow and bone generally get heavier after a course of 'chasing, which for some of the unlucky ones seems to be a sort of refuge for the destitute. And it is through these last that we might, as I say, make a

considerable boast of our thoroughbred's excellence. When one or another is railing at the breed he might be asked whether it can be so very bad if its worst examples, to judge by results, are capable of standing the service the selling plate 'chaser does, not only in one season, but maybe for several. What sort of seasons are they, too, for the chap who, when he wins, will very likely be of no benefit to the fund, because no one thinks it worth while to offer more than fifty pounds for him? Mostly when he wins he gets a good punching; if he loses when he is wanted to win he is punched because he cannot win; and when he loses when he is not wanted to win he is also punched to make believe. Here we have the dregs of servants long employed expected to be able to gallop from two miles and upwards and jump as well. They do so, and keep on at it. Being admittedly very low down, the unfortunate's useful qualities must make the higher grades of better account than some would have us believe.

The good owner of a good veteran horse often sets out to make the superannuated one just the reverse of a dull boy, if having all play and no work makes the right treatment for such a case. Sometimes I greatly wonder whether this sort of retirement on a pension from all sorts of duty is altogether good for any animal accustomed to seeing life. My almost invariable rule is to judge animals by myself—or, at any rate, by the average citizen. There is a wonderful lot of human nature in all creatures associated on familiar terms with man, and I am quite sure that, so far as many phases go, you cannot be wrong when studying their welfare if you

consider their fortunes and tastes through your own eyes. More particularly is this the case with old creatures of long service, because they have become confirmed in certain ways of living, excitement, and diversion.

Holding such views, I have often felt inclined to look upon animal pensioners in their common treatment by well-meaning masters and mistresses as sensible folk did on the members of *the* profession for whose behoof that extremely architectural row of cottages (the Dramatic College, I believe it was called) was built which now finds itself next door to a Mohammedan mosque in the county of Surrey—in short, at Maybury, just the London side of Woking. A more unnatural thing than to expect the average actor or actress, old enough to willingly retire, to take kindly to practising for another sort of interment by being buried alive anywhere out of reach of the footlights, the limelight, and the gaslight of a town, could scarcely be imagined. And I am by no means sure that turning out animals educated as race-horses are, is much more sensible or kinder. As a matter of fact, no one who has worked hard *is* fit to retire from business unless a hobby is in waiting to be taken up after middle age has been passed. And, going on my theory of similarity in tastes between humans and equines, I guess that uninterrupted idleness is not good for the latter after being used to duty and discipline.

Of course your pensioner may have been rendered by damages unfit for anything but pottering about a paddock, but as a rule horses are much happier for a little light occupation, which provides them with change of scene,

fresh company, and lends the zest to that "own time" which comes after having done a little work. Here I might mention a sort of practical joke played on me by the owner of that long-headed old Colonial warrior The Grafter. The genial proprietor, some three or four years ago, presented me with one of his (The Grafter's, please understand) hoofs mounted in silver for a snuff-box. I believe the mounting included a golden horse-shoe with diamond-studded nails for luck. But that is a detail. What I do know is that while I was wondering how a non-snuffer was to turn this costly reservoir and memento to account, I was informed that I might have to wait a little while for it, because "he" had not done with it yet, which seemed to indicate my having come into no more than a reversion of the ornament. Being moved by natural curiosity to inquire who might be the "he" at present in possession, I found the noble animal himself was unwilling to part with it because losing any one of his four feet might spoil the set, and for the present all the lot were coming in handy while he amused himself doing odd jobs between his Sussex residence and the railway station, and so forth—which, I say, although silver mountings, golden horse-shoes, and diamond-headed nails are very nice to have, long may he continue in his light occupation. I am quite sure the old gentleman is a lot better off as he is with a man to look after him and "do" him, company of other sorts about the stables, and his little excursions out and home, than he would be in the richest pastured paddock to be found in the most favoured situation, and nothing to amuse himself with but eating, drinking, and sleeping, or

perhaps a little conversation with a neighbour or two.

These oldsters are not the only horses who could do with more entertainment, also practice in the world. With all submission to superior knowledge, I have frequently ventured to put before friends in the training business the suggestion that our race-horses do not get sufficient variety of route and scene, and are liable to suffer accordingly. Often when from training quarters radiate all manner of ways on which horses could take the air, they have to go out by the same route to do much the same thing at the same time in the same place, till they get as sick and tired of their lives as convicts. Provided it can be done safely as regards the gees being given strong work enough so that they shall not be above themselves while ridden about the roads, and with immunity from outside interference, it would pay very well to take the strings out for a walk now and then, to see the land. There is nothing original, perhaps, in saying that, like man, the horse is an animal—I merely offer the remark for what it is worth ; also that in their minds both these animals are very similar—a point about which no one who has noticed how deuced nasty both sorts *can* be would ever have doubt.

If I recollect right, old Tom Olliver used to hold forth strongly in favour of introducing horses to “life” other than what they will be accustomed to on the gallops themselves as a necessary part of preparation to fit them for their business. This seemed to me very sound doctrine, as also that if you take one consideration with another, you are justified in accepting

risks from accident in carrying out this part of their education, counting as make-weight the probable reduction of loss owing to having neglected to open their eyes to the ways of the world. The more you can make horses that will have to be taken through the public streets or roads familiar with the objects they will come across, the better. I do not go the length of recommending that if a two-year-old is expected to run at a meeting where a band will be playing in the vicinity of the paddock that course trainers should therefore procure the services of local performers on all manner of musical instruments to come into "the yard" or go on to the gallops and give the novices a tune; but, seriously, we must, many of us, have noticed what a trial to the nerves of the green young things racecourse band-playing frequently is. Very often, indeed, these and older horses are so much upset that they go off their form, which they would not do if they knew what a band was and all about it. Considering how highly strung thoroughbreds are, and how ignorant they are kept of the great world outside the narrow sphere of their own homes, it is wonderful that more disappointments are not caused through their being introduced to so many startling experiences when they make their *début* in public. Look at the case of youngsters bred on a stud farm, and practically trained where they are bred, not even being given an outing through being taken up for sale. They live an artificial life without any occasion to develop instinct of looking after themselves; the paddocks they range are even in footing, their fences are guarded for them with whited boards, so they scarcely have to look out to be careful in

their frolics, and as they grow older all responsibility is similarly taken from them. Perhaps they may do a little road work going to and from the gallops when they are drafted into the stables for training; but this is not always so. All is quiet and well regulated, with themselves and their companions' welfare and safety making the centre round which their world revolves. Then, all of a sudden, they must go to the railway station, find out what being boxed means, undergo the distractions of a railway journey, and walk through the crowded streets of a busy town, preparatory to facing the din and clamour of a race-course.

Truly wonderful is the small proportion of actual accidents arising from this condition of things, but I guess that the disappointments incurred through reports of form consequent on nervous agitation must be larger than many of us would suppose—disappointments which might have been avoided if the animals had known a little more before they started. As to the ordinary routine of exercise, surely shifting the routes about as much as possible in going to and from the heaths or downs must make welcome breaks in a monotony that is wearisome. It is the old story of buttons making existence too irksome. At some quarters the horses do the same round of walking, circling over the same piece of ground every time they come out of the stable before making to the stretches of turf up and down which they are doomed to go week in, week out.

I believe and trust I shall not be misunderstood to preach hard-heartedness to "our dumb friends" when I mention the risk well-meaning

folk run of being unjust to humans in seeking to make existence tolerable to dumb animals, a subject well worthy of serious consideration.

I daresay many readers will remember my referring once or twice to an old friend, an aged countryman, who lives hard by Plumpton race-course—a genial, plucky ancient, a hard-worker, and a capital sportsman—who has excited my admiration for years. May I be permitted to quote myself from a back number, so as to bring the individual back to your memory? I called him a Rosy Apple-Faced little man, with a delightful frock all over gaugings, quiltings, and smockings, and a pair of nimble little legs in leather gaiters warranted by wear to stand any weather. At the time I offered to back the old gentleman, who was about eighty then, to make straight up the grass from the foot to the crown of Ditchling Beacon Hill—one of if not quite the highest of the South Downs—and come straight down, against most young athletes. Last Sunday I called to see how he was getting on. He had been doing badly, for, two years or so ago, the earth at the side of a bit of a gully where he was busy gave way with him, and he wrenched the muscles of a leg most dreadfully, so that he was obliged to lie in one position for months, and thereafter went very unsound indeed. Still, he stuck to work.

Please follow me in this humble history. I am writing with a purpose, and in the real interests of many a poor man (also many a poor beast). If he could not walk he hobbled at sorry pace. Still he moved, after all he moved, and I believe that the game little bit of stuff

would have crawled rather than confess himself beaten. By dint of sheer pluck he kept about and did his best towards earning a living; and, strange as it may seem, he has, while counting up to eighty-four—a very patriarchal age—gradually mended till he can now do his work regularly again. I mentioned my calling on him last Sunday. I did, and took with me a tolerably good athlete, to whom I offered in the old 'un's presence to back the latter in a race up Plumpton Bostel and back, start at the foot, go to the crown, and return, against him, the youngster. Says the little chap: "You mustn't do that now; but I could have beaten him easy enough not so long ago, and," he added, "this leg is getting so nearly all right that I don't say I couldn't do so again if it keeps improving for the next three or four years." He was eighty-four at the moment of speaking, and believing what he said about racing uphill in four years time! You wouldn't like to pole-axe or lethal-chamber such a specimen.

I commend this experience to the notice of the school who are in such a hurry to prosecute horse owners and the like for working animals "unfit," who often, I am sure, procure the execution of poor horses who, if asked, and they might speak, would tell you that they rubbed along pretty comfortably on the whole, though there were trying days, such as most of us are bound to put up with. Change positions between my good, honest, hard-working friend who makes me a bit ashamed of myself sometimes if I get a grumbling discontented fit on me and a horse really not in half so bad case as he was. Would the horse have been suffered

to live out the week in which his master was summoned by the society for preventing this or the association for encouraging that? A week!—not till the end of the day of hearing the inevitable prosecution. It seems to me kindest to permit an animal to live so long as it can eat well and carries a fair amount of flesh, even if it is, like poor humanity, wrong somewhere structurally, physically, or through chronic complaint. I do not say work anything to whom action must bring keen suffering because of sores, sprains, or such-like. But, to bring the argumentum home ad hominem, suppose that every man with a club foot, a stiff knee, a bad hip, or something in that line, were ordered to be knocked on the head instead of of being left to do the best he can for himself, the outcry might make the *too* earnest humanitarian school think a little more of the beasts who are only defective, not altogether incompetent. I will tell you the Association I *would* like to subscribe to, and that is a benevolent company for the supply of trace horses, on most moderate terms, to help the heavily-laden up hills. To forward its aims I would not mind stretching the law so as to invest the horsily informed policeman or even the S.P.C.A. man with power to make use of such aid compulsory. At a very few pence a time a good gee could pay well, and, moreover, those who benefited by its services would be money in pocket, because ten minutes of excessive strain in the end takes more out of man or horse than a day's steady labour on what I may call the flat. I saw the other day, and it *was* a nasty sight, a pair, biggish but not in over good condition, stuck on Richmond

Hill with a dray that looked as if it could have done, up that slope, with a pair of elephants. The poor chaps' man was doing his careful best to lead them on by quarterings, and a few of the bystanders—not so many as might—came and lent a shoulder; but it was a cruel job. The irony of it was that a livery stables stood precisely at that point. I don't mean that a carriage horse is fit to help drag such weights up such hills, but it seemed exactly the place, considering its situation, where a good, tough, leisurely, jobbing hauler ought to be kept against he was required, just as an extra horse is always provided at certain steep pitches on omnibus routes.

CHAPTER VII

SOME RACING PORTRAITS

WE are a wonderful people, more particularly the irrepressible gentlemen who combine stoutness of lung-power with speed in arithmetic, and utilise the blend in laying odds in the ring. Nobody who heard and took part will forget, at Ascot in 1903, a loyal demonstration which, for volume of harmony to the square bookmaker, was surprising, and calculated to knock foreigners, dwellers under other monarchs. It was, I say, calculated to knock them all sideways, "looking three roads for Sunday," and rendered not a few of us half afraid that what was kindly meant, given off in the heat of excitement, with everybody glad to make occasion for vocal appreciation, might be taken as "liberties." Mind, in this case, something like the old-fashioned law of libel, as interpreted under a popular error, applied, for the greater the liberty in saying or singing that Somebody with a capital S. was a jolly good fellow, the greater the truth.

His Majesty, whose presence at Ascot with Her Majesty was most gratifying to the company generally, and more particularly to regular racing folk, who very properly regard him as King of Sportsmen and Protector of the Turf, had won

the Prince of Wales's Stakes with Mead, whose method of taking it partook of the nature of a Royal procession. A long way from home Herbert Jones established a commanding lead in the purple, gold braid, scarlet sleeves, black cap. His first going well to the front was the signal to start applause. All up the line the cheering ran, culminating in a mighty roar at the finish. If you wanted to be in proper dignified form and sought change from hurrahing, clearly "God Save the King" was the song to be sung in the land at the moment—who will forget "God Bless the Prince of Wales" as rendered in chorus thousands strong when the Prince won his first Derby?—but somebody started a much less stately air, and led off with "For he's a jolly good fellow." Thereby the bold but happily-inspired fogleman struck a highly sympathetic note, as was evidenced by the spontaneity of the "so-say-all-of-us" tuneful agreement. In an ordinary country you might almost expect this way of testifying extreme respect and good regard for your monarch to lead to towers and dungeons, also headsmen and wooden pillows as a cure for *lèse-majesté*, or at any rate preventing it from occurring again. But we were all, from the highest to the most lowly, taken into the cloud of goodfellowship, with no disrespect, but quite otherwise, intended, and if ever words were justified, the "jolly" and the "good" were here.

A long lecture might be written round Mr Richard Dunn (who died in 1905), and the alteration in business since he and a school who went on similar lines to his flourished only a few years ago. We are always told nowadays of wagerings having grown out of all conscience.

Those who preach sermons to that effect base arguments against this form of speculation on their ipse dixit. Where do they get their data from? I know a good bit about the game, having had long experience and facilities for gathering information, and I am quite certain as to the fallacy of the statement. Mr Dunn was almost the sole representative left in practice of a strong body of ready-money fielders who at their best could, to use an apposite phrase, hardly take money fast enough at important meetings. Of late he would in an ordinary way make little over one-hundred-pound books. His and their trade was carried out on the soundest lines. They went to lay everything in a race if possible, and looked for a profit on the turnover rather than by standing against a few well-backed horses. What have we seen happen to the industry? Why, this quite legitimate, prudent form of holding the bank against all comers dwindle to very small proportions. As to the other branch, where big men oppose their knowledge and judgment to well-informed backers, fine students of form, and commanding points calculated to be precious, the deal between layer and punter is a very near thing, despite the tendency to cramp prices. People talk about the ring as of immense strength. How many bookmakers are there now of standing, take them all told? Not many. When you count up to a score, or even before that, you begin to find difficulty in adding to the numbers. What is more, you are unable to find the new blood, later comers who are training on. If you wrote down the ages of the prominent members of the ring, you would be surprised to find what a high average you

reached. Fifty would scarcely be much over the mean, reckoning in one or two exceptions younger but of long practice.

Dick Dunn's was a career remarkable for industry and perseverance. He was a quick, ready operator, versed in all branches of wagering and methods. From the time when he made a name, he was unwearied in advertisement of all sorts, a system which paid while the field to be exploited was commensurably fertile. But, latterly, with all his energy and hard work, the trade was not there to be done, and as a bookmaker he had seen his day go by. Always before the public, he yet found the clientèle more and more difficult. Poor Dick's name will long be associated with never-ceasing labour in charity. No work was too hard for him in raising funds for the necessities of the Turf, and in private life he was generous to a fault. In this connection I should point out what few may realise—viz., the personal cost attaching to organising subscriptions. At first sight there seems to be no call for the collector to incur liability through begging for others from others. Let anyone try to do as Mr Dunn did. Almost everyone who collects will sooner or later find a return asked for. Though Mr Dunn, for instance, would be out of pocket on his own account in getting together funds for a deserving object, the drain would not stop there. Those who gave through his agency would shortly be in his position, anxious to help someone, and then came in the quid pro quo argument—viz., I gave your man so much, now put your name down on my list.

Two great bookmakers I associate with Brighton—Leviathan Davis and Mr Richard

Henry Fry. Racing folk are proverbially generous, but as a giver in charity of what he made in the bookmaking business, surely Mr Fry stood alone. In every town where racing was carried on he had pensioners who depended on his periodical visits for a benefit, these mostly people who really had no more call on him than that with which frequently asking and having appears to invest the taker. So far as those with whom he had been concerned in business, or whom family or other ties brought closer, Mr Fry not only was unable to say "No," but had no wish other than to be made use of if in the process he might be of real service.

In all the many years during which we were acquainted I never knew him fail to relieve necessity or say a really harsh word of anyone (save once, and then he stopped a long way short of doing his subject anything like justice).

In December 1902, at Windsor I backed with him the last winner of the last race of the meeting in the last book he made. He did not look exactly well, but was on the rails at work with his accustomed vigour and readiness, and was, as usual, busy with a hand at solo as soon as a party was made up in the special train for Waterloo. On Monday came news that this very remarkable man had died in the early morning, aged as we count the span of of life, sixty-six, but, if you take hours of active service to furnish the integer for calculation, pretty nearly three times as old as the average veteran whose limit is reached at three-score years and ten. In a way—but with a very great difference—R. H. Fry, the indefatigable, had

a prototype in the person of Davis, who retired from the Turf many years before he died, and, after being an incurable invalid sedulously nursed by a devoted wife, ended by leaving all his property—some £70,000—to the town of Brighton. The will was disputed, as justifying suspicion that the testator was not in his right mind. One who altogether slurs away such obligations as did Leviathan Davis (early in life he worked as a carpenter at Brighton when the Cubitts were building in Sussex Square) would, we must hope, be of unsound mind. Here the question was not fought out, because the Brighton Corporation agreed to give the widow a sufficient annuity, a bargain shortly terminated, because Mrs Davis, who married again when free from her tedious, painful servitude, died ere she had been on the Corporation's books long as an annuitant.

Old hands who had to do with Davis always made a great point of his going through much strenuous, harassing, exciting work, betting very heavily, without taking stimulant, and that Leviathan's name seldom cropped up in conversation without someone's citing his liking for grapes as a sort of substitute for alcohol and the long prices he would pay for them in the times when the art of production was not understood as it is now, and a guinea a pound was by no means an out-of-the-way charge for good goods purveyed out of the season. In that regard—viz., dislike for or indifference to the comfort and delectation to be derived from intoxicants; a necessary for many men living at high pressure—the two great fielders were after a fashion on all fours. Whether the resem-

blance in manner of other diet carried itself farther I cannot say, because of Davis I knew next to nothing personally. But Mr Fry furnished a most wonderful example of endurance and thriving apparently on quite unique lines. In a period of, say, a score years, I never met a more generous host nor a smaller partaker of good things of the table. Not only did Mr Fry cut out "drink" and smoking from his programme—but he never seemed to want to eat. As a rule the bookmaker who plies his trade at the meetings finds the occupation healthy, probably because he works in the open air and on account of the physical exertion entailed by shouting the odds. Hard labour that is, and calculated to engender appetite. In one way and another Mr Fry would be engaged for long nights as well as hard days, and yet kept going in good health on what, the twenty-four hours through, would not in the aggregate prove better than a scanty meal for the ordinary citizen.

Outside the ring Mr Fry had many interests calling for close application. To these he did such justice as could only be rendered by one fit personally and with clear brain unhandicapped by physical distress. An ardent Conservative, he laboured always unceasingly, and unsparingly of his time and ability. Not many in Parliament could carry an audience with them more artistically and convincingly, and he did great things as a campaigner, more especially in his native county, Devonshire, where his influence as a Lord Bountiful was great indeed. The poor of some districts in North Devon found him always wishful to let them share in his prosperity. I

believe that at Christmas alone he usually put at the disposal of the local clergy some three hundred pounds' worth of blankets and material for warm clothing.

Just now I was talking of a kind of similarity between the late Mr Fry and the late Davis, a leviathan fielder of an earlier period. A singular topographical coincidence comes in here. When Davis died he left, as I mentioned, his wealth to the Brighton Corporation. Out of his bequest they bought a large parcel of land formerly held by a yeoman squire, William Stanford, of Preston, and shaped it into a very splendid public park. Next to Preston is Patcham, unless Withdean be also a parish, of which I am not certain, but anyway that does not matter, because his kinsman, of whom I am about to speak, was interested in Withdean as well as Patcham. This gentleman, who had been long settled on the land hard by Preston, was a near relation, and to him Mr Fry was a frequent visitor, considering his multifarious engagements. Fry is a Quaker name (ever associated with philanthropy, from the days of the Elizabeth Fry who used to live at Plashet.) Just about this little corner of Sussex are many Frys, "Friends" or of Quaker extraction. At Brighton the land for the Jewish burial-ground was given by Thomas Kemp, a Quaker, on whose property at Black Rock, now known as Kemp Town, Davis worked before he took to bookmaking.

With his gifts, instinct to gauge individual character, his marvellous memory for data, also faces, almost impregnable command of temper, suave, persuasive address, untirable industry, and undaunted perseverance, Mr Fry would have

made his mark in any trade or profession. Leaving his early occupation of linen-draper was due to his ability to see ahead. Outside his trade he was never so happy as in doing good turns. In it he had to cope with a very shrewd constituency, both sides trying to win if possible. At one time he was very wealthy. A great portion of the store he accumulated went owing to battling with the queer school who were in the American jockeys' confidence, and their followers. In effect, he was standing to lose where he could not win, because the money was on one side only. How much of the ring's floating capital was taken away at this period can scarcely be guessed, but in the aggregate the sum was very great indeed.

In my time there has been no parallel to Mr W. J. Innes, whose death in 1903 was regretted by thousands of sportsmen all the world over. He stood by himself for devotion to all-round sport, staunchness as a follower and practiser of various pastimes. An unselfish promoter, not sparing expense to bring out promising men and forward them, he did fine work in getting up competitions, chronicling doings with minute attention to detail, and personally noting and recording data. No one excelled him in any of these vocations, traits, and occupations. In one way and another the *Referee's* good friend did half a dozen ordinary men's work, year in year out, perhaps half of his labours being dedicated to charity and a moiety of the remainder expended on self-imposed eleemosynary duties of great service to his associates and positively a delight to himself, for he never could be happy except while on the move or helping somebody.

An almost fabulous amount collected by his agency to relieve distressed individuals or for established charities passed through his hands, and he was so able a "solicitor" that when mishap overtook anyone connected with sport and idea of assistance was mooted, the business was taken to Mr Innes quite as a matter of course. He was trustee for charitable funds innumerable, and mostly took the part of active administrator of the capital and personal almoner. Only an extremely punctual, systematic business hand might possibly keep in trim such a number and variety of offices as he managed to cope with, and this, mind you, while being, what for most of us would be, overloaded with his own affairs. Probably he was our oldest sporting Pressman, as regards length of service, and an invaluable agent for the paper he represented in many later years—the *News of the World*—because for a long while he was, if not the motive power, at any rate intimately concerned in and informed regarding the making of much history. If professional boat-racing could have been kept going as a reputable industry worth encouragement, Mr Innes would have effected such desirable consummation. Not hundreds but thousands of pounds capital he brought into that sport, taking up the chief position as a patron and promoter when, after Kelley and Renforth's best period, the game began to decline. He received Hanlan here and financed him in his great match with the Australian, Trickett, on terms that virtually meant making the Canadian a present of nearly all. Also he stood friend to any number of our own home-made professors in various lines on the road and path as well as in and on the water.

Most worth trusting went through his hands, and he never really despaired of rebuilding up professional boat-racing till two of the kidney, both indebted to him for innumerable kindnesses, cut up a match he made to give them a chance of earning money on the straight.

Some twenty years ago Mr Innes was one of the heaviest backers on the Turf, a successful one, too; and a big bettor also, when large sums were habitually wagered on aquatic contests. No pains were spared by him to clock pro.'s, also the 'Varsity amateurs, and, thanks to an almost perfect system of employing a staff on the banks, scullers' and the crews' work was taken so as to make coaches' dodges to avoid the value of trials being caught of no avail. As sporting editor and a copious contributor to the *News of the World*, gathering data for himself, and more particularly doing his own timing, Mr Innes set himself as much as one ordinary journalist might manage. Yet he was practically managing director or committeeman in charge of the Albert Club, with its large members' roll, framed any number of billiard handicaps—and played in them, generally with success—sat as arbitrator in betting disputes, and assisted innumerable athletic clubs as director of their sports, or active member on their boards. Only his great pluck kept him going towards the last. Those who best knew Mr Innes held him in the most esteem, but his reputation for integrity and judgment of sporting matters was world-wide.

In Mr Charles Greenwood, whose death took place in August 1903, the turf lost one of its most able authorities (of any generation or age) on all matters within its scope; a very widely

assorted constituency, from the highest in the land to quite humble followers of sport, a genial, courteous, considerate acquaintance, ever obliging; a warm-hearted, loyal friend; and the British Public generally a counsellor and guide who, as a collector, assayer, and assessor of information, was an incessant and highly skilled labourer, never sparing himself in their interests. The vast clientèle who year by year, week in, week out, read in the *Daily Telegraph* Mr Greenwood's descriptions of races, interpretations of market doings, the fresh news he was in better position than any other sporting Pressman to acquire, arguments on horses' merits and chances in races to come, and tips—those prophecies which cost so much to think out and make so small a show in space, yet direct the disposition of so much capital—must, though knowing the author by hearsay only, have formed sincere regard for the faithful servant, at the extent of whose infinite pains on their behalf they could not be expected to even guess within reasonable limit. Few of his brother workers of the Press, whose duties lay in the same grooves as Mr Greenwood's, felt as though the world was going round properly after the sad news arrived. By them he was universally esteemed for his goodness of heart, bonhomie, and willingness to assist all, and particularly new hands, to whom encouragement early in their careers was of priceless worth.

Considering the all-too-short years of his life, Mr Greenwood had spent more in the active service of sporting journalism than almost any example to be selected. He began as a boy—was practically apprenticed or articted to the business or profession as a youngster and found in it congenial

occupation fitting his native bent. Always resolutely diligent and marked by very strong force of character and self-reliance, he raised himself step by step till his judgments, expressed in print for the *Daily Telegraph*, to an extent ruled the market, or, at any rate, influenced it largely, and when sought by owners and trainers as one seeks views from counsel in chambers, helped shape their policy in running or backing their horses. Gifted as he was with remarkable memory for detail, the rare natural instinct for fixing on the really most essential points to be considered, and not only keen judicial faculty, but power to dispossess his mind of personal favouritism or want of sympathy—with these qualities love of hard work and ability to stand it, incessant perseverance, and pluck to act on his own opinion, he must have climbed to nearly the top of any profession or business which he essayed. Fortunately, he was entered at sport—fortunately because he loved it, and found in his labour pleasure also.

The public all knew Charles Greenwood as a matter-of-fact writer, who, though he occasionally did relax from a strict business hand into text a trifle less staid, kept his articles on a somewhat severe business footing, facts being made of the first consequence, and putting them in the most direct and least misunderstandable style the next greatest consideration. A reader might be surprised indeed if, being introduced into our friend's own circle, he was privileged to listen to him as a raconteur. Few, indeed, had so large and various a *répertoire* of anecdotes or could score points more crisply with better effect. His serious occupation left scant time outside for anything else but travelling and sleeping, but if

he could have spared enough to compile recollections we should have had a book of humour unapproachable in Sport's library. Devoted as he was to horse-racing, Mr Greenwood managed to keep at his fingers' ends most other forms—cricket, rowing, foot-racing—in fact, all sporting data, and had he not started work so early must, I always thought, have made a big mark as an athlete. A modest man, “of his proper merits he was dumb,” or at least reticent and to be drawn little, but I gathered that as a youngster he must have been a very smart sprinter. In that regard he was a model, very strongly built, having the big chest and powerful shoulders we associate with such runners. He was a member of the joint committee of Tattersall's and the Newmarket Rooms, a most responsible position. The manner of his joining the Kempton Park Board was a high and significant testimonial to his qualities. His inclusion as a director was made the vital condition on which conflicting interests were brought to unison.

So far as could be judged from outside observation, Sir James Miller fully represented the type of Jockey Club Steward one would like to see always in office. That he was one of the right justices and controllers in the right place, I hold no doubt whatever. He was generally regretted, by a wide circle of friends in private life, a very numerous connection of acquaintances found through business, and the Turf community at large. To the last-named are self-appointed spokesmen, among the roughest of the sects, who give forth opinions in no uncertain measure on men and matters, and are mostly quite trustworthy and correct in their conclusions. When

in 1890 Sir James came in for that intense notice induced through being proprietor of the Derby winner, these shortly settled in their minds that the fortunate young purchaser of Sainfoin, a ready-made Blue Riband gainer, was straight, and would very quickly learn his business at the expensive game, horse-racing. They were right enough, too. The new-comer on the Turf very soon took his place, was able to direct his own racing affairs, and never looked back. He did a splendid thing indeed at what was practically the outset of his career and at trifling outlay, considering the vast amounts certain owners have expended in the vain hope of acquiring a horse good enough to win the great three-year-old race at Epsom. From that time out he was marked as being blessed with the most precious of all gifts—luck.

Of course one does not hear anything like so much about the disappointments a head of a large stable has to put up with, and in reckoning so-called winnings fashion is to set forth receipts as gross profits. As almost everyone knows, the figures scheduled in the list of owners' revenues from prizes, though running into great sums, very often would not outbalance the debit side of the ledger with its heavy and various expenses. Still, though Sir James certainly had many a coup manqué, he very probably may be taken as about the greatest winner, in stakes and bets, of any owner (racing for choice on the grand scale) during his own connection with horse-racing. When he fancied his horses, he backed them—at least, he used to, and had a good win in wagers in case the anticipated performance materialised. (A stable I have in my eye most probably could

show greater gains through its betting books; but this confederacy, though open to make the best possible use of stock it breeds or buys, has not so far raced much out of handicaps.) Throughout his career on the Turf, Sir James Miller, through his advisers, won great handicaps, as well as so-called better-class races. Big commissions were worked on his account, but the public could always follow his business in safety, and, being believers in his luck, did so with profit. He was held to be lucky—John Bull goes with winners. Luck is a word very often misused to signify accidents' bearings. The lucky man seldom gets due credit for helping, by means of fine judgment, to create his own fortunate situations, and, what is of equal if not of greater importance, turn them to account at the right moment.

Sainfoin was sold at a comparatively small price, some £6000 and a contingency if the colt won the Derby. Personally, I do not think I could have bought the horse for myself or have advised anyone else to go in for the speculation, and for this reason. John Porter, who trained the youngster, ought to know what is good enough to win a Derby or to run up to an ordinary Derby winner. Surefoot's claims to first place in calculations on form were very strong. Still, he could do no more than win, and a Derby second, if a good second, and well-bred, as Sainfoin was, must be too cheap at £6000 and a "nice present" contingency. Sir Robert Jardine always had a keen eye to the main chance, a very keen one, and looked more likely to be buying his partner's (John Porter's) half than to be selling his own moiety if the other

spec. was promising. Porter himself has always been a very clever coper—if I may use that term—you might trust him to value any number of horses within a shave of their marketable price and turn them over at any bid above his personal estimate. As to his *parting* with what he deemed a real Derby horse, you would rather have expected him to go hot-foot to *buy* one at a price like six thousand pounds or guineas. In short, the money seemed at once too much and not enough. However, the deal was ratified, and the buyer had all the best of it with the very hard-fisted brother-Scot baronet and his co-partner trainer. In all probability, if Surefoot had not turned an irresponsible savage, the history of our 1890 Derby might have been very differently written. In that respect Sir James's luck was great, but he had so many big wins as to make good judges drop the lucky part and talk more of acute judgment.

One of the fine hauls that might have been—but was not—was upset through misfortune and nothing else. This was with Jodel in the Cambridgeshire, won by La Flèche in 1892. Twice was this same Jodel vilely used by fortune. Later she beat Watercress in the Great Lancashire handicap at Liverpool, but the race was given to Baron Hirsch's long, big horse. For Newmarket she was backed to win a very large sum of money, and in my opinion must have won but for being knocked down—or on to her nose, at any rate—just below the distance. I well recollect the working of this commission. When many thousands had been secured at nice prices—say, somewhere getting on for 40 to 1—arrangements were made for a simultaneous attack on the books all over the country. This

looked promising enough, but the order being sent out all in one hand, failed very nearly altogether, and not so many pounds were placed as the commissioners expected to bet hundreds. However, before the race as much as 10 to 1 could be had for a place, so, though the major speculation miscarried, the place gains represented as good as a win under very usual circumstances.

A better type of Steward of the Jockey Club could scarcely be imagined. No higher position is there on the Turf. One would have expected Sir James to have come to the top of any enterprise or occupation he seriously went in for, and his leaving the Army was, in a way, a pity. A somewhat curious thing was his brother's failure to get hold of a big race-winner, though a liberal purchaser, while Sir James or his trainers could turn a selling-plater into the taker of a Cesarewitch. Here offered the contrast between the lucky and the unlucky man. Mr Elliot Hutchins, who had Chaleureux, was fated to be mixed with horses almost from his cradle. At Sherborne School he talked horse and handicapped racers like an old hand. At his 'Varsity he was more than ever devoted to the great game and its players, and quite naturally gravitated afterwards into the ranks of professional writers on the thoroughbred and his doings. For the *Sporting Life* and the *Sportsman*, and afterwards the *Sporting Life* again, he did admirable work as Special Commissioner. You would have thought that after living for, say, thirty years almost wholly in an atmosphere of horse-racing, he would have gathered sufficient understanding of Turf ways to know how the man of small purse, desirous of backing a selling-plater, a good thing,

should go financing. To use the homely phrase, to get "put on" as much money as would have brought for him a splendid win was only a question of taking into his confidence someone better off than himself and inclined to speculation. One could name half a dozen such who, shown the trial, would have financed the business, helping the owner, helping themselves in the market, and undertaking to buy the horse in after he had won his selling race. As it was, poor Hutchins—who had a fortune put in his way if he would close his grip on the gift—played the game out of his own hand, won next to nothing, could not afford to buy Chaleureux in after his win at Bath, and saw the future winner of a Chesterfield cup at Goodwood, a Cesarewitch, and a Manchester November Handicap go for quite an insignificant sum. He served several masters, did the fairly well-named son of Goodfellow and L'Été, before he came round to Sir James Miller, but the comparison holds good between the unfortunate original proprietor and the one who did such great things with him.

The late baronet could not in any disguise have escaped being taken for a soldier. Soldierly he was in carriage, smartness, precision in his business habits, and, like so many who have held commands, inclined to be a bit of a martinet, with strong opinions unhesitatingly pronounced when occasion served or needed. For Gurry, his trainer after Sainfoin left Kingsclere, he entertained sincere regard, a feeling, making change for position between master and man, Mr Martin Gurry fully reciprocated. Gurry, in a quiet way, is in the habit of letting-off many shrewd little touches in conversation, and is able to take his

own part in any company, no matter how smart in quick-wittedness the set may be. The baronet one day waxed wroth as plans ganged agley, and gave a bit of a dressing to Martin, who bided his time. Having expressed his opinion of affairs all out of joint, Sir James came to the trainer. Said he: "Gurry, I do believe that if a man has a son too big a fool for anything else, he would expect him to earn a good living out of training—they make all the worst fools trainers." "Yes, Sir James," was the reply, "quite right, that is the rule, sir, but—occasionally, a soldier," and both laughed. I had hoped at one time that with his string located on the South Downs in the stables beyond Upper Portslade, five miles from Brighton, where the late Mr John Mannington lived, we might have found them trained to good form. In later years the gallops have been cut-up a good bit by riders from the Brighton livery stables, who would not spare the well-cared-for turf. The downs were good then. But somehow the sea air did not suit them altogether, the stables were let for the purpose of sheltering jumpers, and Sir James's string migrated to Newmarket, where they stayed latterly with Blackwell, who scored splendidly with them. Somewhat singularly, Sir (then Mr) John Miller has twice pitched his tent out in the country, and in close touch with galloping grounds. At Bifrons, near Bridge, in Kent, he was on the edge almost of the good going, over which Lord Conyngham's and other horses used to be trained on Barham Downs, while at Westbury his recent residence is situate almost at the base of the big hill known far and wide by the general public because of the Saxon memorial, the White Horse, and the excellent re-

formed grounds, where John Tyler's and others' strings are exercised. He spent some time on and off at Findon and Michel Grove, practically on the gallops, but these were country "boxes" rather than "houses," or places like the others mentioned.

If ever we had a model sportsman always carrying out his Turf affairs on the grand scale, one to fully earn that good title, he is the gentleman we have known under a nom de course—Mr J. C. Stuart—as the Marquis of Hartington and the Duke of Devonshire. What a splendid testimonial to his Grace's exemplary career stands in that the only fault ever found during an active connection of over forty years with the Turf is his having used for one of his horses the name of an animal, Adamas, who did not win the Derby in Blink Bonny's year, though some people were of different opinion! Where a horse has made great reputation, reviving its title makes an unpleasant taste in sportsmen's mouths, besides being liable to create confusion among students of breeding; but Adamas left no impressive record, and it is well to mention, apropos of nomenclature, that finding a name for which Messrs Weatherby will give a permit is no easy matter. I recollect once making out a list, culled from the "Flowers of the Field," of all the Dandelion's relations, hoping to have one passed for a child of Danvita. Every blessed one had been appropriated! As to Adamas, I will not say that the story is absolutely true, but I was present at Newmarket when a punter gave as his reason for backing the Duke's Adamas that old Ned Smith always told him that the horse did win the Derby, and the judge was wrong. [The Duke died March 1908.—ED.]

CHAPTER VIII

CRICKET

SOMEHOW, when I think of cricket, which is very often indeed, I wonder whether we shall ever find popular taste desert the grand old game. Shall we, in order to shorten and smarten it, bring about its being cut, chopped, and contrived into something resembling but very unlike the old model which was a game that could be played without recourse to the sort of subsidy which keeps theatres, horse-races, boxing, football (of course), and other pastimes going. Nowadays the predominance of gate-money and enforced considerations for funds to keep up high pressure unwillingly engages the attention of good sportsmen. The unfortunate progress in this direction has, so to speak, fed its own growth, so that instead of being permitted to do your best with what strength comes your own way naturally, you must seek outside for artificial aid in order to keep in the running at all. Your strength is of no account whatever unless it reaches minimum, which may be beyond your maximum.

The man in the street has given place to the man in the train. You are more often privileged to listen to the latter authority, and he speaks more correctly, I think, John Bull's

sentiments. That mouthpiece, so far as my observation goes, represents the nation as less taken up with cricket than it was. I never thought to live to see the day when anyone could dream of such a thing. Unfortunately a veracious chronicler cannot pass the item, so I give it. Cricket's constitution has changed, as is the tendency with all classes. Public taste no longer is for moderate excellence—the quality the average individual may be able to produce. Every class clamours or silently asserts demand for high-grade entertainment, wants to and will “call above its cards,” and being devoted to a standard generally unattainable, does not essay to act—i.e., play for itself—on its own account.

On the subject of recognising cricket as a profession my interest is very strong indeed ; because I have been at the subject for many years. Please note that when I say many I do not mean a few, and can cite proof of antiquity in an article of mine dealing with snide or paid amateurs, and published by Mr Edmund Yates in the *World* somewhere about 1876. Readers can speak for, say, the best part of a score of seasons, during which I have preached against the fallacy of setting up any distinction between cricketers or athletes other than social, which makes and marks itself. He is poor gentleman or amateur who is not safe of recognition as an unprofessional unless labelled and ticketed “This is an amateur.” For cricket, cricketer is the word, and no need should be to mark such up or down at so much or so little. Once wipe out the line which only nominally divides the paid from the unpaid, and you at a stroke do away with tons of nonsensical false pretences and cause for irrita-

tion. Business is business. The business of pastime has for long been exploited by schools who may not have started on the make, but who found that they could not go on without getting a bit, because the exes. beat them. Besides, devoting much time to the particular branches they affected prevented their following the occupation which should have been work to, we will say, cricket's play. Another section is, perhaps, available for example, who always had a eye on turning their abilities in sport to pecuniary account, just as some men in good positions play billiards merely to win money, and would not devote time to it unless there *was* money in it. Cricket—as it is played now, with new journalism as an accessory, so that one lot of exes. does for both—has become more than ever a business for the unprofessionals, from whose rank comes not the right man, the one to say “I get as much value out of my ability to play and judge cricket, and a sight more than most of the pro.'s. To my idea, cricketing is a highly creditable profession. Suggestions of wrongdoing, such as crookedness in play, are so scarce—in fact, practically unknown—as to furnish a very splendid testimonial to the honour of the craft. You cannot say I am a worse man, entitled as a pro. or professed cricketer to less benefit of clergy—for which read birth, education, and manners—than I should be as a so-called amateur. I am a cricketer by nature and occupation, and am going to drop all the nonsensical amateur business; and now, brother members of this club, also other clubs, what are *you* going to do?”

Cricket and football make perpetually perplexing problems, because of the predominance of commerciality in them. As to the latter, I get to lose clutch of the game, because of the buyings and sellings, leasings, signings on and off, and so forth, going against my stomach to the extent of cutting me out of sympathy with the show. Now I look on an interested, but not an affected, outside spectator, mostly engaged in studying the business as a national or State affair, and not half pleased with the outlook. Let us hope we are going in the right direction with football, and cricket also. I "hae ma doots," and the more I think the worse do I "doot." We most of us have discussed to death gate's paramount weight in football. Cricket is going the same way, or has gone, and while you can easily plead to make a strong case for the game as she is spoke, you can't help regretting developments blotting out some of its most sporting features. Let me name one of them, vanished almost altogether—"Gentleman" cricket. Where are the "County Gentlemen," or "Gentlemen of the County" matches?—gone, or very nearly departed, for good and all. You cannot gather a representative eleven of gentlemen of a county concerned in the championship, because the flower of the should-be amateur talent must be on duty to fight for the club in what we will call the open competition. These old-style matches cost participants nothing, or, at any rate, so little as to render them quite inexpensive, and were really sporting affairs in which men could play without having to make choice between cutting ordinary avocations or not be "chosen," to say nothing about "recognition." I am not unmindful of the Old Boys and such

tours, not so numerous as they were. Still, counting them in as cognate institutions, we get far less of this sort of cricket—a diversion, a relaxation, a holiday enterprise—and hear too much about expenses.

What constitutes throwing a ball, as contrasted with bowling it? The rule stands that the ball must be bowled, not thrown nor jerked. The enactment is, or should be, a perpetual warning. What is wanted, and never has been done, is to define legitimate and unlawful action. Now, I do not want any fussy fool to pretend to take me literally, as that contemptible class so loves to do, quoting a little bit without the context, when I say that I do not know what throwing is, nor can I lay my hand on an authority to tell me what is what in bowling. If you ask for a definition you make your friends cross. "Was that a throw?" says you. Says he, "Yes." "How do make it out a throw?" "Any silly ass can see that he throws." "But," you persist, "what did he do when he threw?" "Why, threw, of course," and that's as near as you are likely to get. If such authorities or the constituted controllers of cricket would tell us what a man does in delivering a ball to make the difference, many of us would be much obliged. Like all the others, I fancy that I can tell, but I have found myself differing from good cricketers, and that when I felt most positive. There were two 'Varsity men I should have no-balled every time. "England" players, amateur and pro., swore that these were exemplarily fair. A bad knock was given to my own theories when I read that Spofforth's test, putting splints over the trundler's elbow, did not fill the bill, and that an

aboriginal Australian who performed so that he could not bend his elbow failed to satisfy the critical that he was not chucking.

There is room for a whole book on the subject. I commend the idea of a neat brochure to industrious, ingenious, well-informed cricket critics, who might treat us to a few introductory chapters, tracing the rise and practice of the no-ball (as regards delivery); give plain descriptions of different methods of communicating force to the ball (the bowler paying due respect to contemporary conventional views of right and wrong in action), and cite instances where arbiters on the legitimate and illegitimate (otherwise umpires) represented general opinion through their findings, or expressed the judgment of a minority. By no means the least interesting portion of the dissertation would bear on the regulations—there have been several—*raisons d'être*. Why was it desirable that the ball should be bowled in accordance with various accepted ideas, and on what pleas were developments permitted? Before I go any farther, let me not miss saying that if the desired summary ever does come to be published, I trust that James—as he signs himself, Jem as known to all the world—Lillywhite's recent letter on "Throwing at Cricket" may be preserved in it just as the epistle was written. I have read Jem's letter several times. I do not quite agree with the West "Sussexer," but the more I read it the more I think of it. In one paragraph the old professor (still the best half of a young 'un), whose forbear, William the Nonpareil, had a great deal to do with setting up a standard for genuine round-arm bowling, strikes a path which has not been trodden

much during the present discussion. I refer to this:

"I once heard Pooley accuse Southerton of being the biggest thrower in England, at a time when no one else could detect the slightest sign of it. However, later in life his delivery became open to suspicion, the disguise not being maintained, and I feel convinced that the wicket-keeper is the best man to detect a throw, and the batsman next."

Poor old Southerton is dead and gone these twenty years. Of him I could not write or say an unkind word if I could think of any, for he was a great friend—a real friend of mine. Always kind-hearted and obliging, ready to do a good turn, and a gentleman in thought and deed, Southerton was one whom to know was to respect. I did sincerely respect him as a friend and in his profession, and shall ever remember him with kind regard, if only because the last day we ever met he put himself to great inconvenience to save me trouble when his consideration was worth very much. I make this explanation so that I may not be thought to have the slightest unkind feeling in saying that more than once I have, in a Pickwickian sense, said to him just what Pooley did, according to Lillywhite. In his later years Southerton's overs were made up almost entirely of throws—at least, that was my opinion. No one objected, no umpire would no-ball him. Why? Because his pace was so slow. A trundler who always banged them in with like action to the veteran's would not go long unchallenged in those days. Some there were of considerable pace—no need to mention them now—who varied their style to the extent

of dealing out three fair or fairish balls and one unmistakable red-hot chuck in an over. They were discussed and condemned by the quidnuncs. Partly from a feeling of camaraderie; in great measure on account of considerations of reciprocity; further, because if a move was made it must be followed up to inaugurate a revolution in cricket's estate, the irregularities were let pass. Most of the swift trundlers only offended against the law more or less occasionally. Slow ones calmly began their service against the batsmen by chucking deliberately in two senses of the word, and so continued till they were taken off—not because of protest against their style, I may explain. Why should they be no-balled? If they threw at their pace for a month they would not do any damage to the batsmen.

The idea has been hazarded that only a small percentage of those who try to put work on a ball with round-arm or over-arm action can do so without so much assistance from the elbow as to bring their bowling within a reasonable definition of throwing. Much has been said about unadulterated throwing being sure to “stump up” the practitioner after a shortish spell of service. That would, I believe, only be correct if much pace were put on, and not at all if the delivery is of hybrid character. As a matter of fact, most of us have known several who we would swear were chuckers, able to get through a season's work as well as any others. These were fast, and no mistake about it. As to the movement taken in slow time, most could with a little practice go on repeating it as long as they are permitted.

I cannot help thinking that for very many

years umpires officially gave expression to opinion that the "fair bowling" ordinance was founded on solicitude for batsmen's safety, and not in view of "adapted" throwing's making the ball do more than would be accomplished by other means. Perhaps the chronicler I shall be so glad to welcome may exploit this notion for us, and support it by tracing the gradual improvement of pitches (to be played on), connecting therewith corresponding progressive emancipation of bowlers from earlier and more severe rules on no-balling. I am quite sure that, so far as village-green cricket went, the very great majority of umpires would hardly give a thought to the delivery of a bowler who "sent 'em in" slowly. A referee in a walking match once said to a protester who averred that a man was running, "Don't bother me; he can't run so fast as he can walk!" Same principle you see; the pace considered to condone the action.

Say that you ask a cricketer whether he knows the difference between bowling and throwing, throwing and jerking, jerking and bowling, he wouldn't say "No," would he? No fear! You could scarcely pitch upon one who would confess to ignorance on these classified varieties in the art of propulsion, though you might happen on a sceptic such as I confess to be as regards race walking. You may, for instance, tumble against somebody who confesses that many of the fast and nearly all of the slow bowlers are only conventionally bowlers but actually are chuckers, just as I believe that scarcely anyone ever walked much over six miles in the hour, and should disqualify the whole of nearly every field started in the last score years. But with walking there *is* a definition. At any rate, articles for the professionals' matches laid

down rules as to heels and toes and knees. To come back to our cricket, the probability is that the first hundred cricketers you meet would all be somewhat offended at your going the length of inquiring whether they could tell fair bowling from the other stuff. And of course the Powers that Be must be still more exactly critical, confident, and correct on the points. Very well, then, why not set down on paper what may be done and may not be done in performing a bowl. Build that round with the four walls of a definition and do ditto for jerking (an almost extinct art greatly deplored by watchmakers because of the damage old-fashioned obliging gentlemen, answering the call of "Thank you, sir," used to wreak on the contents of their waistcoat pockets in sending a ball up) and throwing. The nearest we get to a definition now is that bowling is, in short, bowling, and everything else is what it happens to be, is said to be, or thought to be. There is no code for reference. Would it not be better to instruct umpires not to permit this, that, or the other movement to be worked with the elbow or the wrist, or by both operating together? If the M.C.C.'s united wisdom cannot get out an exhaustive definition, I can tell them who can, and that is any bowler who really chucks. I do not believe that any such ever had any doubt on the matter himself until he had often been passed by umpires. Find a converted chucker. Set him to formulate a specification. He is a man to knock you up in two minutes a definition of right and wrong action. In the words of the ancient wheeze about honesty and best policy, he has tried 'em both.

Once on a time within a century—I began

to con a letter on cricket sent to the *Sportsman*. I got through a few lines out of an epistle extending to the greater part of a column; said to myself, "the one and only Mr Charley Clarke has done this"; forthwith proceeded to read after the manner ascribed to the fair sex in dealing with novels—that is, jumped to the finish of the "work"—found my guess correct, and was very much pleased indeed with myself. Let me tell you why. A good many years ago—dear, dear, I am afraid it was in the seventies, the late seventies, which at the latest makes a many seasons back—I came across a most amusing letter on the beauties of Rugby football, indited by a confirmed, nay bigoted, association votary; a socker (was the word "socker" invented then?) who gave the pick-up-and-run game socks. If I recollect right—and I am pretty nearly sure I do—the author of this little satire subscribed some nom de guerre, not his own moniker. I was sufficiently interested to try and ferret out the author's real name. Who was it? Major Marindin or Mr C. W. Alcock, or one of those to whom I went, said that if I guessed anyone but C. C. Clarke, I should guess wrong. Now, long ago as the little incident occurred, I cannot remember ever having come across another contribution from the same gentleman till this M.C.C. member's go at Marylebone appeared as stated. So I *was* mightily pleased to find that my recollection served me so well in enabling me to catch on as I did, and spot the writer of the later article in question. Mind, I was helped a bit, because quite early on, reference to Esher provided a bit of a clue. The Clarkes were long associated with that most sport-

ing club, which in the old days was pretty much a local centre or branch depôt for the gentlemen of England. No one was at any time too good to play for Esher, with A. P. Lucas, W. H. Game, and the Clarkes resident. Its own local strength was great, but only a very dangerous team taking the federation on could discover the extent of its resources till they were seriously challenged. Then they found an array of talent which reminds me of a yarn about Elstree School.

It fell on a day that a most humble cricketer was invited to "have a day in the country," assisting a very ordinary club in a Saturday match at this Harrow-preparatory-school, and excused himself because he was a duffer. "Never mind about that," his inviter urged, "come and make one; the others are only a lot of schoolboys, and we are sure to enjoy ourselves." "And the school?" says the invitee. "Elstree." "Have you ever played these boys before?" asked the duffer, to whom the words "a day in the country" were suggestive. The visiting eleven had not experienced such pleasure; but, well, they—the club to be played—were "only boys." I do not mind telling you in confidence that the side who tackled the school did not include Mr A. N. Other, the duffer marked for commandeering. He had "been there before," and preferred to take the sort of cricket he anticipated at second hand—that is, to read about it—instead of going more than half-way towards such trouble as a jolly good hiding represents. The other others carried out their programme, and a nice fox they bought, to be sure. A very promising set of little lads the

school put in the field. No invitation could have more correctly indicated the entertainment than this for "a day in the country." The worst of the opposition was nearly up to county form; several were as good, or nearly so, as Messrs Vernon Royle (next to George Strachan the most brilliant cover-point I ever saw) and H. G. Tylecote, who "kindly obliged" on the occasion. My word! the club who went down Edgware way did have a day in the country. They were in it practising fielding while four or five "boys" batted till they were tired of scoring from the pitching of stumps to the drawing thereof, and in the future made inquiries before taking on another school eleven. Pretty nearly a Gentlemen of England side Elstree used to put in the field, and the little village of Esher would occasionally go nearer to that high standard.

Regarding one very important point—dragging out matches we would all wish to be finished if fair for one fair for the other can be ensured—Mr Clarke tells more than one out of a hundred knew. The net boundary, as put forward by the Marylebone Club, and given short trial, failed, I admit, to commend itself to the majority—possibly because the scheme was not introduced in a style to make it understood and properly appreciated. I confess that there seemed more cons than pros in making up its account at Lord's. But you must do the sum, to prove it. Mr Clarke tells us that the sum has been worked out on two grounds. Let me quote him: "At Esher and Silwood Park wire netting was placed round the grounds, and with the simple plan of run it out, four

if the ball bound over and six if it pitch over, all matches but one at Esher have been finished, and the same result has happened at Silwood Park. In the previous year it was quite an exception to get a result at Esher, and at Silwood Park we had six drawn matches." An ounce of proof is worth more than a ton of argument, and Mr C. surprises one with his moderation, considering his opportunities for sledge-hammering the opposition, in mildly suggesting as a possibility "there being something in this when you take facts into consideration."

I am not at all in the same corner with the writer in urging that the M.C.C. ought to be the Jockey Club of cricket and behave as such, at least—I am unwilling to agree in such a position being the one they should occupy as regulators of the game outside its general rules. They *are* the proper authority to make cricket's laws and insist on carrying out the same. And I will go back on myself to the extent of admitting their having come to be the only authority worth following as events have shaped themselves. But, in my humble opinion, the Counties ought to have moulded themselves into an independent power to conduct their own business. They had their opportunity to take full control into their own hands, "instead of which" they wrote up all manner of declarations of independence, so to speak, and, directly someone called out "M.C.C. is coming," ran away like boys from a bobby.

Sooner or later the cricket world must come round to the views on l.b.w., which I am glad to find so well qualified a commentator as Mr Clarke, a practical cricketer all round, vigorously

enunciating. Pad play is not batting, nor anything like it. The batsman is given his weapon of defence and offence, and though his side is credited with runs when a bowler accidentally and incidentally scores leg-byes for his opponents, the batter's intentionally stopping a ball with his legs is not cricket, and never was. Outsiders see most of the game. They may go wrong on technicalities and niceties of cricket, but the inexpert can surely be credited with common-sense enough to grasp and form a trustworthy opinion on a broad principle. Take anyone, if you can find such a person, who has no knowledge of the noble game; give him the rules to study and expound the code for him as to a novice. Then take the disciple to watch the up-to-date defender of the wicket. He will not quite understand a batsman's shaping, with his fore-foot covering at least two-thirds of the wood as the ball is being delivered; but that is a detail. What I was going to say was, that the intelligent person, possessed of open mind on the whole subject, and merely a book student regarding it, will, when he is privileged to behold the Nottingham school's method, pretty generally adopted all round, of getting the pads between the stumps and balls pitched wide of them, be inclined to fancy his education very defective indeed.

"I should much like the umpires to have the power to request any bowler to turn his shirt-sleeve above the elbow. I am sure that if he did so the umpire would have a far better opportunity of judging if a man was throwing or not." "Good on you," Mr Clarke. That note has a great deal in it. The sleeve may prevent your

seeing what the elbow is doing, just as baggy "long drawers" may enable an unmistakable mixer to be passed as a scrupulously fair heel-and-toer. Take this instance. The athlete to whom I am about to refer, an American, came here, saw, and conquered many fields to win good prizes as an amateur walker. I refrain from giving his name, because his visit was long ago, and no useful purpose will be served by now challenging style always passed by our referees. At the time I did repeatedly assert that not one of these officials could possibly know whether the so-called walker was fair or otherwise. How might they properly judge? Our friend the Melican man, cutely taking thought, attired himself in voluminous bloomers from the waist to below the knee, the sort of full-blown knickers which ladies—well, which old-time Arab tumblers displayed. You know the cut affected by "clowns in the circus"—great bags, bifurcated skirts gathered in half-way down the calf. No mortal referee could say whether a walker so equipped was moving with a straight knee or a very bent one—walking, as the gait is understood to be fair, or simply running on his heels. To a great extent this visitor's dodge hits with the bowler's, whose arm makes a wind for itself to blow out the sleeve at the elbow.

Now that we are on cricket costume, let me repeat an old wheeze of my own, not about shirts, but t'other things—the trou-trous. Pace is a great desideratum for fieldsmen, is it not? May I add that you may say the same of policemen, when a turn of speed can make the difference between their catching or being beaten by a bolter. You want the scout to run as fast as he

can after a ball, so put him in trousers, which are certainly five seconds in the hundred yards slower than knickers and stockings. Please do not assault me with fancy sketches of a field performing in 'Varsity running or rowing costume; but just consider that by slight modification of the conventional get-up, pace might—I will write must—be accelerated to the extent of not less than five, and probably more, yards in the hundred, not to mention lightening the day's work.

Dear me, how the time runs away! What seems but yesterday took place, you find, ten or twenty years ago. How long is it since I first heard Mr Absolom deliver, during the Canterbury Cricket Week, his lecture on the art of batting, in which he pointed out, with all common-sense on his side and the scientific "school" authorities dead against him, that the great aim of a batsman was, first, to do what he wanted himself, and, second, to prevent the bowler from doing what he (the trundler) did desire. And the means? That was where Absolom differed diametrically from the "schools." According to them, there was a right and legitimate stroke for every sort of ball that came within hitting distance, and it was your duty to go on as you would in broad-sword exercise, with a guard for each cut, so that you were fairly expected to do a certain thing if your enemy the trundler offered to your notice a particular class of ball. Take the pull. Bad cricket, the critics call this stroke. I don't; I call it jolly good. This was the burthen of C. A. Absolom's argument. You are asked to deal with an off ball so that it is to be sent where the bowler has laid on a service of fieldsmen

waiting for you to do what you are asked. Are you to study the bowler and his scouts or your own feelings in the matter, and hook the ball round to the on? An awful pull, they call it. The runs you get by it all count, and, besides, it isn't an easy stroke for everyone to make. I wonder which of the two was the more powerful—A. N. Hornby, who looked about three stone lighter than he was, or the Kent amateur? Mr Absolom might have made a Cinquevalli had his fancy run to practising sufficiently, for he had the knack of juggling with weighty articles, and enormous strength in his hands and fingers.

Going on memory, I think I may quote as quite the most wonderful piece of fielding I ever witnessed a catch A. P. Lucas made in a game at the Oval by which he put the giant Bonnor out. That tremendous specimen of humanity was, as all know or remember, a mighty smiter, and got a tremendous power of wood on a ball. I can see, as I pen this Notion, Bonnor the Big at the gasometer end opening his shoulders—whatever that may mean—finding just the right ball to “clump,” as the Yorkshiremen say, and landing on it as one does with a right sort of drive, whether with bat on ball or fist on an opponent's head. All the power goes into the stroke; the ball does not seem to have a feather's weight, but it goes just like the other man does—as if he weighed nothing at all, while his feet come up before his head seems to come down. You may watch fighting with the raw 'uns or gloves for years and not see a genuine knock-down blow when the receiver is sent over without possible chance of saving himself by staggering. As he is struck so he falls. Well, Bonnor did

get right on and made a most lusty off-drive, one of the sort of hits where the ball appears to travel straight almost without any curve at all in its trajectory till it begins to drop. Lucas was fielding at a sort of sharp long-off in front of the pavilion rails, and had to run to the old Press hutch—say, forty yards. Along came the leather forty thousand miles an hour, more or less. Right on the boundary, the then Surrey amateur, going at full speed across its line, reached the ball with his left hand only just clear of the ground. You heard a smack, and he had made the catch. The folk right over in the far corner under the gasometer, which got into Dick Humphreys's eye, heard it all that distance off. No other sound was there on the ground till everybody who saw had taken a long breath, and then went up the greatest cheer of my time—on a cricket-field, that is, and perhaps, barring the ovation which was Jessop's portion at the Oval, and the demonstration enveloping the Yorkshiremen, Hirst and Rhodes, when they pulled the big match out of the fire, a strong enough one to make a record.

CHAPTER IX

MORE CRICKET

UNLUCKY indeed must be the English cricket team starting for Australia that do not have fine times on their tour, no matter how the games go, for or against their side, and are to be congratulated on so grand an opportunity for enjoyment coming their way. No one who, after being hard worked, has not made the long voyage between the Old country and Down-Under-Land can understand what a peaceful, restful period has to be spent aboard ship, even by the most energetically-minded, conscientious would-be worker. You simply have to take things easily, whether you wish to or not. You may set your face diligently to do things, and consume hours making believe to be hard at the doing, but the output tells a different tale. Onward through the seas you go; each morning may see some work begun, but it is a precious small job if the same evening sees its close. The voyage is a beautiful boon and an A1 blessing. I often wonder that there are not more floating moving hotels arranged to take folk for holidays of fixed lengths. Some we have, and well directed as regards their objective points and stopping-places; but these do not, as a rule, quite fill the bill for

the man with a week or two off. To begin, they ought to start on a Saturday and be due to return just so close to Monday as to allow the business person time to get to his quarters after landing ready to open the week. You go to the coast for the benefit of sea air, which will probably be, so to speak, on one side of you only, and perhaps not at all if an off-shore breeze holds during your sojourn. Go out to sea, where the desired condiment is all around you, and you can't get away from it if you would. We do travel about a good bit on the salt water, but very little indeed considering all things, more particularly the question of exes. The cost of a voyage is very little more than your bill at a reasonable tariffed hotel would come to for a stay of like duration. Besides, the account comes out to the ship's advantage, because the almost countless methods for frittering away your means represented by petty cash are lacking. Passage money, the stewards' score, and a few fees cover the whole of the reckoning; while on shore, to a go-about man, the oddments run up to more than do all the rest, what you may call standard disbursements. Give me a good long sea voyage for pleasure and recuperating with intent to go strong at business afterwards.

Give—dear me! how I do wish someone *could* give me the chance. You have as nearly as possible resolved into a certainty the having the best of everything with nothing to pay for it, seeing the best of Australia, with everyone a kindly host doing the utmost to make the country's merits appreciated, and the only thing to grumble about being difficulty in avoiding being overdone with hospitality. The tourists, save as

regards internal management of their cricket, need have no thought for the morrow, nor the day after, nor any other day after they set out. The Melbourne Cricket Club representatives personally conduct affairs for them, and take all semblance of trouble off their guests' hands. The latter can, in a third of a year, see more of Australia than do ninety-nine-and-a-bit per cent. of the Colonial population, and, so far as may be managed for them, all with its best, brightest face on. We try to do Colonials well when they come to us, but the two cases cannot be put on the same platform in the way of entertainment. In the first place, our English eleven will have good breathing-time in the Colonies, while the latter's representatives touring over here must fulfil engagements on the lines of the County Clubs, and are booked from Monday to Saturday all through the season, with only prospect of off-days through games being concluded early. Then one must take into account the relative populations and the number of first class matches going on simultaneously. When a visiting team is playing in Australia, that will be almost always on otherwise open dates, so attention is more concentrated on their doings. But I must confess I was not thinking so much of the cricket but of the off-days, the interludes between the games, and the odd times when one can take a spell seeing about the country and getting intimately acquainted with it a little bit at a time. My word! how I do wish I had only half the chance they have of experiencing Australian hospitality, and for my part renewing acquaintance with the many good fellows who appear to me always only too anxious to do a new chum well, which well I

knows it. I guess that very seldom has an English company touring in Australia had a better or more enjoyable time than did that which Lord Darnley took out in 1882 at the invitation of the Melbourne Cricket Club. I wish he was going "back" this autumn, and would take me. We should miss some of the 1882 experiences, though. For instance, you would scarcely expect to be asked "How the devil this Ivory Bliff called himself an Honourable, seeing that he was not an M.L.A.," and the shipwreck effect would, I trust, be omitted. While Mr Bligh was in command I do not think that he ever had a wry word with one of the team, nor with any of the opposition except once, and that was when a professor surreptitiously adorned his boots with things like the clamps boys used to use for tree-climbing, intending to make a place for the other end bowler. Lord Darnley was a model cricketer, game to do any mortal thing to make sport and play any part—high, middling, or humble.

When wishful to protest against our latter-day practice of overdoing cricket (also boat-racing and almost every mortal thing else in which we are nationally concerned as competitors), it is grateful to find there is another pelican in the wilderness. "Now that the last test match is over, it is about time to protest against the enormous prominence that these events occupy in the public mind. Judging by the evening Press, one would have imagined last week that England as a nation was on the verge of ruin, and that annihilation was imminent." "Keen sportsmanship and enthusiasm in such things are all very well, but to let them be

carried to their present extent is rather a serious matter. Partisanship runs to undue limits, and on one side or the other sentiments are nurtured which are extremely undesirable." Quite so, good on ye, Mr *Truth*. Never was truer word said, and I may add that for years and years the *Referee* has been preaching moderation in this regard and deploring the forced, unnatural, abominably fictitious stir built round such business, to the detriment of whatever sport is touched, because it becomes more or less tainted in the contact. I do not quite like to say what I want, because I may be supposed guilty of personal animus and playing the Pharisee as well. However, risking such charges, let me now speak for myself, and, I am sure, a very large proportion of our sportsmen, in declaring that the way in which what we may call an innocent competitive enterprise is worked up "in the papers" is absolutely sickening. Anyone who reads his times must see that booms never do any game permanent good, for after the boom the slump, and inordinate difficulty in settling down to everyday-life living. Another feature of the practice, at the same time very bad and consolingly good, is that the fuss, the suggestion of squabbles and quarrels—nearly all the ferment—is introduced from outside. The papers do the undesirable work what time the players themselves respect wholesome traditions, giving and taking fair-mindedly. That is so, and makes all the more lamentable the light in which they are caused to figure. The catchpenny—or halfpenny—poster headlines do us a power of harm with Colonials and foreigners.

These are not to know and understand that

this sort of stuff is repellent and repugnant to the people whose opinion is worth taking. How should they catch such an idea? They see the flaming, flaunting, or miserably otherwise advertisements, and must suppose those to be acceptable to John Bull, because, in short, they *are* to be seen whichever way you turn, and it is fair to conjecture they would not appear at all if they were not marketable commodities. Clever handling by the Press can work up almost anything from a christening to an earthquake, into a boom, and humbug newspaper buyers till they verily believe they are fervently interested in something about which they in their heart of hearts care precious little. Not so much harm would be done if only the outside public realised that tiffs and jars are as inevitable in human sport as in human anything else and blow one as promptly. All comes out right in the wash—at least it would but for this confounded outside interest. Does anyone suppose that a big regatta at home generally passes off without many little disagreements, or a football match, or any other strong competition? Why, bless you, you would sometimes think there must be bloodshed, and plentiful shedding of blood, too, after so apparently a plain matter as a mile foot-race handicap with a numerous field. And may I ask those who have been on the rails at a bend when a troop of horses have been crowded by their riders, all wanting the best inside berth—what have they, the onlookers, thought, must happen when such as did not kill each other in consequence of, at the time, alleged deliberate foul play came back, were weighed out, got off the premises, and

were free to fly at each other's throats without fear of being dropped on by the Jockey Club? Similarly, how must one fear for the immediate future after listening to the exchange of remarks at the first jump in a hurdle-race? Nothing under murder must ensue. What happens? Rarely, very rarely, there is formal protest. Often, very often, one jockey while "changing" expresses very forcibly his opinion of another. I can see them, the one fastening his braces and lecturing, and the other, black in the face with ire and the uncomfortable task of lacing up his boots, waiting his turn for a few forcible words. And after all, what *does* happen? Why, the rowing men, when the prizes are distributed, are patting each other on their respective backs. The footballers are high-teasing in most amicable companionship. The runners are in friendly chorus cursing the unknown somebody who has helped himself to one wrong sock or left a most dilapidated singlet in place of the new one he must have known didn't belong to him. The flat-race jockeys are talking in amiable enough fashion, sharing a cab to the station. The cross-country men have forgotten that they fell out, and all ends happily till next time, when new squabbles will inevitably arise to vary the monotony of ordinary proceedings. Does anyone suppose for a moment that if one of our England teams engaged against the Australians were threatened with danger on the field the Colonials would not turn out to a man to fight for them as brothers—you can reverse the positions if necessary? No; the supposition is outside the pale of all incredulity.

In going for a spectatorial interest of the wrong

sort let me not seem to fail in appreciation of the right. To my mind, no more earnest sportsmen are to be found than the followers of cricket, who line the benches, humble admirers, mostly strong partisans. These regular attendants at county and special great matches, generally old 'uns, arrive as early as they can, and see the game right through till "over" is called for the last time in the day's work. They are the "gallery" of the cricket theatre, or, perhaps, the ancient pit may be nearer for their proper designation, and sportsmen and no mistake about it. Changing the name to cricket from whist, they are severe followers of the late Sarah Battle's motto requiring a clean hearth, a bright fire, and the rigour of the game. Purists they are to a degree, and seem to many degrees unfair, possibly because at cricket, as in fighting, the real amateur will try to make laws and actions correspond to favour his man or men. But genuine amateurs, nevertheless, ready to give up a good deal for seeing cricket for cricket's sake, and in their fortuitous collection of stray atoms representing a grand synod of village-green delegates. Absorbing enjoyment from the play goes—or, to my and their thinking, should go—hand-in-hand with judicious, temperate absorption of good ale and that placid pipe-puffing of tobacco so useful to mellow criticism.

A long while ago I paid tribute to the worthies of the cricket ring, these good sorts I have in mind, and felt quite pleased with myself the other day in coming across an old book of my own that enabled me to see whether the opinions I expressed under the heading "A Nice Glass of Ale" many years back had altered at all in a

long run. Now I find myself quite of the same opinion still, and though a man most easily led, not the least bit open to conviction in the opposite direction. Good typical old stagers were in my eye while I tried to picture, among others, those members of the "ring" who saw batting, bowling, and fielding through the kindly influence of well-cellarred and treated Bass drawn for choice from the wood and served in its stoneware mug—shandy-gaff also. Per contra was the unfavourable attitude blameable not on the poor man soured by synonymous beer, but the bad stuff purveyed. As I know him, the crowd unit will be a stickler for his rights. He takes the pitch early, making sacrifices to attain thereto, and further to retain the same by dint of continual occupancy. And he knows his rights against encroachment by scrouging up sideways, or screening by waifs and strays, who most unwarrantably go and stick themselves in front, and will not lie or sit down on the turf. My experience is that you can almost gauge the tap's quality by the ring's demeanour. Amiable, long-suffering to a fault are they, unless the beer *is* quisby. Let it be off colour, and these quidnuncs are open to quarrel with everybody and everything not quite as it should be. I used to think that I could spot the worthies a mile off the Oval or Lord's as they proceeded towards the grounds by 'bus or on foot. About them was the air of being seriously engaged with important business in hand, and being provided for long duty, just as might the prudent jurymen who could be gifted with a prevision of being locked up all night. These were news distributors for their own little centres, now out of work because the evening cricket specials

cover so much of the ground they went over, but still able to connect themselves personally with the game; the match they watched, because of getting at first or remote hand speech with somebody of importance. I am quite certain about the senior members of the ring being sportsmen and cricketers who do shoulder their crutch, in a manner of speaking, to show how games are won, and would play if they could. What joy it used to be for some to get hold of a ball and trundle to the actual players in the few minutes between the luncheon's end and the stated time for the interval to close! Most of the regulars had a house of call on their way back from the field, and they would not half talk cricket. "Not half!"

Talking of drinks for cricket, how good was the Hatfield purveyed at Kennington Oval in the late Mr William Burrup's time. One seldom nowadays hears a person described as a character—a term meant to convey the idea of marked individuality. "Quite a character" was a recognised expression with well-understood meaning in the years when Mr William Burrup was secretary of the Surrey County Cricket Club, and quite a character he was. So long as I can recollect he was called "old"—a word of endearment, as "old chap," "old man"; also "Billy," a familiar pet name for the christened William, by which the Surrey ring invariably indicated their secretary. Are we better or worse than we were in the middle of last century, there or thereabouts? If we are the one or the other, that is not for want of changing about in our manners and customs. Tea they drink now, do cricketers, and have an interval for the express purpose of tanning their

innards by means of the infusion or decoction, and giving their food a leathery consistence. They didn't do much in the tea line—Consule W. Burrup—but at the fit and proper moment invigorated themselves by means of the Surrey Cup, which cheered, and would jolly well inebriate too, if you happened to tilt your head far back and took *too* long pulls and strong pulls and pulled all together with more regard to thirst than discretion.

Quite a stately function in the hospitable line was the bringing forth and dispensing of the Surrey Cup. They used big silver cups for the purpose, and filled them with Hatfield—a very soothing, goodwill and peace-promoting brew which I have not tasted for a long, long while. Our friend—I can see him now, poor old Billy—was hospitable in his official capacity, also in person, and carried the big vessel out to the pitch, where it was handed round in the “loving” fashion, barring the bowing and table napkin part of the performance, which makes the bashful visitor to a civic feast wish that he was somewhere else or that loving cups had never been invented. Ill-natured folk would sometimes say that this cupping was not beneficial to play, and that the time spent on it was wasted, being an interruption to the game. Be that as it may, Hatfield *was* good, and *is* good to think of, only you have to let on a good deal just at present, when a winter scene is set, since for the mixture, as before, summer, with heat, is needed. I dare say that many good readers can in their minds' eye conjure up a summer afternoon at the Oval with a couple of Surrey men in—say, Mr Miller and Mr Dowson—the Kent eleven in the field,

and the perspiring warriors' wants being ministered to by their secretary and aids. Upon my word! to think of it makes a body thirsty now. It is easy to get back to old times. I can almost hear Mr Burrup telling what he and the ground landlord, now his Gracious Majesty King Edward VII., thought on a certain subject, and see the closing in of the ring ("Surrey mob" was a term not yet invented) to the rails of the Pavilion when a favourite was to be presented with talent money, Mr Burrup carrying out the operation with a little speech, after the fashion of giving away prizes at sports.

The Hatfield was furnished by Mr Trotman. He, you know, was for years refreshment contractor at the Oval, also at the Zoo, and many a hundred gallons did he purvey of the grateful beverage. Mr P. J. Sheldrake, the Hertfordshire scorer, sent me a recipe for concocting Hatfield, otherwise the Surrey Cup, as in the "Gentleman's Table Guide," published in 1873 on the authority of "— Troughton, Esq.," no doubt the good cricketer many of us recollect. Somehow the directions do not strike me as indicating the flavour we used to appreciate when digestion shied only at serious fences like brick-bats and broken bottles, and a "head" was unrecognised as possible follow to such light beverages as rum punch with "flannel blanket" to top off with. Still, probably I am wrong again, and here is the prescription. Take a quart of ale, two glasses of sherry, one glass of cloves, two bottles of ginger beer; add a small quantity of nutmeg grated on top and some lumps of pure block ice before serving. That should not hurt anyone, ought it, being shandy-gaff to all intents, barring

the two glasses of sherry? The most dangerous, insidious component of the lot is, I believe, the very innocent one—viz., ice in lumps, when set a-floating in a cup which really is a cup, a vessel of deep draught. You may not feel thirsty, or say so, or have been thirsty and quite heroically striven to drown the appetite or drinkatite, and cried a go. In other words, the bar has been put up, and then when the most delectable fluid quencher offers temptation, what makes good resolution treat itself? What? Why, the ice with its confounded tinkle, tinkle, against the side of the big pot. These blessed lumps of ice first break your vows for you, and then compel you to pull instead of sip, with your head well back, and a free flow down the gullet. With that same insidious ice, tinkling in its own artful way against the goblet's side, the soda-water in proportion due, and the lemon, also borage and cucumber, with perhaps a strawberry or two, dispense inviting fragrance. Felixir makes a capital cup; it is palatable, also refreshing and "pegging up" as a summer or any other season article to "take for" whatever excuse for a glass may be needed. By the way, I wonder did Mr Sheldrake ever hear of what was formerly called, in his county, the teetotallers' wager? Down his way was a fine bowler who played for Hertford Town and the county, and was a good steeple-chase rider, too—a Mr Brown, almost the most temperate sportsman I ever knew. He defined extreme moderation in gambling and boozing as playing single wicket single-handed on a hot day for a bottle of ginger beer, the loser to have first drink.

I am afraid that many of the present genera-

tion are not acquainted with the very pleasant gossip writings for which "The Old Buffer" (Mr Frederick Gale) was responsible. Fred. Gale, of Mitcham, Surrey—or, as "F. G." would put it, "of Surrey in the County of Mitcham"—was a very ardent sportsman in many ways, who had been playing games, helping others in that direction, and gathering anecdotes on all manner of sports, men, and cities from his youth, even before he went to Winchester, I should say, till he reached his fourscore. Afraid is a word used advisedly in my opening sentence, for those who missed the articles and paragraphs issued from "The Old Buffer's" armchair lost much amusement and edification from a raconteur and lecturer, keen himself, especially on cricket, and ever preaching keenness, cleanliness in sport or pastime, and manliness. When arrived at what most people consider old age, Mr Gale was warm as a boy in enthusiasm for his favourite game—cricket—and so strong in pluck that he started to leave England intending to settle down in Canada for the rest of his time. Later he returned to the Old Country and took cricket mostly at Kennington Oval and Lord's under his wing again.

Of him and the late Dr Jones, great cronies, members of the Surrey County Cricket Club Committee, any number of amusing stories might be told. I can hear poor Fred. Gale telling some of them now, sitting in the Surrey Pavilion or at Canterbury, on the St Lawrence Ground, as he sucks at his old briar pipe and aggravates the Doctor almost into bad temper. One little incident, I think, neither the one nor the other would forget to his last day. Dr Jones, an

orator of the old school (he went first by many years), was making a speech and was interrupted by someone who said "Bosh!" or Mr Fred. Gale was the spokesman who suffered from the interruption—I can't say which; but some one of the pair was pulled up sharp and challenged the other with his—in short, said bosh: a charge indignantly denied. Every now and then, at dates much later, this old sore would be rubbed raw by a pronounced difference of opinion on quite a different subject, and up, in the middle of a speech probably—say, in proposing a health or returning thanks—would crop the ancient grievance with "You did say 'bosh,' you know, Jones" or "Gale"; just as if the original discussion had never been dropped, say, a dozen years ago. Two more kindly souls you could not find, but neither ever forgot, if he forgave, the unfortunate misunderstanding.

CHAPTER X

IN FRESH WATER

AT the commencement of every boating season one expects swimming—its advantages, difficulties, and drawbacks—to crop up. On the first-named one need not descant, because they are so very obvious ; but apparently it will be a long while yet before the art as a health-maker, a recreation, an athletic sport, and, as well, a means of life-preserving in a double sense is given its proper place, and its votaries considered as they ought to be. Some of us have been fighting on its side and against authorities all our lives, or for a pretty big stretch of the same, championing a cause which should command universal unanimous support, for it would seem that on swimming's own merits it would be treated as a beneficent boon which had to be encouraged in every possible way. Swimmers are gradually gaining emancipation, yet vexatious regulations are still in force in different localities, and a tendency remains to treat bathers rather as criminals under surveillance than as citizens who for themselves and as examples are doing the State service.

What good the Committee of the Privy

Council on Education can do by refusing the School Board's syllabus of instruction in swimming and life-saving in the water, and insisting that for their purposes only instruction on land will be recognised, the unofficial mind (especially if what headpiece you have holds affection and respect for the science and practice) finds it is hard to see. On one side—our side, we will call it, readers—is a very strong argument indeed, appealing to the dullest comprehension. According to my observation, the densest understanding is to be quickened by a touch of £ s. d. Now, this matter of swimming and making swimmers, also educating them into usefulness as handy people in the water to rescue such as are in trouble, has very strong economic £ s. d. bearings. As somebody remarks apropos other amusements, we want soldiers. So we do. Also we want our active strength in population kept on a good level of all-round efficiency. To that end the British tax and rate payer has to pull out, and so acquires proprietary interest in the people for whose raising in the way they should go his pocket is so often touched. John Bull's family costs him too much to allow of his affording to waste it, and the difference between promoting swimming in every way and snubbing its forwarders, or, at least, we will call it putting the drag on, means the difference between going for reasonable protection of property and exposing it to wicked waste. We are taught—the English law teaches us—that a citizen's life is not his own to play with, but belongs to his country. I only wish we could get the proprietor to freeze on to the notion that everyone who cannot swim is taking unwarrantable liberties

with his (John Bull's) property, and ought to be strictly limited in taking risks.

Could a scheme for compulsory education in swimming be made universally workable? Well, universal is a big word, general would be more convenient, and in some outlying sparsely populated districts there might be too much burthen to the ratepayers in constructing baths for the purpose of affording facilities for teaching and practice. Still, it must be borne in mind that you are not *obliged* to have a big area of water for the purpose, nor are appointments necessarily costly. I should say that there are few places where the boys do not somehow find a means to get into the water in hot weather, and in the great majority of cases these pools or puddles, which they use for want of better, might be readily converted into something superior. Swimming *is* taught at Board schools, and quite right, too. We should be very foolish indeed if, after laying out so much money in stock, we did not go to the insurance office. The board scholars cost a terrible power of money, and as we have to spend it on the boys and girls, it is only common-sense to teach them how to take care of their lives instead of wasting them, and by consequence our money. Thanks to the Schools Swimming Association and the better-late-than-never movement among corporations and vestries, we are being fairly well done in one way and another; but what we want is a general order to learn swimming.

Each year the list of fatal accidents in the water grows, or seems to grow, and in almost all cases of what are called bathing fatalities "death" and "waste" have been interchangeable

terms. It is not as though the youngsters were unwilling to learn, for we all know that their instincts and inclination go right the other way about. Look at the poor little kiddies doing the best they can for themselves in dirty Thames at Bankside! The trouble is to keep urchins out of the water, a task which authorities are frequently only too delighted to undertake. Thank goodness we are at last growing out of the old-fashioned method, and do not always interfere as we used; but in many districts what is permitted in the way of bathing is allowed very grudgingly, as witness the Thames. I grant that some bathing in frequented rivers is a nuisance, and I regret to say that some bathers are intentionally objectionable. (This would be a lovely world if there were no wrong 'uns!) The best is the easiest way to deal with such trouble and troublers on the Thames, and that is to establish bathing depôts at sufficiently frequent intervals and require all to keep to these. After such reserves were installed, there would be no excuse for the transgressors who bring discredit on reputable swimmers and discomfort to others who seek their share of enjoyment from use of the water.

I move and protest that no one who cannot swim ought to be suffered to take out a skiff or any small craft. What is the State doing to permit any person not qualified to get *out of* the water under ordinary conditions without assistance to go *on* the water, and chance falling or otherwise coming into it? And what business has the inexperienced, or, maybe, altogether ignorant, goer down to the sea or river in little ships to be able to hire such ships or boats and

use them unassisted by experts? This is, as I am aware, a stock grumble of mine, but really one ought to grumble till good comes of all the objecting; and, mind you, the experienced have a great grievance in the connection. You see, it is like this. You do not exactly say or think "Serve you right" when the silly persons fall into serious—possibly fatal—trouble through doing obviously foolish things, but there is the situation; they likely enough unknowingly take wild chances, and may suffer accordingly. But so often it is not the heedless causer of the trouble who pays for his rashness, but the careful hand who attempts rescue or is innocently involved in disaster. I fancy that the sweet little cherub who sits up aloft to take care of the life of poor Jack must have extended his connection and turned himself from a single-handed supervisor into a sort universal provider of providential protection, for only special Providence can prevent our folk from being drowned in squads whenever holidays are on in boating seasons. To look at the batches one sees out, they want a sweet little cherub to each member of the crew, and would keep him nice and busy at that.

It was brought home to me—as if it was not always being brought home to me—how horribly easily life may be lost for lack of the art, when I nearly let a man drown just because I did not realise he needed help, when business took me to Newhaven. I took a boat to go there. After manifold difficulties in getting ashore, I thought it advisable to go off and wait for the turn of the tide before the operation, which was troublesome; with the last of the ebb helping, the performance would be rendered dangerous and difficult by the

flood. Lying off and waiting in hopes that the tide might soon turn, I heard a mighty splash at the back end of a barge. "A precious awkward diver that must be," says I to the other voyager. Directly appeared the head and shoulders of a man clothed as to the shoulders in a jersey, or it might be the top of a bathing costume. He didn't swim well, and I thought he was fooling about. That impression was confirmed when someone came to the shore and spoke to him. I was only a dozen yards or so away, waiting to see the "kidder" start and swim properly. Next thing I knew was that a man ran into the water and pulled the "swimmer" out.

I will swear that he might have been drowned for all that I or the other hand in my boat would have dreamed of offering to help. I could have got to him in almost three strokes backing. But what for *should* I go to him? People who can't swim do not dive off barges, nor prepare by putting on costumes or, say, jerseys to swim in. He certainly did flounder a bit, but not alarmingly; and I should no more have thought of crossing Pall Mall and offering my arm to a Guardsman who walked a trifle lame than of, so to speak, interfering with the bather. And all the while my story was wrong from beginning to end. The poor chap had not dived off the barge. He had fallen from the bowsprit of a ship next door. He had not prepared for a bathe, but had been working in the jersey as I saw him. The mighty splash (I know an ex-champion who always makes a tremendous "bloss" on plunging) had knocked all the wind and some of the sense out of him, and what we thought and were sure was fooling about was neither more nor less than his fighting

for dear life. Oh, dear! what should I have thought of myself if I had sat there and seen the man drown, when I could get him out of all trouble by just lending a befriending hand? But it was not till his mate ran in—the drowner was only seven or eight yards from the water's edge—that I had the slightest inkling that anything was wrong.

Swimming, a national need and asset, is a matter where the State is concerned, and the State ought to lend a hand; but I do not mean that because swimming facilities are boons and blessings people who are quite able to provide these for themselves ought to sit down and wait for the ratepayers or the charitable to treat them. I remember being reproached for going back on myself by opposing a proposition to put a floating bath in the Thames somewhere on the City shore. That shows how you get misunderstood. I did not object to the purport of the suggestion, but would have been glad to see it carried out on what I consider right lines. What I objected to, and do always dislike, was the idea that the bath could only be—shall we say?—floated by means of sending round the hat, which, in my opinion, is the last resource, although it is so peculiarly popular, especially with the professional philanthropist, always ready to benefit his fellow-men at other fellow-men's expense. So near as I can recollect, I took exception to the prospectus because, after setting forth that as so many thousands or hundreds of thousands of persons wanted to bathe each day, therefore the enterprise was sure to be a success financially, it maintained that it was right and proper that the capital required should be donated.

Really it is a great pity that some of us do not wait to call on Jupiter till after we have put our shoulders to the wheel. If there *are* so many interested—and I do not say there are not—let the local council or vestry do the business and benefit the rates thereby, or let the multitude concerned put their mickles together to make the required muckle. To me the practice appears all wrong. Thanks to many good souls, Prince George's playing-fields at Raynes Park were secured for the public. If people like to give for so excellent an object as creating a public playground, well and good. But I never could see why the clubs concerned did not among them take this land for themselves if they were so inclined. If you counted the members of clubs, football and cricket, who pitched their tents as well as their wickets on this land and, getting at the figures, then divided the sum asked by the vender by this total, each body's share was almost insignificant. Besides, it would not have been a difficult financial feat to arrange the purchase on the instalment principle if the several—which is to say, hundreds of—purchasers desired. There are sharp auctioneers about, who, if they had the estate to sell cut up into as many lots as these club members' roll-call numbers, would in ten minutes put all straight to extend payments over ten years, make a fine profit out of the trifle of interest, and enable the buyers to acquire a nice little bit of property without knowing that it had cost them anything except money that would have been wasted but for being put into this sort of savings bank. It is just the same if a section want a bit of a public park made handy for them or,

say, "fitted" with a running track. They do not go to the Commissioners and say, "We desire this, that, and the other, and if you will kindly grant us permission, will do the work required." Oh! no. They want somebody else to perform the labour or find the money to pay for doing the same. What for? Where does their claim come in? They desire but do not need assistance, being in position to help themselves. Possibly, if you ask them how many want this change effected, you will be given big figures. Is it not cleaner and more manly for all this crowd to set to and bear their share of the cost or labour than to go—well there, I can't help using the word—cadging? It is neither less nor more *than* cadging.

A great chance is always being missed so long as we do not have swimming-baths or a swimming-bath de luxe in the heart of the City. My ideal is one (I suppose it must be down in a basement because of the expense) well-lighted, perfectly ventilated, and with its water always at an agreeable temperature. How would the City men enjoy such baths in this weather? What a fine business ought to be done! If the water was always kept on the flow, the bath's being rather small wouldn't matter much. The thing only wants doing really well, to be a success. We are far behind the Midlands and the North, especially the North, except in one particular. We do not, as a rule, make the mistake, so common—especially in Lancashire—of fixing too high a temperature. I cannot do at all with such. They make me slack and tired instead of setting me up. As a matter of fact, I have not of late years found many opportunities

to experience London baths, so am not now competent to give an opinion, but, as a rule, I used to find most baths very little to my taste, though some vastly pleased other people. For instance, I never came across what I call a sensible Turkish bath. The miserable thing was that a bath of this sort was ever introduced under such a style or title, and that being so, introduced to architects—oh! those architects!—the dim religious, gloomy, jealously-guarded-from-the-sun, idea they have so ably amplified, that the place to which you go to spend a couple of hours or so is purposely darkened till you cannot see to read big print in it. That is to help the time pass quickly and pleasantly, I presume. You want something bright and cheerful, and are presented with a stained-glass illuminated vault. Again, for years architects thought a bit of glass between the cooling room and the next, a sheet of glass to divide the two, over the water of the plunge must be correct. Two or three people, imagining that what was glass was space, dived into the invisible obstruction and cut themselves badly. They also broke the glass. So the architects fixed up thicker, and would have gone on thickening and constructively being guilty of maiming with malice aforethought till they presented the immovable vitreous body so often quoted.

But fortunately one of the mutilated plungers brought an action for damages, and recovered a jolly lot, too. Then the proprietors took the architecture on their own hooks, and hung up a bit of leather curtain which served all required screening purposes, and did not lead to substantial and other painful damages. It always

has been etiquette, too, to make buttered slides in the shampooing rooms, instead of putting down a bit of cocoanut matting or something of that sort to walk on, and to leave the lavatory at the outside temperature. Again—but hang it! Here am I off on Turkish baths when I meant to be discoursing about the swimming variety. I was going to say that, as a rule, if these affairs have a fault, it is that they are beastly dirty. Dear! dear! If you find one into which the light of day is let, maybe by accident, don't you venture to look at the water when the sun is on it. No, my brother, don't you do that, unless you are fully prepared to give up using that bath. Rather deal with it as one used with the *à la mode* beef of commerce and the cheap eating-houses. Take it, so to speak, up into the darkest corner, and make your meal or do your bathing there.

Knowing what I do of certain baths, and seeing what I do see, I am no longer of opinion that bacilli, bacteria, germs, or any of those things are unhealthy, but hold views on the other line. If they were unhealthy, why are not all of us who used the old, and some new, baths—why are we not all dead and done for? What do I think of many of our baths? Filthy is the word; degradingly dirty. Smell 'em, my friends. Inspect their sanitary, or, rather, insanitary, arrangements. Give your mind to following up their system of ventilation. Look at the poor fellows who come in grimy and go out lighter. What ought to make for cleanliness is more by way of pollution. In how many baths is the water changed with reasonable frequency? Would the cost of

keeping a constant flow through be too much? It is always seems to me that what might be called waste in this connection should be easily obviated. Why could not bath water be used for other purposes, as, for instance, watering the roads?

Unfortunately I have a very unwelcome cue furnished for another word or two on unnecessary risks and consequent suffering, said cue being a canine acquaintance dead lame, with a foot-pad cut nearly off, and others badly cut through striking glass while running on a public playground. How many people get maimed in a year's bathing through this nuisance! If I were writing articles about bathing and swimming in the Old Country, more particularly in the Thames, I think I should begin with a strong caution to look out for broken bottles, very likely repeat the same in the middle of my catalogue, and most probably wind up with another monition to beware of cutting glass. For weeks I had intended to make an appeal on this head to the foolish who work so much ill for want of thought rather, we would believe, than through want of heart, but who do, take one year with another, cause an immense amount of suffering and serious illness. Downright fiendish I call the way that so many deal with a bottle directly they have emptied it. If they don't think, or rather, don't care, for such disregard of consequences amounts to callousness, they jolly well ought to be made to care—and that by rights without the option.

Just a word about a danger accomplished watermen create for themselves, which is almost inconceivable to me, though some laugh at it. To give one instance. I have seen a Tyne

sculler, matched for the championship, go for long pulls by himself with his boots, ankle high, screwed to the stretcher, and his feet securely laced up in them. Shoes give you a chance. What chance had he in case of accident?

Very excellent reading indeed is afforded by the Life-Saving Society's annual report. The amount of good work done—much of it on a self-supporting basis—is wonderful, and we must bear in mind that a great deal more in the way of promoting knowledge of swimming and applying it for rescue work is really due to the National Life-Saving Society than it takes for itself. The Society has set any number of wheels going round, which might never have been moving but for its send-off. Now they run by themselves, one thing strikes me as not being quite as it ought to be—viz., the amount of subscription. The gentlemen who labour so hard in the national work of gratuitous life assurance from a common danger deserve to have far more aid put in their hands.

Curiously, the swimming amateur has so long as I can recollect been ever glad to turn school-master without fees, so rendering the nation good service. Mr Horace Davenport must have spent years, counting hour by hour, in gratuitously imparting the principles of the art he so brilliantly illustrated. There was, too, the old London Swimming Association, was it not, of which the late J. Garrett Elliott was the moving spirit, and, dear me! my memory is so treacherous, I was near forgetting in this connection my great friend, now gone before, Mr John Latey, able Editor of *Sketch* and *P.I.P.*, writer of novels, and at one time all manner of

articles for more than the orthodox thirty-nine per day or week, I believe. Mr Latey, who was almost one of "us," was an earnest, never-lagging labourer in promoting the spread—may I call it?—of swimming. The City Swimming Club's members devote considerable attention to teaching those who cannot afford to pay for instruction, while, I am very pleased to say, taking care not to come in so as to interfere with professional instructors earning a living. This sort of thing, including the careful consideration for pro.'s, ranks with me as the highest form of sport.

Although I fear being informed that my life is one round of pleasure, as the proprietor of a neighbouring newspaper told a sub-editor found smoking a pipe while indexing a book of reference and working against the clock, I must plead guilty to dining out with the Otters' Club. "Labor ipse voluptas" was the motto of my old swimming club the Ilex. By no means plagiarists in appropriating neighbours' text, the Otter Swimming Club founded themselves, worked on and made themselves flourish so exceedingly on the principle enunciated as to become what the Ilex was, *the* leading amateur swimming club of England, in the same class as the amateur rowing men's institution, the aforesaid Ilex. I have vivid memory of many jolly gatherings at which I assisted while the latter had matters pretty much their own way, and all gratitude for the pleasures enjoyed at their suppers. Gin and bitters, steak and onions, old ale, Allsopp "A" and Bass's No. 1 ale, rum punch, all in quantities expressible by the sign x , and devious walks from the White Hart at Barnes (Chris. Willcox was a boss of the show) there or thereabouts to Barnes

railway station, or as near thereto as you could conveniently appertain, are details firmly fixed in my recollection. Who wouldn't remember sweet suppers such as these and the afore-mentioned "appertaining" necessitating much watermanship in steering through very rolling waves of common, beset with shoals that rose at you, yawning gravel-pits far worse than quicksands, Scyllas of furze and Charybdises of thorn-bush, dangers in a sea of troubles, not the least of which was illimitable width. Jolly was the word then. Because jolly was the word, and not on account of any association of detail just quoted, I mention these recollections in connection with the Otter Swimming Club dinner. I doubt whether the poor, also dear old, Ilex ever was, in its very best day, quite as strong an institution as the Otter is now; in fact, I am sure it was not. The same element which distinguished the older is strong in its successor—what may be called the rowing club interest; but somehow, while wishing the Otters nothing but the best of good, I do sometimes—as I daresay many of their members do—feel wishful that the Ilex might still be a power in the swimming land—or water. It seems as if something must be wrong with the way of the world when such a federacy as this was can peter out and be, as my friend put it, now defunct. A club to promote and encourage the art of swimming among members of rowing clubs seems a sort of logical necessity, a corollary to the boat-pullers' existence; and I am certain that the vigorous young firms, of which the most lusty is the Otter, would be as pleased as would ancient mariners to whom the Ilex was *the* swimming club, if that might be resuscitated.

CHAPTER XI

PUTNEY AND THE CLUBS

My old and very much valued friend and correspondent Mr W. H. Eyre, has been propounding an idea that should be taken up by the State. He wants—as I want, and many of us have wanted for a long while—somebody at his own expense, or at the municipality's or the country-at-large's, to collect all interesting material about the houses we live in before memories of occurrences and folk-lore worth recording die out. Once I got so far as inducing two or three biggish men to favourably consider a little thing of my own—viz., systematic photographing at intervals of all streets, squares, houses of importance or peculiar construction any way interesting. The scheme was to take their portraits before they were rearranged by pulling down and rebuilding, or merely reduced to ruins. "Ruins" happens to be the word right here, for it was through getting himself up in "all black" so as to fit in with latter-day picturesque ideas of the New Zealanders' touring costume, and sitting in memory (and, let me repeat, the other adornments) moralising on *the* Ruins of London up Holborn Hill way, that Mr Eyre came to suggest and request that some competent person should undertake picturesque

accounts of celebrated sporting drums, disappeared or disestablished from their former association. If only we could find the right man to carry out this work! Unfortunately, you know, such centres began to fade a long while ago, and a good many who talk about them do so only at second hand.

Two or three times I have started to do a sort of Old and New London style of go-as-you-please descriptive history of both sides of the boat-racing Thames, mixing matter understood of the people generally with special diversions in the direction of sport, present and past, its worthies, unworthies, celebrities, and notorieties, their tricks, manners, good or bad luck, characters, and—what is a handy opposite to the complimentary reading of character? shall we say convictions? No more congenial work than this did I ever find. Anything to do with sport was good enough for me. Boat-racing, the principal pastime of our river, I liked as much as pretty nearly any three other amusements outside it put together. Besides, I knew through personal acquaintance such a lot of the old stock, the crop just before that which at the time of my peregrinations held the sway, as they themselves would have put it, and the young 'uns coming on. Mind you, putting us both to start off the same mark, Mr Eyre could give me I do not know how many lengths, and a dreadful beating as historian of boat-racing on the river, he being as chock-full of knowledge as Sol Gills, with an encyclopædic—may I say omnivorous?—appetite for major facts and the most minute detail, possessing the advantage of living and having his being among the aquatically-inclined Thames-siders.

No one could tell more or better than he of watermen, apprentices, landsmen, steamer skippers, Jacks-in-the-water, bargees, sandboys, and fishermen, licensed by permission and various rights, or simply having successfully defied all authorities and so licensed themselves. Bearing in mind the somewhat libellous adage about knowing a man by the company he keeps, I refrain from suggesting that Mr Eyre could tell us much about the boy pirates of the Thames who, metaphorically, hoisted the black flag on two or three logs tied together to make a raft, and, setting forth on Putney Reach's water, navigated to Fulham's shores to rob the orchards, and anybody in general. Neither will I cite him as an authority through experience in the fine art of sub-aquatic body-snatching.

You may laugh, readers, hearing me talk as if this was a recognised industry. The reason I do so is the oft-quoted one, because it is, or was; and a very nice, quiet, safe business, too, supposing you could get connection enough. Sometimes the gentlemen engaged in the enterprise had hard times, seeing that then few to-be-for-ever-silent-passengers made lonely voyages up or down the Thames. Besides, when they did go irresponsibly floating down or up to Camelot or somewhere else, they might, after all, bring no grist to the honest tradesman's mill, being found, on examination extending to the pockets, of poor account. I do not profess to be up to the intricacies of the science, but I believe that such subjects as these were relieved of anything calculated to make them sink, and allowed to go on their way. But when a body met a body with valuables quite different treat-

ment followed. The live one took the dead one to safe anchorage, where it was pegged down to await developments—a word you may translate into offers of reward. If what seemed a fair premium was advertised, then the derelict remains would be discovered with great promptitude and punctuality. Otherwise no unseemly haste was shown in the matter; the—what shall we call them?—salvage corps could wait. The longer the interval the more would be friends' and relations' anxiety indicated by a rising scale of rewards. Anyhow, there were men—I daresay are—with good practices in this very much superior Rogue Riderhood profession, and interesting, if somewhat gruesome, reading could be furnished on the subject.

To go back to ruins for a moment, our tideway veteran wants someone to confirm or correct his uncertain impression that in the interval between *the* Ruins being disestablished as an open-air betting market and its being legally occupied by the holders, who had done nothing with it for so long, a crop of corn was grown there—which is to say within a stone's throw of 'Obun 'Ill—and in due course was to be seen standing in shocks. This is one of those confoundedly misleading propositions calculated to get a conscientious citizen into trouble, because if you do not actually recollect, you cogitate until the idea seems to seize on you. Like me you may conjure up the pastoral scene, an oasis of rusticity in a weary waste of concentrated smoke and-bricks-and-mortar desert. Unless you are very strong-minded, indeed, the unique situation gets such a hold that you innocently lie that you saw what you only heard about rather than

forsake possibility of the anomalous occurrence. I could swear to something of the sort, but would not so much as affirm. Still, there are plenty left among us who would lay a thousand pounds to a farthing one way or another and prove their case. Perhaps some of these will oblige. My impression is that I recollect bets being made on this question a long while ago, and settled in favour of harvest-homing in the heart of smoky London. After all, Holborn Viaduct way can be no more against grain culture than is lots of the country up North. I see little to choose between that and, for instance, the productive market-garden-cum-farmeries round about Manchester. Where the weak part of the story comes in is round about Mr Passer Communis, and, as William Cobbett said of the ants, his abominable industry. So long as the cheeky London sparrow can see any mortal thing to eat and get at it, he does not care about being properly gramnivorous or any other ivorous, so long as it helps make up omnivorous. Gobbling is his game, also his forte—directly he grows up, that is, though for preference he is in the grub-eating line while himself in what I may call the green leaf.

Things go so rapidly now that scarcely sufficient attention can be paid to current doings, so fast is the rush into a future, to be left behind almost before you are abreast of it. Real pictures with live actors present themselves in almost instantaneous succession—at least, so it seems. Through scant leisure being afforded for book-reading, the constituency drops the habit, which falls out of its old place in life. Of course the real thing is better than any picture by brush, pen, or pencil; yet I

often wonder that demand is small for materials, sketches of sorts to conjure up past times and their pastimes, as could be done with, say, Mr Eyre's suggested series of old sporting drums' history. Take, for instance, the waterside pubs., where men who rowed, their gaffers, trainers, and others in the fancy line did congregate. Old hands who have been out of England for a long spell feel quite pangs on viewing Putney as it is when unthinkingly expecting to find the Putney as it was in their long-ago days; upset in all their notions as a long-absent traveller, returning a man to the homestead he left while a boy, and dead out in all his measurements and estimates.

From those with loving remembrance of the metropolitan waters and their banks as they were before the great reconstruction set in, I should like to hear an opinion. For prettiness and enjoyment, old Putney—and I am not speaking of so very long ago—was tons in front of the new. Above the wooden bridge was country, and nicely wooded, too, on the Fulham side, before the Conservancy had the trees by the Bishop's Walk cut down. Up to very nearly 1870 waterside Putney was pretty much as are villages remote, right away on the higher reaches, where the houseboat is absent and the banjo bungalow has not come. Picturesqueness there was in plenty when the big trees stood on the Bishop's Walk over against Fulham Palace; the clubs had not a house, not even London; Beverley Brook's outlet at high tide made as pretty a peep of romantic scenery as you could wish for, quite to suit Mr Waterfall Smith; Craven Cottage had not begun, like Sweet Alice's (Mrs Ben Bolt that ought to have been) rustic

porch, to fall to decay: the country started pretty much where Point House left off; 'Varsity crews did not disdain to lodge themselves at public-houses (you may call them hotels; I say public); and the celebrated L. R. C. picture was not yet painted. Most of us remember the place with the Bells down by the river, the haunt of professional rowing men from all parts of the world, and a house of call for any number of amateurs. This was an institution in the way of waterside inns one looked upon as no likelier to change than Putney Church with its motto, "Time and tide wait for no man." You could land anywhere on the foreshore where the footing was hard. No embankment wall in your way. A little inconvenient one-of-a-terrace kind of dwelling, Point House, commanded a high rent because of its standing close to the water; and over probabilities of acquiring a lease of such property well-to-do rowing men and the like would almost fight. Now such a tenement is number something in a row of modern (and much more comfortable) houses, a number and nothing more. To the Star and Garter came people for dining purposes, and to take trips even out of Boat Race times; and then it gave no hint of the gigantic proportions to which the extended premises have reached. Remnants of the Stuarts and Commonwealth celebrities, such as Cromwell House, Fairfax House, and other relics, notably very ancient inns stowed in odd corners, were dear to the rowing men dwelling in those parts. Places where highwaymen like Jerry Abershaw (see your Captain Marryat and "Japhet in Search of a Father") hung—ominous word—out were still "authenticated." And it appeared to me that everyone

who could would pitch his tent in or near Putney so as to be handy for work on the river.

All that sort of intimate association with boating and boat-racing and attachment to the locale for residence in practice seems to me to have died out, or most of it. And I expect that were the Putney of to-day—by Putney I mean to include the place, its immediate surroundings and associations—to be ten times more radically altered than it has been, from an outlying riparian townlet to a crowded suburb, the difference would not be felt by this generation half as much as the change I spoke of by the school who used to take their pleasure in and about boat-racing's headquarters, but are now pretty long in the tooth.

Please understand I do not blame anyone. Times change; if you do not move with them, you get left. Daily, inclination grows stronger to treat everything, and I might almost say everyone, on a business basis without sentiment or consideration beyond dealing on a money-down principle. (Of course cash, absolutely in money or value, may be only promised, not fairly handed over, that is an incident of a bargain void of any tinge of imagination.) The thing or person has a price for being taken up as required, used while usage is desirable, and dropped when not wanted longer. As I believe it, the greater proportion of the old school went into sport because Nature had projected their career in that direction. Having enlisted, they served their time. Put on the retired list, they remained faithful to their colours out of instinct simply. Now we work on short service, very short service lines. The idea of obligation to carry on with what

practically became part of yourself, has disappeared. While he is under engagement to do this, that, or the other, your new man fulfils it if he thinks he will, then walks off. He has not raised any vain hope of an attachment to be disparagingly described as sentimental, and is certainly free to go his own road. Why not? Others go their own roads as best suits them. But that sort of thing is not sporting as sporting used to be, neither is it good for sport. That our young fellows are nothing like so keen as they were, is quite a sure thing. One thing by itself can settle any doubt on this—viz., coaches telling you that you cannot get the men to train as they should. They will not do work enough to get fit—there are, of course, exceptions—and you cannot make them. Between old notions and new lies great difference.

This sort of reminiscing comes sort of natural after such a time-mark as the fiftieth anniversary dinner of the London Rowing Club in January, 1906. Mr Ben Horton, vice-president of the club, occupied the chair at the Hotel Cecil. The company was numerous and enthusiastic, so well done, hearty and jolly after a really grand dinner, that I daresay not a few of the old 'uns fancied they were as young and useful as they used to be in the days of the classical celebrities their chairman quoted with their doughty deeds and records. Some of those present *were* the celebrities, you know.

Records are records. You cannot get away from the figures or dispute the book's veracity. Still, for myself, I confess to wondering whether the "Rowing Almanack" and newspaper files had not been playing tricks with the clock one way

or the other. First I was staggered almost at the jubilee part of the business—tilted off my balance first one way and then the other. Fifty years—from 1856 to 1906—seemed such a tremendously long while. The club's seeing fifty years, with self and contemporaries carrying remembrance of many of the original members, though not privileged to see them all row, sounded impossible, too. Again, turning the situation over as one does, you began to believe in these fighting men's days having belonged to a previous era altogether. Surely great oarsmen and scullers, whom boat-pulling-inclined youths worshipped in the sixties—very grown-up youths now, these latter, in the aged list—must have been at work for the L. R. C. earlier than 1856! Why, they were middle-aged men already to the lot coming on to succeed them.

So they were, but what sixteen or seventeen or up to very nearly twenty considers old may be scarcely deemed a properly grown-up stage by the man of forty. I know that H. H. Playford and Frank L. Playford seemed to me quite patriarchal when I was not so old as I am now, but then, John Ireland, the great umpire in professional matches, and I were almost of an age in company. These left off making history before my contemporaries were grown-up enough to go in for man's sports; but between their near successors and our crop was no difference, not any in some instances, and that takes you back to, well—quite long enough to go. Mr Horton, in a very interesting reminiscent speech, among many cited mentioned comrades, great amateur rowers whose loss the club deploras, grudging their being called even if Nature's course was run

when certain of them were taken away. Of course the common-sense view presented itself to make a *per contra*—viz., reflecting on the splendid proportion of veteran members left, as fine a set of seasoned warriors as you could wish to put forward for purposes of refuting the anti-athletic school. They could, I guess, do as good a day's work, with age allowance, as the young 'uns, and take their own part, too, on level terms except for pace.

Their successors will, I fancy, never be asked to train as hard as did the first Londoners, who in their second year went to Henley and walked off with the Stewards, the Diamonds, and the Grand Challenge Cup, beating the Oxford University Boat Club, and in 1859 defeated the Cambridge University Boat Club in a heat, and the Oxford University Boat Club afterwards. While Mr James Layton, who became president in 1860 and remained so till his death in 1875, was in office some of what I venture to call the barbarities of training disappeared. I never recollect the prize-fighters' preparation hurting anybody much. Still, it carried a deal of unnecessary—shall we say?—torture. I am sure that some of these ancient methods were mistaken, too, because they took too much out of men. Half the pugilists were overdone in their preparation through being given too much long, slow, dragging work, instead of sharp, bustling exercise, a far better means of removing internal fat than the other. This is not to give preference to slack training over the honest hard sort, but more by way of pleading for moderation. In one particular I am sure about the former style being wrong—viz., in cutting an athlete's drink down, not letting him

moisten his clay when he is thirsty in training. My experience is that as anyone training grows fit so does he, if all is well with him, lose his thirst, therefore un wisdom is shown in denying means of assuaging that same. Enforced abstinence from drink when Nature calls for a refresher—not necessarily stimulant, or, at any rate, alcoholic—has, I am sure, been fatal to more than one fine oarsman in the days when surgeons were given less free play with edged tools.

But this by the way. We were talking of old-style training's severity. In the period first mentioned a Metropolitan Rowing Club crew would sometimes be sentenced, or directed, to start fresh from a long row and run right away out of their ship at the hard above the Star and Garter, on an expedition up to Putney Hill-top and back. As for diet, everybody in those days was practically denied a deal of what was needed. For some features of preparation no need or justification really existed. Still, this was almost better than the half-and-half sort of business one sees nowadays. We have had a good many doctors in the Metropolitan crews, hard men themselves. I never heard one explain why so often a fine chap, apparently all right, will go to pieces—a whole crew will at a certain stage—and that temporary deterioration be forerunner of a rise exceeding the passing depression. The turn comes, and the trained is fit to fight for his life in whatever station from the ring to skipping he may be called to.

What a splendid list of L.R.C. worthies Mr Horton presented! There was in the gallery A. A. Casamajor, who died in 1861; he is to be

seen in *the* club picture. This gentleman won five Diamonds, six Wingfield Sculls, forty-five rowing races—in crews, that is—and was never beaten as a public sculler. How good was Casamajor, and was his boat faster or slower than the up-to-date model? She had no floor at all; in place of the flat bottom half-circle model we adopt, her straight sides came to a V for a keel. If you could sit her you might sit anything, but get the least bit of balance and go you must. I have been in a seaway in a ship on nearly similar lines. Also I have been chucked clear of the craft. The boat and club-house was built in 1870; by that time the original members' roll of 106 sworn in at the first meeting in 1856 had grown to over 500, I believe. If I recollect right, the Star and Garter had been made to serve as club-house. A rare set of hard fighters were about from 1860 to 1878—quos nunc enumerare longum est. Our president at table was never in better form. One is always too polite to allude to ages. Still, on the old-age question, including athletics' effects on you, I must quote one crew in which he figured. These won the Grand Challenge Cup in 1874: Bow was B. Horton, then C. S. Routh and C. E. Routh (both of whose initial names I have seen indicated with an "S."), E. B. Parlour, A. de L. Long, F. L. Playford, S. le B. Smith, F. S. Gulston (stroke)—what a waterman and general!—and V. E. Weston (cox). Some of these had been great at race-pulling for seasons before this. In 1904, thirty years after this particular year, the crew complete turned up to be photographed and dine together all sound and hearty. In 1883 died H. H. Playford, one of the most powerful

oarsmen I ever saw, a man impossible to turn from his set purpose. "H. H." could stand anything himself, and thought everybody else was equally gifted with strength and stamina. He was a great authority on cooking, and taught me not to put a fork in a steak. The way he accentuated his instructions was to kick my "behind" part, and send the fore to get burnt on the stove's bars. I never forgot the lesson—cheap, too, at the price.

Next but one to me at the dinner was a fine seasoned athlete — amateur champion boxer, rower, runner, footballer, a great swimmer, field sportsman, and a doer of everything athletic, a doer who did all well. Grand in physique and a stayer always, full of mirth and full of glee as a genial Scotsman can be, bright and merry was David Gibson, my frequent companion through many years. At all his jokes, for many a joke had he to tell, and came to me to tell them that night, I laughed with genuine appreciation. Fifty-six according to the calendar, not sixteen in boyish spirits, Mr Gibson kept the game alive in our little party. I knew that not long ago he had been seriously ill. Recovered he was, more blithe than ever, and enjoyed life, looking at its bright side, and helping others to do that same. The last friend to say good-night to one or two of us as we left the entertainment was David Gibson, of the magnificent deep chest, the sturdy frame, the robust carriage. "Good-bye, old scoundrel that you are," said David, as we parted. And at Richmond, a few hours afterwards, he died in a moment at the International Rugby football match. Poor old David! Good old David! He lived in athletic sport, and died

in it after a long innings, and would have "lived the same life over if he had to live again," as Lindsay Gordon puts it. Had the dear old chap been asked when his end was to come, he would, perhaps, have chosen to part from his long-tried friends after a jovial leave-taking, when they were gathered by scores never dreaming of the instant loss impending.

In January the London Rowing Club banquet; in February the Thames. No more jovial federation in its annual corroborrees is to be found than the Thames Rowing Club. None in this world has a better post-prandial orator than Mr W. H. Eyre, who played all sorts of parts in every kind of sporting drama for years before the public getting on for forty bought their shovels, as the navvies say. I would, as I recount season by season, always go miles—yes, miles and miles—to hear him hold forth in his robust, cheery manner. This time I can dispose of his part in the banqueting proceedings by putting him at his very best. Perhaps the part of the entertainment most noteworthy was the emphatic protest raised by representatives of several rowing clubs against the London County Council's steam-boating on the reaches from Putney to Hammersmith, and their skippers' callous disregard of small boaters' lives and craft. Mr Rudolph Lehmann, M.P., who spoke for Leander, is, I think I can say without giving offence for introducing politics, a democratic sympathiser with John Burns's school. You might hope that this 'Varsity coach's being in that galley with the Battersea brother may lead to asking what the devil for J. B. wanted to be upsetting folks', mostly working-men's, little pleasure afloat, the men and their craft as well.

I have pleasure in backing up the Thames Rowing Club members and guests who protested, as have all their congeners, against the arbitrary autocratic, selfish, and everything but democratic and truly socialistic in its best sense, practice of the London County Council, presumably approved, despite protest, by the very men who ought to be thinking for others as for themselves. I was glad to hear Mr Ellington of the *Field* (following others concerned in and for the Amateur Rowing Association class, supposed to be better able to put up with loss through the Council's steamers) speak up for the little men, to whom even a shilling is of consequence. You see, the poorer the man boating for pleasure, the less seaworthy or riverworthy will his craft probably be, and therefore the more easily damaged through the excessive wash thrown up by these steamers' unnecessarily high rate of navigation. So those least able to stand bad luck have it most readily thrust on them, which is d——d hard. To them shipwreck in final or partial degree and call for outlay in repairs would sensibly hit their clubs or individual members, who at the best have great struggle to rub along at all. Damage, exasperating and expensive as it must be to the better endowed, is readily remediable and comparatively insignificant, yet cruel in its incidence on the presumably John Burns connection. Queer people indeed are these Burnsians, who will beg as collectors of voluntary subscriptions, or vote solid to tax the ratepayers for installation and maintenance of dry-land playgrounds, yet, for the sake of getting their own way in municipal trading and attracting influence in franchise,

render useless by hundreds of acres water-parks enjoyed from time immemorial free to all.

I have been praising Mr Eyre's stock of anecdotes. Here is a sample, a local legend of an overcoat, given in his own words: "A concert, to celebrate the victory of the Calderhead's form from Greenock in 'the hundred' at the Thames National, was taking place at the White Horse on the river shore at Wandsworth (then known to us 'longshore men' as 'the Port of Wanzer'). The 'sing-song' was held in a first-floor room, and the top of Mr Charles May's presidential chair, with his overcoat temptingly displayed hanging over its back, was visible through the open window (against which it was backed) to the various not too particular gentry of the neighbourhood assembled outside. I am inclined to think that this appearance was regarded by the 'larrikin' population as a sort of challenge to perform a deed of deftness, and that it was more with a view to subsequent tap-room glorification than from any predatory instinct, that some lithe and sinuous sportsman crept up the water-spout, or by some other means reached the window and dexterously fingered away the coat, little by little, although Mr May was leaning against it, more or less, the whole of the time. The room was full of company, sitting and standing, and the successful performance of the feat without detection was undoubtedly a triumph of light-fingered larceny. The loss was discovered as the sing-song broke up, and Mr May received much ironical sympathy with his loss. Pausing on the way through the bar, one of us described the matter as a joke to the landlord of those days—a well-

known ex-rowing professional. 'What!' said either he or another Wandsworth waterman of perfectly 'straight' reputation, 'was that Mr May's coat the beggars were swaggering about? I'll blanky soon get it for you.' Which he did, rushing out and returning with it in a very few minutes, to Mr May's great satisfaction. It is hardly necessary to say that no obtrusive questions were asked, and the general impression was that the incident had terminated in a manner calculated to redound greatly to the credit and honour of all concerned.

"I need scarcely add that the whole neighbourhood has since very greatly improved, and that such an affair could not possibly now take place at the present White Horse. But God bless 'em! if you allow for 'environment,' they weren't by any means bad sorts in those parts, as a rule even then."

Mr H. R. Forster's book, *Down by the River: A Rowing Man's Miscellany*, has to the metropolitan rowing man created a long-felt want. Written by a Cambridge oarsman, there is, and only naturally, a goodish bit of that 'Varsity's flavour in the neat little volume of some hundred and twenty pages; but the items specially devoted to the Cam and the Ouse and their "shop" can well be understood of the multitude, and amuse them, too. Our friend, a late Thames R.C. captain, is frequently guilty of trade poetry—i.e., regarding practical boat-race pulling—and smart, bright rhymes he writes. Among the many excellent little poems, "The Evolution of Rowing" would perhaps be liked best. "The Débutante" is possibly the best class, and "The Old Crock" will be most liked by

—ahem, more or less incompetent, also patriarchal, pullers and paddlers appreciating the touch of human nature which makes the whole crowd kin. "Let us," writes our author, "say something of those whom people stigmatise as corks. I doubt whether there is a better or truer rowing man on the river than the good old-fashioned, hopeless cork. I have known many of them, and come to respect their very deficiencies. Year by year they row on without hope of advancement, or even of more success than an occasional scratch four or junior trial can give, ever cheerful and persevering in spite of the most discouraging circumstances; and where his club is concerned, the genuine cork is always as keen as though he assisted it to win the Grand Challenge every morning before breakfast. Let us, therefore, give him some of the recognition that he deserves but seldom gets."

Grateful and comforting to corks, is it not? and, moreover, ought to be instructive to t'other sort, the more successful artists, also to the younger generation, who too often miss the fine, strong quality which, so to speak, glorifies the cork in sportsmen's eyes—viz., his keenness and unselfishness. I don't mind saying that it is the corks who keep half the rowing clubs going, more particularly the old corks. I would like to be able to print Mr Forster as he drops into poetry, with the rowing person of no importance for text. Please listen to this little bit describing the cork: "His form is far from neat, His hands are never ready, He cannot keep his feet Upon the stretcher steady; He tugs against his straps, His blade is weak and dirty; He gets in time,

perhaps, One stroke in every thirty. In weird spasmodic jerks He does his clumsy toiling, As though his rusty works Most sadly wanted oiling."

Young gentlemen and elders of superior elevation kindly cast your eye carefully on this "follow": "Yet some of you who smile With pitiful serenity Upon his dreadful style Might imitate his keenness. He does the best he can To serve his club and college; I've known a first boat man Do less for all his knowledge." There is clever research behind "Grandfather Nilus's Notes on the Early History of Rowing," and studiously collected historical matter in "On the Tideway," a chapter which leaves off just when it begins to be most interesting to those who agree with Mr Forster, as I do in this: "There is a fascination about the tideway, too—a zest which smoother and more sluggish courses cannot excite, a charm which is more subtle than the attraction of more picturesque reaches. There is a pleasure to be got from rowing on it which is not to be got elsewhere." True for you, Mr F., as a novice ought to find out the first time he comes over the rollers at Teddington from the stream water, catches the ebb, and finds his ship, whatever it may be, change from a dead to a live thing.

CHAPTER XII

ROWING AT PUTNEY

IN an admirable article in the *Standard*, I found an awkward expression used regarding the Oxford-Cambridge match from Putney to Mortlake. The writer claims for the contest its being the cleanest and straightest of all. With all due respect to him and all concerned, may I ask whether he might not have given others a chance? What is the matter with ordinary amateur boat-pullers as a rule? And, passing from aquatic sports, are there not others? Somehow one does not quite like this typical 'Varsity style of putting the colleges first and the rest nowhere, and the worst of being irritated through a remnant of the University swagger which, happily, generally gets rubbed off so as to reduce its proprietors to the level of human beings, is your feeling sort of called upon to start replies and reprisals. For all these you must be sorry; still, it is a little difficult to pass this sort of thing, which means casting a slur on all other amateurs. While confessing to being rubbed the wrong way by this unwelcome swagger, I must add a compliment on my own account to the institution which in some of its developments has been greatly improved. For instance, coaches long ago left off endeavouring

to dodge reporters and putting them wrong if possible. Nowadays, when brethren of my craft are catered for so magnificently (at their firm's expense, understand) with steam launches laid on and all manner of conveniences for following the work, you would scarcely believe in earlier coaches pulling their men up sharp because newspaper men were about on the barge-walk with clocks, or somebody in that line was discovered on a steamer. But that was quite a common occurrence.

I can remember, too, when your humble servant was the only one, barring 'Varsity men, engaged in the same business, who was not objected to as passenger on a little ship lent by a friend of mine to one of the 'Varsity boat clubs. Detrimentials used to be spotted, challenged, and required to leave the boat forthwith, and there was talk of marooning such on Chiswick Eyot with a big spring tide coming. All that sort of thing has died out, as has for the most part sugaring in trials to order, or for personal purposes of betting—a practice which undoubtedly obtained. Why on earth, when wagering is so utterly put out of all count by the contestants, as it professedly is and has been, any mystery should have been created and maintained passes my comprehension altogether. But in the not long ago every expedient to be invented was resorted to for the purpose of fogging the public. And—well, I will not fall into the error which overstating the merits of the Blues invites me to commit, and show cause against the *Standard's* most entertaining writer—at least, I will not except to ask what one of our great coaches said a year or two back when

somebody in one of the boats proposed something in the way of fitting trials, and authorised reports to rigging the market. Of course a community ought not to suffer for one member's unworthy actions. At the same time, why go and exalt one particular set above all their fellows, as if no one else could go straight?

Of course, when the 'Varsity crews are at Putney we must somehow have a betting quotation, or tradition will be outraged. As a matter of fact, and as all the world that knows anything is aware, what is called bookmaking on the affair is at an end. Here and there a racecourse or club fielder will accept odds to oblige a customer, but market there is none, save such as is made by amateurs mainly in or about the Stock Exchange. Whether the so-called professional bookmakers preferring to leave the business alone mainly because of custom's petering out makes for good or makes to prove anything beyond the circumstance of business being business, and no business necessitating shutting up shop, is not worth arguing. I mean to say that betting on the Boat Race having gone out of fashion does not affect our everlasting desire to get a bit by backing our opinion, if we think ours is better than t'other party's. There would be as much to-day as we knew thirty years ago, and probably more, if the game had kept in the fashion. It dropped when racing folk left off opposing each other, was revived to an extent when a very noble Viceroyalty that is now insisted on having commissions for Oxford executed (and did not find so much difficulty as an expert might expect about his orders, because he was a regular patron in betting), and is now

pretty much left to the City, very nearly always represented in both crews, and ever prepared to speculate, going for a turn. Each year we have returned for us a starting price, "official," "authentic," or otherwise labelled authoritative and guaranteed. Good men of the racing world, with full understanding of the situation in all its bearings and their own moral responsibilities, do the best they can to determine what is a fair rate, taking all things into consideration. Such punters and others as arrange a little deal on S.P. basis can safely accept these gentlemen's arbitration or assessment of what is fair. But market there is none, nor any place within the meaning of the Act, or outside, where a body could go to back his fancy. In horse-racing anyone can see and hear what prices are laid or, at any rate, offered.

Go to Putney on the Boat Race day. Where does the betting come in? Not on the steamboats nor on the towpath, nor in the clubs either. Such a thing as starting price has to be manufactured the best way it can, though there would be tons of it if those who reckon one side a good thing could dig up bookmakers or others to take odds. Explanation of the falling-off comes through the pros. tiring of the business. If custom was fairly plentiful, they would make a strong enough market. The amateur who goes into fielding is seldom so well treated as the pro. His fellows want to drive absurdly hard bargains with their own set, and are like too many of us if dealing with a friend in his trade or profession. We start out with the notion of giving him a turn because he is *our* friend, and then proceed to expect him to do his

work without profit because we are *his* friend, which is not friendly or jannock.

A broken-down wastrel's estimation of amateur sports' ethics, made at Henley when Cambridge were practising there in 1903, deserves recording. A card-seller out of work the worthy was, who, in a quite friendly way, meant to provide valuable information. I didn't speak to him, but he *did* speak to me, and says he, he says: "No good your stopping to see Cambridge this afternoon, sir. Oxford's come up here a-Brusselling, and the others' got the office, so it ain't likely they'll show what they can do." Do you understand what the good gentleman meant generally, and more especially by "Brusselling"? Probably, if you can translate that verb active into English as she is spoke through dictionaries other than slang, all the rest will be clear as print. For the benefit of the uneducated, I will explain that to "Brussels" is very good rhyming slang, much better than one generally meets in print, because custom is, for such as put it in cold type, to give the rhyme away, and so destroy the purport of the linguist, which is to hide from some (the uninitiated) what he wishes to convey to others up in the language. Almost anyone can catch on so as to guess at the proper reading of this argot, if the jingle is supplied instead of only indicated, as the missing match-word will suggest itself. Example. Ordinary vernacular might almost as well be used for "Left and Right" or "Read and Write," meaning "fight." But simply "Left" or "Read" would be understood only of the people up in this special patter. The accepted rhyme-word for tout is sprout, with Brussels as front name to make the

reference quite plain. "Brussels sprout" is novice's work. "Brussels" solus fills the bill, and what this miscreant was low-minded enough to suggest to me—he being a believer in only ways that are dark—was that the Oxford crew were visiting Henley to tout their opponents' gallops, and the latter were sure to frustrate their knavish tricks by not coming out of the stable, doing only walking exercise, going another way, or otherwise dodging observation. What is more, he believed it all, too—confound his impudence, also ignorance, which we must pity.

You could not be cross with the poor, benighted chap, though I should have liked to introduce him to the Cambridge coxswain, fresh from winning the Inter-'Varsity bantam-weight boxing. I was so tickled that I would have explained the conceit there and then to a friend, and had a laugh over it, if I could find one—a friend, I mean. Alas! I had come a hundred miles to look at the Light Blues, and was unable to hit on anyone to share a joke, reason being an almost total absence of everybody. True, the Cambridge crew were there, and a little posse with them, but spectators—other than a dozen ladies, half as many loafers, and four greyhounds—were absent in a general way. I had half a mind to endeavour to put a better understanding into the heathen's mind, but he would not have believed me—Moses, me, and the prophets all arguing at once—unless approached through an avenue of ale, and that sort of attack was scarcely worth the candle—or beer. A late celebrated pugilist is credited with similar sordid views of humanity, summing up an exceedingly painful situation for noble patrons

taken in the act, accessories aiding and abetting organised dog-fighting, with advice to "square the something judge."

Among the gallant sportsmen who believe in prophesying, also betting, after the event, many interesting coups used to be brought off in connection with the Boat Race. Sometimes the coups miscarried most vexatiously. I am afraid to say how many years ago it was that a Cambridge boat in the Inter-University race went under Barnes Bridge with an impossible lead, so far as regards its so far out-paced follower's chance of picking up round the bend to the Ship at Mortlake, and then got beaten. C. B. Lawes was consul (or stroke) at the period, and, as I recollect from personal observation, was at that eventful epogue undertaking to pull seven pumped-out brother oarsmen and a coxswain in an eight-oared wager-boat, and beat another ship containing at least as many, as several live 'uns. Great as was the enterprise on behalf of the stroke, who dug his oar in and hoicked it out at the rate of x to the minute, it seemed almost as though, should he join the army of martyrs done to a turn in the good cause, the tide would float what I believe I have heard described as an octette up to the winning-post before the followers could catch them up, no matter how second, third, or thirteenth wind came back to these gallant strivers, in whose vocabulary the word defeat had no place unless as applying to someone else. Surely then was the moment to trade on the situation by backing Cambridge in hotels and places where they bet, situate at a distance from the battle royal; and plenty had been marked down.

Alas! for the ingenious parties with the wires all laid, they were privileged to empty themselves on the blue riband; a light-blue round a pigeon's leg, arriving with the tip. Poor chaps, they found the unexpected happen very disastrously, for Oxford, in the most reprehensible manner possible for would-be betters after the event, got up and won. The wise or cute men of Hampton Court and the parts about East Molesey were that day broke to a pebble, thanks to this pigeon express and finding mugs.

Another dreadful coup manqué came under my knowledge in connection with a professional sculling match between a Tynesider and a Thames professor. Brighton Races were on coincidentally with this, which carried interest sufficient to make a market on it in the ring, so that you could bet to a nice bit of money during the intervals of racing. Sculling races, you should know, are usually determined and ended when one party to a cutting-down fight establishes a substantial lead. What the *Rowing Almanack* says, "won by four lengths," or one or twenty, is little guide for form, since, for the most part, the leader does pretty well as he pleases after his opponent cracks, so that very often you could be practically certain of not making a mistake in sending off the winner from well below Hammersmith Bridge, as the men approached it from Putney on the voyage to the Ship at Mortlake. Nobody made the slightest mistake for this plant. Upside-downness had been arranged for the benefit of unscrupulous persons, who might in one way or another tap the wire or get at the bulletin. Briefly, whatever name was sent as the winner was the loser.

Nothing could be more simple, yet the whole show was upset through the good offices of one of the special telegraph staff—a sportsman—who, knowing the sender and the actual winner, himself set to work to correct things and put them straight in the interest of the addresser and the addressee. So it came to pass that the despatch was edited, and “Kelley” (we will say, who did win) “won” came through the wires instead of “Chambers,” the loser. Part of the play was to let the news get abroad in order to create demand for the alleged winner, so that the receiver, who understood that “Kelly won” meant that Kelly lost, might operate to advantage. Opportunities in this direction were liberally provided, to his bitter cost. As we said, the friendly telegraphist had edited and corrected the message, and completely reversed its sense. The biters were bitten and worried severely.

In the old days, before everything was quite so superfine, we used to have a set feast on the Monday before the Boat Race. The company varied, but for years two of us, generally three, were what you might call regulars, the foundation of the feast, with power to add to their number. The menu never varied, and it consisted of three courses, the last being bread and cheese. On the Thursday, after all the work had been done, my business was to slip up to London and see that good British yeoman cricketer and business man, Mr Maxted, of Spiers & Pond, who would, with his own hands—a great condescension for the manager of several departments of the great going concern—cut the steak. Not *a* steak, please understand, but *the* steak. Beginning from the point, and so on till a perfectly

equally thick all the way through—say two and a half inches—slab of meat was laid out. What weight I do not know. Whatever the weight was we never left any, and however many came in, it made plenty for all. Then my good friend had a quantity of scallops ready to be opened, which were duly seen to and sealed over in a trustworthy jar. Not one fishmonger in a hundred knows how to treat scallops properly, nor one cook in a thousand how to begin to cook them. I had some one at home who could do it, with just enough calculated margin of underdoneness to finish them properly while being made thoroughly hot for dinner next day. Then at midday we would repair—F. S. Gulston, old Harry Kelley, always a gentleman; perhaps G. D. Lister, remembered by many still; myself; and likely some more, to the White Lion, a very humble public-house indeed, where I was allowed, as a favoured customer of many years' standing, to do my own cooking. Never have I dined better than at these times. What can you have better of itself? We had good ale, and ale, and ale, the best old red Cheshire cheese, whereof I knew a fount, a constant supply, and so we ran; puffing the pipe of contentment, afterwards ere taking to the foreshore again to watch the tide, and perhaps some professionals training; then make for the London Rowing Club, to foregather with old friends—among them E. D. and L. P. Brickwood. Perhaps the late Mr Walsh of the *Field*—oh! such an editor in wrestling with a case or a proposition, and getting its true inwardness and value out in less than no time. Often that magnificent oarsman the late Mr William Stout of Gloucester would be with us; mayhap

he had helped us out with the scallop feast—anyway, we had jolly companions every one, and being on good terms with ourselves felt that no matter whether they did race the next day or not, we had done our duty in carrying out the most important preliminaries.

It is a good forty years ago since, fresh and keen about boat-racing, I was first numbered among payers for freight on a steamer to accompany champion sculling or a 'Varsity Boat Race, instead of viewing the contest cheaply on foot and land. The best variety of the latter mode was to station yourself on the high ground somewhere about the Duke's Head at Putney. So posted you watched the start, and as much as you could see—some if you were lucky, at any rate, but not much that would be—of the race going towards the Point before the accompanying flotilla screened the contestants. Then you made over the Market Garden ground by the Half Moon field, all bricks and mortar now, at risk of being tomahawked by a gardener's spade or lanced by his pitchfork. Next was the rush among cabs and traps, all helter skelter, across Barnes Common, and so down to the waterside at Barnes, where you waited up by Chris. Wilcocks's White Hart for "them" to come out of Corney Reach, and work round the big bend on the Middlesex shore to the Ship at Mortlake. As a rule I think you got more racing that way than on a steamer, but were less liberally provided with excitement. You see, your ship would be, perhaps, one of twenty to thirty paddle-boats, all fouling and bumping and jostling each other in frantic style, sufficiently exciting to make a nervous passenger jump

overboard for fear of being knocked into the water or blown up. Most of the fleet would be shut out all the way by the leaders, some be hung up when they should be starting, and others fail to stay. The only thing really certain was a collection being made by the crew for the crew and the skipper.

Some old readers can recollect what being afloat on a 'Varsity Boat-race day was, with every paddle steamer the Thames Company could spare in commission to go up with the crews, or, if unable to stand so high a trial as that, to do its best to be there or thereabouts. How was it that most of them escaped shipwrecks and burstings and blowings up, and we who took our chances abroad were not drowned, smashed, burnt, boiled, or converted into sausage-meat among the machinery, like the poor chap who went to a down-river fight, and was taken out of the engine-room a spoonful at a time? There they were, the passenger boats, whose captains did their steering by wireless telegraphy, a sort of deaf and dumb finger talk, to a watchful nipper, who translated orders, signalled from the bridge, to the engineer; such despatches as "back her," "stop her," "half a tarn a-starn," "go on a-'ed." There they were, each doing its best pretty much regardless of the other or consequences, charging and fouling, and ramming into the rest, and being done to likewise. I have been one of a crowd conveyed on a solid wall of, say, eight or nine steamers jammed sponson to sponson, going straight full speed at a buttress of Hammersmith Bridge with a certainty thrown in of the funnels being smashed off before they could be lowered on top of the wedged-in passengers. If you or

your ship got in front you might see some of the rowing. Most likely all you did see was the mob of boats ahead, and at that were thankful indeed when the expected arrived in the shape of an easy, and the time came for the devoted crew to go round collecting in spare moments afforded through something's going wrong with the works. In those days the captain appointed himself official stakeholder, and charged a shilling in the pound for acting as such. You could get your pocket picked on most reasonable terms, and probably did if you displayed money, or looked like being worth "going over," and had had a good day if you didn't stop a live spark or some sort of grit with your eye before the voyage was over. But you were *not* harrowed by the noise-makers which so painfully remind those attending latter-day boat races of science's advance in appliances of navigation. I would like to have a go at this branch of misery-making, but content myself with assuring all the skippers whose craft thus attack one's ears during the race of my cordial detestation. The old-fashioned "cock-a-doodle-do" on the scape pipe I can stand, and almost like, but the horrible din raised by a mob, gang, crowd, flock, shoal—what do you call it?—of shrieking, groaning syrens makes an outrage—can't a harmonious sound-signaller be invented to carry as far as these brutal contrivances? Also cannot someone set afloat the navigable grandstand boat the *Referee* has asked for so many years—a good big vessel constructed to give a large number of folk a view of a race.

Really, it seems very unfortunate that what has come to be considered the most important boat race of the year has to be decided at a time

when practising, as 'Varsity crews *do* practise, carries with it many dangers, even to the strong in constitution and careful in procedure. Now and again we get a spell of warm, spring-like days for the middle and end of March, but, as a rule, these are mixed in character, as against the sun has to be counted chill easterly wind. When you get the one without the other—that is to say, wind and no sun—then taking outdoor exercise in anything like racing trim may be simply tempting Providence. I do not want to be accused of being in the namby-pamby line of business, but it does seem, and always has seemed to me, that we are in the way of doing more harm than good through this sort of sport. I think that, taking one month with another, March is the least suitable for winter rowing. That diversion or exercise as carried on by metropolitan clubs differs very materially from the 'Varsity variety. Our system is to go at the rowing as much as possible, start and finish without intervals for "remarks" from the coach, which the irreverent call "hanging about." That a very great deal of hanging about can be put up with, and not much harm done may be taken as proved by the great proportion of athletes who, so to speak, survive the peculiar preparation; at the same time no one can be surprised when some of them get knocked up.

From time immemorial almost it has been the fashion for the rowing men of the tideway to differ from what are known as the University school in their ideas of fitness in managing training work. As I said earlier, there is frequently lamentable want of common sense displayed by amateurs, who, because they do not happen to

catch cold, appear to take delight in courting danger; but on the whole the metropolitan division do act much more sensibly than the Dark and Light Blues. It seems to me that the style of work we have seen so many years when Oxford and Cambridge come to Putney—the pulling a bit and getting warm, and stopping a bit and getting cold, and the neck-muffling (which I never could believe in)—means, in the language of the ring, putting the men on a good hiding to nothing; “nobody gives you anything if it comes off.” Which is to say, that if a man catches cold, nowadays commonly rendered influenza, he has received the “good hiding” asked for, while on the other hand successful issue from the ordeal as regards health does not carry with it any prize. So, considering that there are no advantages, but very serious disadvantages in the course indicated, the most sensible plan appears to be to minimise the risk as far as possible, after the manner of professionals. I really am not a believer in molly-coddling, not even a little bit. “Doing hardy” is, as I have found, very often the same as humbug, so I am not an advocate of that former. All the same, I do think that it is a mistake to go against common sense. Our machinery wants so much fire in the furnace to keep the hot water in the pipes in circulation, a fact athletes should bear in mind, because, if they expose themselves to chills, the warming, which is also the motive power, gets used up when it is wanted to rattle the machinery along, in fighting the cold.

CHAPTER XIII

ON LONDON'S RIVER

I CANNOT do better than begin this chapter by mentioning the Metropolitan Regatta. I may explain for the benefit of College oarsmen, probably unaware of its existence and importance, that it is held in July, under the management of the London Rowing Club, at Putney, where the Thames affords opportunities for rowing even when the 'Varsity crews do not need to make use of it. If the Metropolitan is not the greatest regatta on the river it ought to be; quite as big as Henley, counting one condition with another. Accident in environment prevents its being taken up as a fashionable show. For that some of us are not sorry. Peculiarity of taste among College oarsmen unfortunately makes this division hold aloof. For this all of us are sorry. The metropolitan clubs are pleased to meet them in action, and welcome opposition from separate colleges, associated universities, or individual clubs, such as the Vikings. As it is, the Metropolitan makes and has made opportunity for a grand regatta; but so far as my acquaintance with the accounts goes, it is most inadequately supported financially outside the London Rowing Club, whose members do subscribe liberally. Thames and Kingston,

as clubs, I believe, are annual subscribers, and there may be another one or two, but the run of amateur rowing men do not think fit to co-operate in finding working expenses. The hon. secretary gets together what is necessary, for annually a good list from the London Rowing Club is presented. There the subscriptions practically stop.

A good deal more might perhaps be done if Amateur Rowing Associates in general did what I conceive to be their duty, and put their names, also their money, down. Practically the Metropolitan is a national regatta for all qualified under A.R.A. rules, and as such should command a much greater revenue than it does. Speaking of this, it is, when you think of it, rather strange to note how complacently a great proportion of us expect to get our sport for nothing. I wonder sometimes whether the crowd who assist by their presence, and in no other way, ever ask themselves who pays for their diversion, or feel at all thankful for the amusement afforded quite free, gratis, and for nothing. So long as this can be managed on these liberal terms, that is by far the best way, as may be proved by reasons to be cited, but not worth quoting here, since they have been marshalled before. All the same, admitting that the custom holds many advantages, there is humour in the idea that the public should expect all manner of shows got up for their delectation—entertainments literally given. This is all very well for those who cannot afford to pay, and who, maybe, are rather indifferent as to the sports laid on, so indifferent that if they were told beforehand that a small fee must be paid, they

would rather keep the money than part and go to the show. I do not say so much about this sort. There is, however, a big constituency who are very unsportsmanlike in not returning material thanks for benefits received. We are most of us tarred with the same brush. To take what we call the white folk, whose shortcomings are due to want of thought rather than want of liberal feeling and fair-mindedness, these would, if they thought of it, pay their shot by way of subscription or polite returning of thanks. Unfortunately, they do not happen to think about doing either. If they are resident near the venue, they will probably be asked to do the former; but you scarcely hear of spontaneous offerings from such as having received good value desire to be free from obligation. I wonder how many letters secretaries of our river regattas have been favoured with to tell them that the writer and party begged to return thanks for the fine holiday they enjoyed, and to ask the committee's acceptance of a small or large contribution? I am quite aware that as regards riparian residents some may explain that they give and take: give to their own local regatta, and take what sightseeing, etc., is on hand at others. This is very well indeed, and we will say that they are all right. Look, however, at the great majority who feel personally affronted if an institution peters out for want of funds, but do not part a penny. I am not advocating sending round the hat where gate cannot be charged. Between this and accepting voluntarily tendered assistance towards defraying expenses is much difference. Expenses mount up most lamentably; in fact, you will scarcely

believe that so small an affair as a local one-day Saturday afternoon regatta would run off with so many pounds as it does, and the pay, pay, pay is too much on one side.

What can be reckoned as the birthday of the World's Championship? Here at Putney, of course, it was born—in the home of boat-racing, the cradle of the championship which, as being for the Thames and subsequently the Tyne as well, used to include the rest of the world quite incidentally, and as the greater does the less. When, far away back the Thames watermen and Tyne puddlers and other mighty strong fellows made boat-racing history, what did anybody want to talk about the World for and its championship? Only one was extant and of consequence—the Championship of the Thames. Later the Tyne was tacked on, and if I recollect right Harry Kelley or Joe Sadler once described himself as, in addition, champion of the Ouse, meaning the one that runs by King's Lynn, and had a somewhat celebrated course on the Eau Brink cut. But the World was created very late indeed for use in charter parties for voyages on Thames and Tyne to determine premierships in the art and practice of wager boat-racing.

I suppose we never again shall have such a time in sculling as when Durnan's uncle and the pick of the other Canadians—Gaudaur, Wallace Ross, and later O'Connor—came over here and met the best of the Australians with not a few more than useful Englishmen. There was quite a market for sculling men then. One never can say what may happen. Everything goes by the swing of the pendulum. What is nearly dead one day is all the rage the next. The surest invest-

ment on paper may be a wreck ten years after it was so very gilt-edged, and the show that would not pay the gas one year may mean house full business the next. Bearing those facts in mind, I am shy of prophesying, but it does appear highly improbable that professional boat-racing on the big scale can be revived here. Much can be done in the humble lines, and very much good with it, but the days of patrons, backers, or "gaffers" have passed with the supply of likely material—and opportunity for betting, the mainstay of professional sport. If ever the great barrage is made, the waterman's trade might be revived; and on the surface of the great lake from Teddington to Tilbury thousands of jolly young—including some of the jolly old—watermen be in great request for ferrying and the like. Then, so many being raised on boat-pulling, and making it the business of their lives, we could get among the rank and file, so educated physically, those exceptions fortuitously constructed and constituted to make great boat-pullers.

A gratifying circumstance connected with the Sculling Championship is that so far the title has always been held by a British subject. Canadians and New South Welshmen have come here to tackle home-made representatives, and also, as in the case of Hanlan and Trickett, Beach and Gaudaur, Gaudaur and Stanbury, O'Connor and Searle, to make the Thames neutral water for a World's Championship. But in the history of the enlarged Championship of the Thames every winner has been one of ours. The first to invade these shores was, if I recollect right, taken into Mr Charley Bush's stable under the wing of

Harry Kelley and George Drewitt, probably the best trainer we ever had. That was R. A. W. Green, an Australian and (if I may use the word) respectable larrikin all the while, despite his imposing string of names. R. A. W., if you please, indicated Richard Augustus Willoughby, a fine crop of front names for one smart man. He used what was called a tubular boat, very like indeed in model to the steam yachts built on that principle for Mr Winans, a name well known now for endeavours to make trotting in England.

She was a very pretty piece of work, cedar all over, tapering fore and aft from the well, and of beautiful mould. I had her in my possession once for a while—that was long years after R. A. W. had been defeated and gone back—(Australians “come home” to England and go back to the Colonies)—and she was perfect then. It is easy to pick out faults in construction, as, for instance, her tapering making a curve in the keel, and so rendering her difficult to keep straight, and the top part being heavier through cedar being used instead of oiled silk. All the same, she was as pretty a ship as you would wish to come across. Green was terrifically fast, sculling a quick stroke, and when he met Bob Chambers led him to an extent quite alarming for all but Bob, the imperturbable. “What did you think when he was so far ahead of you at the point?” asked a friend after Chambers had brought the Colonial back and handsomely beaten him. “I thought,” said Chambers, “he’d win sure enough if he could go all the way like that.” Another account—you see there was interviewing of a sort even in that remote age, and 1863 is a long while ago—

came from the Australian, a very popular man over here. He attributed Chambers's perwailing on him to stop to getting a pain in his side. Quoth White, a below-bridger, of Shadwell, whom I met in the early eighties on the Mary River, at Maryborough, N.S.W., where he had settled down, "when I rowed him he gave me a pain in both sides, and all over me as well." I came across the Maryborough Rowing Club shortly after Trickett had been defeated by Hanlan. Curious—is it not?—to recollect what popular opinion on Tyneside thought and said about the Canadian. There were two Hanlans, you know—the one who flourished before he suffered from typhus, and the much inferior survivor of that engagement. The first was a phenomenally good man of his own proper merits, leaving out his knowledge of sliding seats and swinging rowlocks. On the Tyne good folk went back to the dark ages to explain the Canuck's excellence. I do not know whether many readers have been struck by the deceptiveness of a clever sculler's action when he works a slide well. He may be as nearly all out as no matter, and yet appear to be going well within himself. Hanlan went so fast, and with such apparent ease, that his pace was ascribed to magic, or its latter-day equivalent—concealed machinery. In that the Geordies steadfastly believed for a long time. A close observer accustomed to the old-fashioned fixed seat on which some did a little slide might well be deceived, because whereas in the former method the boat made one spurt as the sculls were ripped through the water, Hanlan gave three moves through the water—viz., as he laid on at the first

grip of his sculls, next a longer dart as the stroke was all but pulled through, and last a sharp jump caused by a tremendous wrench with the wrists as he feathered. For magic the Tynesiders read clockwork, and so had the matter explained to their own satisfaction.

In my opinion when Hanlan beat Trickett the latter was past his best form. The Trickett who beat Joe Sadler in 1876 was a better man on that day than he ever was subsequently. Besides, I always shall think that, apart from his being handicapped by losing a finger before he met Hanlan, he, on his return to England, made a mistake in having his work set very wide. That gave him excessive leverage, but only allowed him to lay himself on to his stroke for about two-thirds of it, and made recovery difficult. Still, hampered or not in his work, he made a magnificent race with Hanlan, and at a mile was so hard on the Canadian that the latter was as nearly as possible settled. Here was a replica in a way, or rather this furnished the original example of the situation repeated with Beach and Gaudaur, who, in Mr W. J. Innes's regatta, raced themselves helpless. After the regatta was over I went to Beach at Barnes, and asked whether anything occurred to make him leave off pulling for a little. Beach told me he had no choice about pulling up or pulling on, being stone beaten for the time.

Both Hanlan and Trickett had arrived at cracking. The question was which must go first for want of a blow. In another few seconds Hanlan must have let down for a few moments. Just as he was cracking, poor Trickett had no choice but to dwell. That gave the other, who

had a trifle left, his chance to take an easy, and won him the race. Until the Australian faltered, the contest had been tremendous and wonderfully equal. Afterwards Hanlan lay back in his boat, paddled one scull over the other, and generally monkeyed so as to spoil the dignity of a splendid victory. All the same, there was method in the business, for Hanlan was sorely in need of a blow, and the mountebank show was designed to cover his distress from the opposition camp.

Hanlan, like all who keep on long enough, came to learn what getting "whacked" felt like. There was no nonsense then. Just now I wrote that the Trickett who beat Sadler and frightened our talent for a while was, to my fancy, a better man at the time than when he returned to our shores to meet Hanlan, and with brother Colonials did mainly—thanks to the late Mr Billy Innes—make a boom in professional boat-racing the like of which has not been, and, I fear, never will be seen again. Now, let me say for Hanlan that after he suffered from typhus the Toronto athlete was never half himself any more, and must not be judged by performances after his attack. "The best ever seen" is a tall order. If Hanlan at his best was not the very finest sculler ever seen, he must have been very near to that high standard. Searle probably was the greatest since the introduction of slides and swinging rowlocks. Yet Hanlan *was* very, very good. If, however, a classical sculler of the century 1800 to 1899 had to be named, I am by no means sure that I should be looking for him among the new-style racers. Bob Chambers was a wonder, so was Renforth; and if one must pick a specimen from the fixed-seat and rowlock school as fitted for the

other methods, I should go for Harry Kelley. His power, pluck, and stamina we saw tested in his championship days. Also we saw in him one of the most perfect illustrators of the new style during the long spell he had of coaching and leading men in their work after he was engaged in training, having retired from racing himself. He used after the seat that slides and the swinging rowlock came into existence. After they were exploited he used, while helping to train men, to be a perfect model of good style under the new-fangled conditions. He was an oldish man, as age for high-pressure athletics goes, while Hanlan was just a lad, being discovered by Mr Gulston, of the London Rowing Club, and the rest of the four who went over to compete at the Centennial Regatta on the Schuyskill, where I remember being much impressed by the regatta reach. I can't say that I tested it at regatta times. As a matter of fact, I wasn't even able to get a boat to go on it, being a stranger without a guide, who wandered upon a pilgrimage to the course where the Centennial Regatta was held. Our London Rowing Club crew—Gulston, Labat, Howell, and A. Trower—competed, thought themselves badly used, and in a manner discovered Hanlan, who, thanks to them, was furnished with a good pair of sculls for the first time in his boat-racing career.

A few years ago a correspondent told me about Harry Kelley's mother, whose age was one hundred and two. The old lady was living in Fulham Almshouses, well, bright, and cheerful. She must have a wonderful constitution and pluck to match, for she told the friends who went to see her that she could do all her own

housework for herself, with the exception of the washing, and that beat her. I do not wonder at that last. How many of you great, big, fine, strong men have tried your hands at the work poor, light, little thin slips of girls are expected to do and not hurt themselves?

Naturally all concerned in the old-fashioned idea of watermanship and longshore or riverside life are up in arms against the London County Council. The L.C.C. has in its steamboat service done much to carry out the regrettable part of poor dear old Tom Tugg's lament in Dibdin's charming little operetta, "The Waterman." Tom, beloved of the city ladies, the jolly young waterman who feathered with such skill and dexterity, as from Blackfriars Stairs he used for to ply, had a rare pretty song in his part, "Then farewell, my trim-built wherry." Trades were trades then. A man had to serve his apprenticeship to the one to which he was called. Poor Tom—of whom some ship home sailing should, in the hypothetical case put by Dibdin, bring doleful news to distress his hardhearted sweetheart—was driven from the Thames for love of she, on quite sentimental grounds, to enlist the king's navy, and fight the enemy who might make him "nobly fall." Around this sort of thing is a halo of blue water and Thames River romances. Nothing of this attaches to the sordid, hardhearted, anti-sport policy disgracing the London County Council, who takes away the no longer jolly young or old waterman's chance of keeping body and soul together, whether he be afloat with his skiff or ashore working in a boat-yard.

The Council seems to have knocked ideas of

fair-play and give-and-take on the head. While the L.C.C. is professedly anxious to lay out tens of thousands on dry-land people's recreation parks, it deliberately acts to work to abolish the cost-less and price-less grand water park and recreation area, our Thames, within its scope. The L.C.C. *will* run passenger steamers at rates dangerous to other water-wayfarers in lighter craft. No need exists for this selfish disturbing of traffic. If motorists or such-like travellers went on their roads habitually constituting common danger the L.C.C. would be down on them like a thousand of bricks, not only on account of speed-limit, but on the ground of navigation to common peril. This last count the L.C.C. by its servants habitually puts out of thought, so that it is warning off the boating society from Putney to Hammersmith. Maintenance is an ugly word, and I know what it means, so I hesitate to make an offer; but if strong men, who are to be found in the Putney and other metropolitan clubs on the tideway, want to pool a fund to prosecute on public grounds the London County Council for countenancing this persistent neglect of the first rule of the road and the river—viz., fair-play—they can put me down for a subscription towards a protestant fund. "Live and let live" is my motto. Life is insupportable unless co-operation obtains. I want to live enjoying citizens' rights and privileges as long as I can, so must pay my whack to preserve them. At the same time, I have no personal feeling against the L.C.C. Far from that, I should be delighted to show the other way about by taking its representative members, not distinguishable for favourable treatment by their

steamboat skippers, out in my skiff on the Putney reaches, and see how they like being swamped by wash impossible in the not long ago. With them or us shall be Messrs Henry and Sinclair, of the Life-Saving Association. These experts can devote all their talents to bringing round the councillors. I can swim—at least, I have fallen or been chucked from almost every description of vessel, sea-going or river, and scrambled out somehow. So long as the councillors get in themselves through their servants' wrong-doing, I do not mind much how I go.

That is the case of and for the professionals—the watermen; and naturally the amateurs, the rowing men, are in much the same boat. Rowing men should hasten themselves to help in procuring special regulations for the County Council's flotilla of passenger steamers, while between the bridges, Putney and Hammersmith, and in certain hours. Unless this is done ordinary difficulties of navigating light boats on the reaches may be increased, and the only way to reach this sort of water bullying is by the law. When small—what we should call legitimate—river craft create unnecessary wash, which is, in this connection, pretty much equivalent to unnecessary risk, a very excellent way to punish them is to publish their names, so that their acquaintances on the river and riverside may know what bad sportsmen they are. Public opinion, "the river's" view of such proceedings, makes itself very strongly felt. But that is not exactly what I set out to write about. I was going to say that according to my ideas a great deal of unnecessary risk is manufactured through builders omitting to make a little addition to certain craft, which would go just as well

if canvassed fore and aft, or with only a bow cover, as when left "open." The additional weight is next to nothing, and the expense quite nominal. I am quite aware that some friends may think I am a bit of a molly-coddle, but that does not matter. Here is the simple fact that, given reasonable provision against swamping your funny, rum-tum whiff, or whatever the boats very frequently let on the Thames may be, and may be called, these are pretty nearly as safe as a lifeboat, while without at least a bit of a bow-cover to ward off wash or lipper, they are eminently adapted for swamping.

I have not seen a sea-racing skiff for years—to overhaul it, that is—but recollect in the days when Billy Mason and Fred Griggs (father of the "boys" who for years and years have been winning races) were rivals for the championship of the South Coast, their very light racing craft would stand a sea rough enough to prevent the heavy licensed craft from putting out. Of course, they were built on very different lines from the Thames lightish boats, but the point is their being made so seaworthy, thanks to an oiled canvas-cover forward, and that without any bulkhead like there is in a regular fine wager boat—the article which I have seen described as a "best and best." Bless the describer's innocence! there ain't no such article as a "best and best." The term came into use to indicate that parties to a sculling or other boat-pulling competition were at liberty to use any craft they pleased. There was no limit in length, width, style of equipment, or material. You do the best you can for yourself, and I will do the best I can for myself; that was the idea, and

after a time, instead of setting forth in articles that each party shall be at liberty to provide himself with this, that, and the other, "best and best" came to be accepted—if one could get better than the other he might. Best and best would also apply to craft regarding which limitations were agreed. Simply you did the best under the conditions. But you might as well talk of a best and best dingey, or a best and best lighter, or, for the matter of that, a best and best wheel-barrow, or a best and best wager boat.

Really, what with one thing and another, among all long-suffering people I should award the palm for patience under trial to navigators of small manually propelled craft on the Thames. What I venture to call the right sort used to consider themselves none too well used in the long-ago days of boating, when inexperienced, inexpert water wayfarers created trouble. Gradually the rowing interest—I am for the moment leaving out racing—became more and more prejudiced. Launches appeared on the scene in parts where the paddle-steamers were unknown. These demanded their share of the road—and took it. They went at speeds never dreamed of in voyaging on the upper reaches. The undesirable exceptions among them to be found in every class made bad weather for everybody else, kicking up a nasty sea, produced "while you wait," by their wash. They shaped their course on the get-out-of-the-way-if-you-don't-want-to-be-squashed principle, frittered away the banks, and occasionally did some smashing up at the locks, particularly in hurrying to go out of the basin. The Thames Conservancy had trouble with

them; but the business became more serious when these screw-steamers grew and grew and grew, till such splendid lumping fine boats like *The Princess Beatrice* and *The King* reflected great credit on their designers and builders, but more than ever emphasised the objection of the boating man, that only small slowish craft were suitable to the river above lock.

Mind, I am not saying a word against the handling of these particular boats instanced: the greater worry has been through smaller ships which, being let very cheaply, enabled the rowdy crowd to extend its influence for discomfort and annoyance over far greater distance than in the days when the noisy ones were restricted to row-boats. The skiff and other small boaters, against whom everyone not in the same line too often seems to have a hand, found strong reason to regret the institution of punting, which is not punting, as a fashionable function. Without dilating on the eccentricities of these floating lounges and tea-tables when left to be directed by the stream or the prettily clothed man in possession of the pole, with a very small percentage of his attention on navigation, I will pass to that unholy terror, the punt harnessed to the "Have a line on, sir?" man. For him should be some bye-law made so that he should be fined considerably, according to his means, poor devil! for earning a bit by towing a punt down stream in the slack water, and for his hirer an enactment involving anything up to the value of the punt and its cargo. Somebody in such a punt is supposed to steer, but no one can possibly affect its speed, short of casting off or cutting the line, because the chap harnessed is

out of shouting range, and takes no notice of anything except worrying along, which, as a matter of detail, he can do quicker while drawing his load than he can walk—or, at least, than he ever does walk untrammelled. Having briefly and lightly touched upon some existing troubles of the Thames boat-puller, let me pass to a new worry which threatens to do for the river what the motor-car has done for the roads, and that is, warn off what I venture to call the very deserving class of boating folk corresponding to walkers.

The motor-boat appears to me a most happy outcome of the launch idea. It provides means for getting about on the water at lighter cost of installation and maintenance than did predecesing motor-craft, from the paddle-steamer downwards. Yet one cannot begin too soon in pleading that all idea of racing shall be dissociated from the new style auto-craft, and that their skippers or helmsmen, proprietorial or retained, should pass some sort of examination, showing themselves not only capable of managing and directing their own ship, but of understanding the ways, manners, and customs of other shipmen. This last is, in my opinion, quite a necessary point to insist on. Whether you can carry it out when any mortal man, woman, and almost child is legally free to hire a boat from a yard, and forthwith go and drown himself or herself by force of sheer ignorance, I doubt. Still, I throw out the suggestion in a truly friendly spirit and the interests of good fellowship all round. "Give and take" is the right sportsman's motto, the best for getting through the world free from friction, and the

more the motor boatmen, who will be coming in swarms, understand fellow-voyagers' business as well as their own, the more shall we avoid such unpleasantness as attached to the early days of road motoring. I am quite sure that if the auto-car had been, when introduced to the roads, "governed" by "coachees"—that is, experienced horse-drivers converted into chauffeurs (another of our ill-fitting reach-me-down names)—the estrangement, to put it mildly, which accompanied the autos' early career would have been avoided.

A thing I never could understand is the dislike Thames-side boat-builders and watermen always appear to hold for covering in craft of low free-board, if not aft as well as fore, at any rate forward, as an easy means of minimising danger. You are not obliged to have a bulk-head as with wager-boats; a simple canvas bow-cover, slightly peaked and fitted with little wash straits to turn off water shipped, will serve. The new-style sea-racing skiffs I have seen of late are made of moulded cedar instead of being clinker-built of American spruce, a very tough, flexible material. These former must, I should say, be afloat for the man to get in, whereas the older type could stand being launched from the shore over the shingle, a business requiring practice and skill in timing to catch a lull if the sea is roughish. Getting ashore again used to be more ticklish still as the sculler backed in, with the assistant on the shore waiting to run the skiff away out of the reach of the next sea as the boat's stern touched ground and its occupant nimbly popped out before the water came on. Well, now, these little ships are safe

enough in skilful hands when quite a heavy sea is running, so much that no licensed pleasure craft are allowed to launch, and the fishermen would rather be ashore than afloat. They are, or were, practically unswampable, but of course had much more freeboard than the river-built boats. Still, though of different type from the latter, they make handy example in favour of the principle. In one of these short coast craft you might have a most enjoyable sea trip between Dover and Calais on the right sort of day, which in summer can sometimes be got all right. The journey is so palpably of no account to anyone who can paddle for a few hours without hurting his hands or getting into trouble with the thwart, that I always do want to have a turn at the job, which is, in my opinion, of no account whatever. The feat is made out to be something very great indeed. I consider that he must be a very poor boat-puller who, being properly guided and equipped, couldn't paddle over the course without feeling that he had taken more than an ordinary morning's exercise, granted that he could select his day.

Now that motor-boats threaten to become the vogue, those who fancy going on the river to do some work for themselves should try to save themselves trouble in future by looking ahead a little now. The Council is as hard to move as was the Board of Works. Somewhere about 1870, I believe, the Thames Embankment was opened, and very shortly after that I made inquiries as to when the chains—part of the original design—were likely to be seen hanging from the lion's mouth bosses in its walls. "Presently," was the answer, but presently is a

to-morrow that never has come. Finding that the chains were not to be in evidence, I begged for ropes to be slung, or if that was not practicable, because of bringing shabbiness, I petitioned that a row of small floating booms might be strung along the granite walls to give a handhold to any poor devil unluckily in the water. Never a chain, nor a rope, nor a boom has been fitted up, and all these years you or I, reader, falling in at one end—say Blackfriars, or above the Houses of Parliament—would not find a handhold between those two points, unless on the chains of the steam-boat dummies. As to these last, for goodness gracious' sake, if you do get into the river where dummies are, don't go near one of them with a tide running, for under you will be sucked to a certainty. What is more, on the Middlesex Embankment there are not any stairs fit for their alleged purpose. Bearing in mind the want of luck attending petitions for less inhuman treatment of people in jeopardy of their lives, let me counsel pitching it pretty strong.

Talking of river accidents, I recollect a very funny incident in which Lord Londesborough had part. Comic it was, but might very easily have been tragic; in fact, was on the edge, and very nearly over the edge, of tragedy. A long while ago, somewhere about 1880, Lord Londesborough was being "run up" with a boat race, Harry Kelley steering his launch—the one he was on, I mean. We won't bother to say who was to blame, but will just record that a below-bridge waterman's boat managed to get run down. The accident happened far back, and I am now so unmindful of detail as not to be

certain who was the party addressed in manner to be related. At any rate, we will not bother about personality, but take "Jones" as representative of the person who was or might have been the central figure. Well, what became of the below-bridge boat or the two below-bridge grown-ups run down with her I quite forget. What I can remember is that a young human below-bridge boy had a narrow squeak for life or death. He was chucked into the water with the rest, and might have stopped there but for some of our lot, who at no little risk managed to grap the nipper, and lug him on board pretty far gone.

After rubbing and doing all the rest for him, we put him in the engine-room to be baked into working order, also his clothes. Meanwhile someone, the Jones afore-mentioned, went round with the hat and collected—a bit of silver being a sovereign (no scoffing, please) cure for many ills—with gratifying result, say, up to five-and-twenty shillings. The captain was elected spokesman for the presentation, the youthful below-bridger served up all hot from the stoke-hole depths, dry-clothed, and apparently in his right mind, but evidently worried about missing something, for he felt vaguely round the top of his head. The captain handed over the testimonial with a few words explaining that the boy had to thank the gentlemen on board, and Mr Jones in particular, for saving him from a watery grave, and, what was worth far more, getting him twenty-five shillings. Mr Skipper indicated Mr Jones. You should have heard the young gentleman's appreciation. The something missing turned out to be his cap, the sort

of thing likely to be overlooked when you grab at a drowning man's hair. Says he, he says, looking with undisguised suspicion on Jones, who thought he had come out pretty well for him: "Oh," he says, says he, "it was you, was it? Then where's my blooming cap? You ain't going to sneak my cap, don't you think it. Gimme my blooming cap."

CHAPTER XIV

MOLESEY TO DATCHET

HAS *the* river seen its best day as a medium of circulation, financial and in the sense of the word, as our friends the Ententers use it, to indicate traffic? A few years ago the very idea of Thames ever losing a votary once enrolled, or failing to gain, as it and time flowed on, at least quite as many adherents as would be convenient for themselves and each other must be scouted, and its proposer plunged into profound unpopularity. Now I have seen the theory confidently advanced in print—newspaper print, too—and set up, not as a subject for controversy, but like a well-established, generally agreed fact. The river is no longer the fashion, be assured; motoring has tootled, rattled, and snorted off with the capital formerly directed to river and riparian pursuits and dwelling. The money is on the landroad—never more, I fear, to be anything like quietly comfortable—to the neglect of the highway no longer classable as silent. How much of this is true we cannot guess till two—no, not Sundays—two fine summers come together, and when that will be not the bells of Old Bailey or Ouzeley can tell. One who loves the river must often be in an anomalous position, wishing prosperity to all connected with the stream, but being averse to their

doing well to overcrowding point ; and, moreover, perfectly sure that a great part of the latter-day custom could well be dispensed with, because it and its doings or goings-on are incompatible with the ideas of repose and quiet which make much of Thames's attractions.

We shall see what we shall see by and by about this alleged or real change in fashion, which for the old-fashioned river man and woman may or might not be an altogether unmixed evil. But I fear that as things have been going in recent years cause can readily be cited for the effect indicated. To begin with, pleasuring came to be dreadfully overdone in what one may call artificiality, with attendant expenses, being changed in great part from an almost necessary diversion to a costly luxury. Too high a standard in dress, service, and all incidentals has been set—at least, so it seems to me—and a pernicious fashion of getting and paying somebody to do for you what used to make the height of pleasure in doing for yourself. Boating—getting about for the fun of the thing by one's own labour—*has* without question been falling out of fashion more and more, the decadence dating from the invention of punt loafing in pretty attire. The crux, the delicate question which was to be done, study appearances or go in for boating, with a notion of hard work in it, arose with the introduction of that beautiful outward adornment the stand-up collar, as wide as a bandbox is high, and no more easy and comfortable for an active man to wear. Once creased or weakened, and its glory was surely departed, so when young England took to boating so linen-armour-plated, you knew that either this or doing any work worth mention

must go—and the collar stayed. This was only one indication of decadence in real fancy for boating, as that used to be understood, a craft whose difficulties were not eased by the gradual extension of launches' proportions. With their growth, navigation for small rowed or sculled craft has become hampered, and rendered less safe or more dangerous. And in regular arithmetical proportion, as dimensions enlarged made apparently for carrying larger passenger freights, so has form fallen, noise-making increased, and the arrogance of the big ship to the small. Can these matters be remedied or toned down? To get out of their way the better-to-do have mostly left the lower reaches, say, up as far as Maidenhead, and are eschewing points elsewhere handy to tap by cheap railway service.

Here is a sort of irregular random log of a solitary voyage between the harbour of Molesey Lock and the haven of the Bells of Ouzeley. It was the second week in August, and I took a constitutional scull up river to Old Windsor from the Mitre at Hampton Court—the best inn on the River Thames, bar none, from the extremest hostelry on the estuary to the furthestmost pub. I have visited towards its source, which is at Witney. That I enjoyed myself I freely confess, also do I plead guilty to selfishness in being suited by the solitariness of the excursion. The weather was beautiful. I had a leading wind for the most part, the river was not so low as it has been, and not only was I all by myself in the boat, which is a great advantage to at least one contemplative man who wants to think a bit ahead about his work, and at the same time takes a deal of notice of surroundings, but there

was scarcely another soul about on the river. After a little while that circumstance set me wondering, as I have often wondered before, at the present generation's methods of carrying on. This happened to be a longer journey than usual, but the same curious question has been putting itself to me often on shorter voyages, which I take first because I like them, and second to do myself good. Now here am I, an old 'un—there is no disguising the fact—keen enough to, so to speak, run after every opportunity I can see of doing strong sculling exercise.

(For the most part I shouldn't see any opportunities at all, unless I made them by getting up early and so manufacturing overtime.) I do not hold myself up as an exemplar—far be it from me to go into that line of business—but I can say that while I certainly labour at my trade more hours than, and at least as hard as, the average citizen who must earn his living, I do manage to give myself a fair-sized bit of a holiday almost every day, thanks to getting up early and setting to work resolutely as soon as I am up. Now I am going to ask you how many do you guess that I come across of my way of thinking, or, being that way minded, willing to make and take what they can get, and do the best they can with the same oddments which prove so useful to me. How many? I am bothered if I can quote enough to make a many in the sense that many must be numerous enough to constitute a plural. The idea that so much dreadful waste does go on rankled in my mind as I set out on my voyage towards Windsor. There was I, the said old 'un,

pleased as a boy with an unexpected half-holiday and something to spend, quite eager to get afloat early to enjoy the river. Where were the residents, the young men who, when prizes are to be won or distinction to be gained at regattas, are supposed to be fond of rowing? Were any of them likely to be about taking advantage of the clear courses? Not much, not many, not any. And the visitors who descend on the river banks for more or less restricted and costly periods—where were they? Surely some of them would be getting their money's worth out of an early start before the sun's power grew great. Where *were* they? Not up—or loafing, for the most part. Bless you, I didn't want them. All the same, I pitied and despised their folly, more especially the silliness of the young 'uns, and that I daresay did make me captious.

Put my start at 8 A.M. from Molesey Lock, and my progress as only steady. Would you be surprised to hear that in two hours I became aware of only two pleasure boats on the move, and, barring at Staines, where Mr Fred Fenner was umpiring a regatta, and leaving out two launches, I scarcely saw half a dozen more all the way up to the "Bells of Boozeley" at Old Windsor. What is more, not one boat in the first seven miles was in its right course. The first ship I spoke was a skiff, and that noble vessel, with two decent lads in her, was being cheerfully and confidently navigated down-stream, so as to effectually block the passage of anyone working up on the proper course close to the bank. I was not looking to find anyone so breaking the rule of the road, and was, besides, very busy thinking on the subject of manners,

preaching to myself a sermon suggested by the frowzy, dilapidated aspect of the eyot. Still, we saw each other in plenty of time, self and the strange sail, and its crew being decent lads and knowledgeable, cleared out on appeal, not like a youthful potentate I had the misfortune to encounter later on up Halliford way. He—but let him wait, we will come to him presently. If the boys had been silly enough to try to make out wrong to be right, I should not, I fear, have had the heart to do justice to my case, for at the time I was feeling real mean, as I have felt on two or three days this week while passing a Thames eyot whose condition was simply disgraceful. To this eyot the public have access in a way. That is to say, the good sportsman—I mean lady—who owns it puts up a notice board informing all and sundry that they must not trespass on this private property, but never to my knowledge interferes with respectable people who only trespass harmlessly. “Only trespass harmlessly” are the words that came naturally to me in stating the case, as did “respectable people.” It seemed easy to convey through these the idea of men and women come of decent kin, or at any rate brought up that way, who would never think of requitting hospitality to which they helped themselves by doing their host or hostess a bad turn.

Perhaps I am getting too old-fashioned for anything. Possibly I *am* captious. Again, it seems to me probable that I take a fair and unexaggerated view of the relations that ought to exist between a landowner who permits gratuitous use of his property and the users thereof. My pastors and masters tried hard to

instil a certain sense of justice if not due gratitude into my noddle. They did so, even to the extent of endeavouring to knock it in bodily, as you may say. And they succeeded to an extent, because at an early age I came to understand the philosophy of being punctiliously careful about always shutting gates after opening them, and not leaving litter about. If total strangers are good enough to keep their estates up so that you may enjoy them, the least you can do is to fall in with their arrangements as far as you understand the same. I also was instructed never to read a notice board, and on no account to leave the well-beaten track; but these are details not exactly bearing on the business in hand, which is to say something very plain and strong about the conduct of people who make picnics on Thames eyots, and leave them extended dust-bins—rubbish-shoots scattered with the refuse of their feeds, littered with scraps of paper, and, what is wickedest of all, strewn with broken bottles. If I had my way, breaking a bottle intentionally and letting the pieces lie about should be a heavily punishable offence. The amount of harm that accrues through this senseless, selfish practice is very heavy. Most of us can recollect serious accidents that have occurred to bathers through this cause. It is never safe on the Thames or on many other rivers to wade into the water unless you are well shod, for you cannot tell where the broken glass lies. I used to think it was rather hard lines when a proprietor gave me and others to understand that on the whole he preferred keeping his place for himself to enjoying my unsatiated company. It seemed

selfish to deny one a pleasure that need not cost the said holder anything when he was not about himself. You didn't take away any of his ground nor damage what was left. That was the way I looked at the situation. But when you come to know how these proprietors are treated, the mess that parties who land make, the utter indifference they show to risk of, for instance, burning the whole place up, you may not wonder that the reasonable, proper-minded are made to suffer for the more or less swagger hoodlums, and the whole lot—good, indifferent, and bad—warned off.

It seems to me we stand badly in need of some preaching on the manners which maketh the man—good old motto of the good old founder of good old Winchester School—and on the want of manners which maketh this England of ours too small to hold us. Believe me, my brethren, we are penny wise and pound foolish in following the course we are taking in the matter of education. I see that more and more plainly every day. I am not much in the line of teaching the young idea to shoot, so as to order itself lowly and reverently to its pastors and masters; but there is a world of difference between grovelling and being polite and civil to all and sundry, great and small, as one should be who seeks to build self-respect on a solid foundation. That extra penny for manners would be well laid out, because it would be the means of oiling our social machinery, and making the works run smoothly. Manners are being left out of latter-day State education, because ignorance can make no distinction between servility and civility, the give-and-take politeness which so greatly obviates friction, and

that outward show of independence which gives offence, and is the visible sign of callous selfishness. We are going the wrong way and fast. While the young 'uns are taught and encouraged not to be gracious to those above them, as life's prizes happen to be temporarily distributed, they are growing up not to be polite and accommodating to each other. I mark this with sorrow for the rising generation, and lay stress on it the more because, you know, we are a decent lot, a very decent lot indeed, on the whole. I was thinking some of this over while passing Hurst Park, where I had been when the Bank Holiday crowd were there, and I was then, as I almost always am, lost in admiration of the big assemblage's good humour. What a pity, says I to myself, says I, that we should be levelling down instead of up.

Thinking on these matters helped me on my voyage till I was abreast of the waterworks' wall by the Cherry Orchard, against whose demnition ugliness I protested while as yet the foundations were not laid. It has worked out to me just as it was bound to be—an ugly brick wall as the bulwark at the base of a high earth mound. But, after all, what will it matter about disfiguring the river—matter to boating people, I mean? The waterworks are gradually getting all, but it is a comfort to recollect that in due course the stream will be no good to them, but will make a very interesting roadway for us when the companies have used up all the water through draining the stream in drought, and letting the flood water waste. Captious, am I? You go and take stock of the wall over by the Cherry Orchard, and you will be captious enough to curse these Bal-

buses and all their waterworks. By way of compensation I noted the *Weekly Dispatch* preparing to go a-fishing by the new club at Sunbury, and he is always cheery and cheering. The *W. D.* was a trifle sore, because his boy had been summoned by the Thames Conservancy for swimming opposite his father's house at a quarter after eight at night—swimming in the Thames and a very nice and proper costume. Being of a philosophical nature, our contemporary did not say much, but fished it off—"it," I presume, being a slight tendency to my complaint captiousness.

Doubtless it is my captiousness which makes me argue that the Thames Conservancy should keep a sharp eye on obstructions—some of them dangerous—which interfere with the navigation of the river, and at the same time wake up riparian owners if these could be made responsible for their removal. Their officers do in many cases go further than this, and order the work to be done by their own men. That is excellent in its way, and I am glad to explain that a great deal is done on these lines. But I should be pleased to find that eyot owners and others were compelled to clear away trees, camp-shedding, and the like, which, being displaced from their property, become a source of danger or annoyance. Let me give a sample or two of what lately existed. On the eyot just below the Swan at Thames Ditton was a beastly snag, perhaps accidentally fixed, and a pole, certainly artificially run out and fastened, presumably in order to prevent boats from coming close to the bank.

I only wish I could be strong-minded enough to stand on my rights, even if that meant getting my boat smashed up and my precious person cast

into the water. Very unpleasant that is—I have “tried ’em both”—yet, all the same, there is your duty straight afore you, and you ought to go for it to the extent of declining to steer out of your proper course to suit the convenience of others who are very much off theirs. Sometimes I get so vexed and humiliated, that I could punch my own head for being the ass I am to allow people to humbug me about. For there is fate in it. Who gets put in the wrong and feels the position keenly? I do. Does the offending party mind who, coming up zigzag-wise in the middle of the river, meets me going down where I ought to be, and after various misleading manœuvres causes me to steer in towards the bank as the only way of avoiding collision? Does he, do his pals, care a tinker’s curse about what I say? Not a ha’porth. Likely enough he believes himself quite a martyr, being talked to after all his politeness. And what happens to me? Scooting out of the intruder’s way I am forced near to the bank, and of course get into a mix with incredulous gentlemen working up in the orthodox manner. “The middle of the stream going down, sir,” says someone with vitriolic politeness. “How they get trusted with a boat at all I can’t understand,” puts in another. “Did you think you were going up or down the river?” is a question not meant altogether kindly. Explanation is vain, and you are obliged to take and swallow insult which really you do deserve for not doing the right thing at the outset by refusing to budge from your right course. If we did what we ought, we should summon those who fasten punts up with a short chain so that they bulge out across the stream, and make them tie them at stem and stern too. I recall a dingey

which was mostly kept at Constable's Steps, towards the top of Tagg's Island, jutting out at a right angle where you most particularly desired to steer close in. (Apropos of the eyot, it was looking very pretty when I sighted the port of Tagg's Hotel, at which I did *not* call ten minutes after setting sail, whatever may be libellously insinuated.) There is one way to put these little irregularities straight, and that is, do what I couldn't, but a friend did. He complained several times, and ineffectually, about trespass of this sort. Then he took the law into his own hands, and, with a strong partner and a heavy boat, knocked a hole into the other, which led to her sinking. He also summoned the proprietor for damages to his own craft, and got them without going into court.

How is it that visitors, summer lodgers at Sunbury, so often distinguish themselves by being obnoxious to others who want to enjoy the Thames? I scarcely ever go up to the Magpie (excellent hostelry) without noticing this. One happy thought is to fasten a punt broadside on from the camp shedding, said vessel being moored by its chain on the shore side, and held in position at the other end by a rypeck, which is left there as a permanence, no matter whether the punt is away or not. Per contra, very civil and obliging are the officers in charge of the lock, where on this occasion I had both lock and the rollers all to myself. These are the last rollers for a long while going up, more's the pity, because in the first place much time is wasted in getting through the locks, and again there is often dreadful waste of water. To think of the thousands of gallons let through for

me at Shepperton and Chertsey, two big locks through which I was the only farer at the time, with nothing going up with me or coming out. Some day we shall have rollers, or, better still, a lift, for small craft at every lock. The lift or an arrangement for placing the boats on a sort of cradle, and lowering them down or drawing them up by machinery will expedite matters greatly, and perhaps by then a reasonable limit to the length of launches will be fixed, and traffic through the gates be much lighter and easier.

I am always fond of the bends round from Walton Bridge to Halliford, and again past Shepperton to the lock so-called, but which might as well be styled Weybridge. Below Halliford I got a mixed reception. First from the admiral of a monkey-boat, who shouted, "Hi! get out of that!" which is not polite in words. The barge was being towed down by a horse. The high officer commanding, though rude of speech, was a good sort. You do not as a rule argue to the extent of risking a collision with craft of this description, any more than a brougham chances the result of trying to scrape the varnish off the wheels of a brewer's dray. So I "hi'd and got out of that," and, like the village blacksmith and the whole world, looked the bargee in the face when I came alongside. "There's a many accidents happens with small boats when you're horse-towing, and you were safer outside, governor," said he. If we had been going the same way, he should have had his share of a jolly quart for that. He sent me on my way with half the captiousness gone. But he only sent me off so lightened of my load to pick up another, for I was

scarcely clear before a second hail instructed me to "look where I was coming." I had no need to screw my head to look where I *was* coming, or because I knew exactly what I was doing, and that a canoe was inshore—why inshore, as he, the canoeist, had no business there, I did not see. But I didn't mind playing Uncle Toby to his foolish fly. The world—or the river—was big enough for both of us. Still, to be told to look where I was going was a bit too much, so says I, "Surely thirty yards of water leaves room enough for you?" But the party concerned couldn't see that. He was all "side," what there was of him that wasn't shirt-front—a "something" of a cove in his own estimation—and wanted to argue. What I ought to have done with the ill-mannered cub was to take my own place, and let him either get out of the way or be put out of it. How this sort of young man would enjoy himself on the tideway to be sure when he started on some of the rowing men of those parts!

I never go by Dunton's without a kindly thought for that genial, clever boat-builder, nor a laugh at my own expense, recollecting how he rigged me out after I got into the lock a year or two ago, and had to swim till they floated me up to the top just as, so says tradition, the Irish lock-keeper lifted the coach and drowned all the passengers, including the father of the gentleman who owns the eyot just opposite Dunton's yard. When above Shepperton you generally get more variety in the way of birds and other creatures. The first side-show I had was from some cows, who ought to be filing into their meadows, but couldn't file because one cow had got mislaid, or

her place was taken by somebody else. If she couldn't go in her proper order the others were not to go at all. So she, like the godfather of Mr Hammond's horse Herminius and his pals, held the bridge, otherwise the gate. When it comes to precedence, your cow is an easy first.

On the point of public swimming accommodation—a rare one for many of us who would like to do a great deal more swimming in the Thames than is permitted, owing to Conservancy's deterrent rules and a part of the public's selfishness—let me give credit where that same is due, and put in a good word for the baths formed close to the Middlesex shore end of Walton Bridge. Their cost must have been small in proportion to the accommodation afforded, and I never go past them without wishing that wholesale orders might be executed from the sample and specimens planted somewhere handy to every riparian town and village. Also I do wish the Thames Conservancy would put water wayfarers in the line they should go respecting the rule of the river road. The directions should be put up in appropriate positions on locks and bridges, also distributed in boat-building yards. Then there would be no excuse for the trouble made by the sort who don't know—or say they don't—and certainly don't care; and the well-meaning but insufficiently informed voyager, who knows a little, but not enough of right sides and wrong sides, and asks, "Tell us, governor, whose right do we go to—him as pulls or him as steers?" would receive much enlightenment. A correspondent sent me a very clear and easy table of handy hints for small boat navigators

more especially scullers. Here are his four rules :

1. Going *up* stream, keep close to either bank, where the stream is weakest.
2. Going *down* stream, keep in the middle, where the stream is strongest.
3. Pass any boat going the same way as you by going outside it—*i.e.*, farther than it from the bank if you are going up stream, or from the centre of the stream if you are going down stream.
4. Pass any boat you meet by keeping away from the place where it ought to be.

I am sure that a vast amount of trouble, and a far vaster measure of irritation, might be saved if the public were in this particular trained up in the way they should go by means of notices displayed at the locks, bridges, landing-places, and boatyards. No boatyard should be allowed to go without one.

A great year for water-lilies, as I could observe all the way from Sir Charles Dilke's Island to beyond Laleham. Have you ever been into Laleham churchyard, and read the epitaph on the worthy young man who was run over on the railway? According to the libretto, a tombstone was put up to his memory in the hope that the youth of the village might copy his example—presumably of getting run over. Of course you do not know what a Laleham man told me about his wife's health. I can't tell you, because I should be found out, but it is a very funny story. The river folk began to wake up by the time I got so far. The old gentleman who looks after your boat on the shore was on duty, and the houseboaters were putting books and cushions, and bottles and

umbrellas, and dogs into punts, preparing for the exertions of the day.

At the Swan Hotel, Staines—it is not quite in Staines, but the other side of the water, the Egham side before you get to Staines Bridge—I have found a most excellent lunch, with an old friend, one of the Mr Stollery's junior installed as aid, and an ex-Stock Exchange gentleman in the same position as the late Mr Riley, who did "kape the hottel." As the Stock Exchange is and always was very clannish, also fond of boating, I take this opportunity of calling their or its attention to the Swan as a Thames house of call at which they *ought* to call. I didn't lunch there on this particular occasion, you understand, not having done anything like work enough to justify lunch. At Staines a regatta was on, and in Bell Weir Lock I had two companions, a skiff, with for occupier a young lady who could give half of us points in watermanship, and a little launch. Here I was captious for the last time. The united waterworks establishment for collecting flood water were soothing to a man of my views, so I put them against the lockman, who, seeing that with extra care I held on to the hang-down chain with one hand, and had a hold ahead on the festoon ditto with the boathook, insisted on collecting his threepence there and then. I pointed out that there were anatomical difficulties in the way of getting money out of my trousers' pocket while both hands were otherwise engaged, but he didn't heed, and poked the bag at me some more, as if I might have threepenny-pieces or coppers concealed in my mouth, and would like to cough them into his net. Ever since I tried to pull the walls of a lock or two

down when the water was let in very fast and the walls pulled me in, I *have* been very careful, and don't mind being laughed at for being over-cautious. So the collector had to wait until the water had all come in, and then he only got half what all the other lock-keepers had, so being over-officious didn't pay him. Up by the Sailing Club and the varnish works by Ankerwycke, Runnymede, Magna Charta Island, the Cooper's Hill boathouse, and to the "Bells of Boozeley" is always pleasant voyaging for your humble servant. At the Bells ended the voyage, and my log, except to say that I saw a rare lot of kingfishers, and I think the Thames Conservancy's rules are making the creatures tamer and less scary than they were. One gentleman in a red waistcoat, with green satin swallow-tail coat, and I had quite a long time together. He looked at me from a couple of yards range and I looked at him, and neither of us minded the other a little bit. I fear that, accustomed as he is to gorgeous raiment, he must have thought me very dowdy. I left him on his stump still busy thinking. Perhaps he thought that strong work was a good prescription for driving captiousness out of you. If he didn't, I did.

Datchet, next door to opposite-the-Bells-of-Ouzeley, otherwise Wraysbury, is one of the prettiest Thames-side places for early use, as also for summer residence, and always an excellent centre for working the district. The village had, I regret to say, lost some of its popularity with boating and other folk after the late Major Druce retired from the Manor Hotel, their wants not being exactly understood. Now I can confidently recommend the Manor, which used to be the centre

of the village's life, to Datchet readers who want to be done well at a reasonable tariff. At least, I do not mean to recommend any hotels again, but will endeavour to conform with wishes as a guide by putting in a good word for proprietors and able managers. So please take me as a reference, not for the Manor, but for Mrs Woodhatch's style of running the establishment. Datchet is one of the places which I find interesting out of its conventional season, which let me assure my readers can be done with no evil of "howling wilderness" and scenes of desolation, if only you will keep your eyes open. One fine day early in December, after the National Sporting Club's late night, I put in a spell of overtime round and about Datchet, the deserted village of the winter months. I made forth in the hope of dropping on to some of my ancient friends about the river. Not a human being was there, of course. The custom is for the man who is wanted in the village to be down by the landing-stages. Seek one of the waterside characters, you may find him up in the village, but on the banks no. Being quite lonely, I had a turn spying up and down the reach above the long eyot of old Windsor in search of my friend the enemy, a nasty, disagreeable, cantankerous, aged master-swan, and wasted twenty minutes before I recollected that he was happily killed ten years ago. He *was* a brute, but in the matter of company, a live beast without extenuating circumstances is better to have a row with than no one to contradict you. I should not have taken so kindly interest in the gentleman had I been in a boat. He used to come at you if he travelled a quarter of a mile to do it. Once the villain surpassed himself. I hope I never shall get into such

a pickle again. His mastership took to flying, and there was I sculling for dear life with this chap "whanging" along, his evil head and great long neck stretched at me over the stern of the boat. He being dead, I naturally could not find him, but I did mark the kingfisher whose watch-tower is a gnarled elbow of cypress root in the part of the Park where the towpath is not at the public's service, except under severe restrictions. My kingfisher—I call it mine, but it might be his very great-great-grandchild—was artful in selecting his pitch, for the cypress bark matched his rufous breast to a shade. Also I looked for the dachshund of the Manor, who struck up acquaintance with me the first day I saw him. He used to call round early every morning at my lodgings to be taken for a walk, and would not leave off barking till he was satisfied. Poor chap! he paid the penalty of being too prolix. A dog his weight of ordinary length would have escaped the wheel that ran over him. Unfortunately his back was a yard or two too long, and he fell a victim.

CHAPTER XV

UP TO HENLEY

HENLEY REGATTA, for a sequence of years unbroken, thirty long, not counting more ancient history, has been your humble servant's holiday-making first choice in all the whole year's diversions. A big extra dose of pleasure I extract from getting there, when I can do it in my own way, which is to scull myself up, working the old skiff up from bridge to bridge—Maidenhead to Henley—from an early start on the Tuesday morning. She will be waiting at Maidenhead in all her unadorned beauty—that is, without an ounce of the unnecessary weighty lumber, gratings, carpets, the board up forrard, the cushions and rail, that among them make pretty nearly one man's work to tug along. Why ever on earth people want to clutter up a boat and weigh her down with a cargo of lumber I never can make out. No more pleasant journey than this is to be found on the Thames if, that is, you time yourself right and are well under way, so as to be able to dodge through the locks where rollers are not without getting hung up by late flotillas—punts, skiffs, and the like. Somehow, conducting rafts of this sort seems to imbue the watermen or boatyard persons in charge with crooked twists of temper and surliness, such as

used to characterise the typical turnpike man. The midsummer overfed Thames waterside character very quickly becomes a cheeky, greedy, extortionate churl, during the short reign of fat times, and fully justifies the biting sarcasm which represents his kidney as making corners in lamb at midsummer and similar trusts in sheep's heads when midwinter comes. Awkward fellow-travellers these are, delighted to make you lose a lock if they can. Exceptions there are, I expect, but I never found one.

One year I started at 7 A.M., after waiting an hour for a longshore character out of work who had promised to help me scull along, "thinking of nothing at all"—an artist who said he had not earned a bob since Ascot Sunday, and had been mostly out of work after he came back from the South African War. So long as he could earn his money and give satisfaction, he did not care what he turned his hands to. By the time I had done with him, and very tired I was, I came to the conclusion that his forte in the hand-turning line would be with a clutch on a beer-mug. For robust manual labour his touch was much too delicate. That time we had no coxswain, but a lump of stone which he looted, and in a subsequent discussion put forward as an asset for compensation, alleging that he had to leave a shilling deposit on it. My waster sculled in fair form all the way from Maidenhead Bridge to Boulter's Lock. To give credit where credit was due, he could steer looking over his shoulder.

After you get past Boulter's you strike the sort of Thames I like. Nobody could possibly help admiring Clievedon, its hanging woods, diversity of foliage, and air of peace, with quite

enough prosperity in it. Praising this charming, long extended chalk hanger, which brings some of the most beautiful of typical Buckinghamshire Down scenery to the water's edge, is altogether supererogatory ; but I am fain to render it homage for fear of being misunderstood, when I say that the Thames I care for most has very low banks, so that you from your boat can see across the meads, and mark all manner of vegetable, insect, bird, and beastly life, not forgetting the sleek cows or the scenting hay. Much of this is denied you where your course lies under high gravel banks. With the low boundary, too, you mostly miss the sharp sets of the stream and the deep holes, which account for eccentricities in the river's pace. You cannot name the odds for the contemplative man on sculling against the water's run, hugging the shore, and so gaining acquaintance with its possessions and adornments, and coming down mid-stream, cut off from intimacy with bank life.

On the river lonesomeness carries with it plenty of sea-room for navigation. If you know your route, you can go on and on up stream without ever taking a lookout, stationary obstructions in your course your extra sense warns you of ; such as a punt tethered by a short chain so as to be held broadside on, or a skiff, run with her nose into the bank, and so left. But, generally speaking, no active lookout is required. Very funny it is how quiet affects some people ; they are almost like a pulling horse in that respect. So long as they talk all their faculties are awake ; break the run, they think the more, and simultaneously concentrate themselves in cogitation, so that the boat, yourself, the river, all the prettinesses, the major beauties

on which a moment ago the entertaining omnivorous absorber of fact and fancy, theory and invention, had been holding forth, pass out of ken. I had one friend in particular, to hear whom talk on a sympathetic subject I would willingly walk fifty miles out and home. The most, absolutely the most lovable sermoniser on stones, bibliophile of running brooks, and expounder of the faith of good in everything, he is the one of all others to have with you on the river. He knows it all from its source up Cricklade way, and the tops of the tallest elms on its banks, to the Conservancy laws for regulating floods and traffic, the niceties of fine boat-pulling, and the whole racing lore of the river for thirty years—man, weight, occasion, and result, letter perfect. What a partner, what an entertainer while he talks! But if it ever is your lot, friends, to be with him while he is punctuating his periods with silence, never you mind about his being one of our most accomplished gentleman-watermen, and the etiquette of leaving number one in a double-sculler to steer, just you look round and see what the ship is doing ere it be too late and you are apprised of the fact by experiencing the whumping jar that indicates your having gone full burst into something, if only a tree.

I did not have any trouble of this sort with my hero retired from the wars. Whether in cloudland or fiercely on the job resisting the challenge of a boat's crew loaded up to their chins with cheek enough to think they could pass us, my partner aforesaid is always a terror for doing everything with all his might; you could not dream of his sugaring. This hired treasure

was a pillar of sugar. Before we had got up to the ferry, which the new man at Clievedon is credited with wanting to stop as regards certain former users, I discovered great access of speed in the stream; at least, the skiff wanted more lifting, a good deal more than it had a mile lower down. Shortly, studying the waters, another explanation offered itself, and was corroborated by turning the tail-of-the-eye-rays on. In the words of the South Coast fishermen, my young friend and co-operator would not at that period have pulled a sprat off a gridiron. Which shall I try, says I, blowing up or beer? Beer might be as petrol in his motor works, blowing up could act as the tenpenny nail in the cog-wheels of machinery; so beer at the Bel and the Dragon was my objective till we got to Cookham, having previously wandered up the back-water, the one that does not lead to the lock. My bowman appears to be a sort who flourishes on moisture, for with military alacrity he answers to his names when asked if a second pint of Bel and the Dragon's cool ale and some more bread and cheese will do him good. Actually the treatment *is* a success, for we go along at quite a strong paddle towards Marlow, leaving Cookham Church, in whose restful graveyard is buried a man who engineered me many a hundred miles on the Thames, especially when the crews were up at Putney, about the time when Jesus, Cambridge, won the Grand. Poor chap! the engines he tended at last played him false, and killed him while the little craft was lying at Cookham.

I do not admire very much the show houses on the Bucks shore as you go to Bourne Bridge,

and certainly not the later editions. Seldom have I been on these waters without finding a bothersome strong wind as you make for Spade Oak Reach. We found one: the stream from the ferry under Cookham Dene, and all along by Quarry Wood is apt to run strongly, and I give you my word so affected the warrior bold, as to make him follow the immortal mot of the Old Guards' mouthpiece at Waterloo: "The Guard dies but does not surrender. Friends, let us conceal ourselves." He could not conceal himself without going overboard, but the last degree of stimulant from the cool ale reserve had worked off, and he carefully concealed any back put into his sculling, and was no more good to me than the lump of stone with the shilling mortgage on it at the other end of the ship. A nice stiff job it was to get round the corner where the menagerie was (and the towpath was not, a little while ago) carrying these two passengers, and then there was I purposely baulked of the lock by a small tug with a lot of boats who would not let me through, although they could not have got in before the gates closed. Not a nice place to wait at is the tail of Marlow Lock—not at all nicely arranged is the whole concern from the bridge and past the tumbling bay to the lock itself, and it is wonderful that accidents do not occur more often—fatalities which could be prevented through an outlay of a few shillings. It makes my blood run cold to see some of the locks and weirs—Molesey, for instance—and think of lives lost that might have been saved, if some booms were strained diagonally across the river from Kent's Island. Even at Marlow boats coming down in the gloaming would not

find so much as a lantern put out to show them where the landing was, and, you know, when night falls on the river and the mist rises, even the most experienced can easily lose their bearings. At the Anglers, I sent my crew ashore for more pint-pot petrol and bread and cheese. The fuel generated power to such an extent that we were over the Marlow Regatta Course in quite respectable time, and on the other side of Temple Lock.

And so to Medmenham, and more petrol; also nearing Hambledon more real strong stream. Once at this lock you are much about the same as at Henley—at least, that is how you feel, and might be inclined to land to look at the old mill and the miller's prize terriers, have a dip in the pool below the small tumbling bay, or go up and sample the lovely Buckinghamshire beech-tree, tree-clumpy, undulating land, always beautiful, but suggestive of greater glories mostly its own private property when autumn begins to pass, and every brown and yellow, from old gold to burnt umber, contributes to a patchwork of drying leaves. Many a time and oft have I paddled down here past Greenlands and the public ferry, now labelled private, and thought the passage all too short. Jolly long I found it ere I reached the aquatic gallowsy arrangement at the starting post, so as to see the first heat of the day's start before making to the boat-tent for a rub down and a change. There I settled my bold mariner by imposing overtime labour on him. His strenuous duty was to look out of one end of the tent and give notice of ladies' approach, while the London Rowing Club Phelps guarded the other extremity. All being well and free from

interruption, I paid off the weary warrior. Four lots of beer, two of bread and cheese, and a passenger's life for, say, six miles ought to count for something. Wishing to do him handsome, I supplemented the "kind" with eight shillings in bullion. "What's this?" says he. Perhaps he drove a cab in the South African War. "Count it," says I. "The man at Maidenhead said you would give me twelve bob." "All right," says I. "You ask him for the other four." With that he departed, and Mr Phelps reminded me of his presence. Quoth Phelps, "I suppose the poor fellow has been ordered carriage exercise for his health; he would not make a dint in a pat of butter all the time I watched him coming up with you, but if you will excuse me, you have made one mistake yourself. He is the man that ought to have paid the eight bob, not you."

The moral of this of course is, secure congenial fellow-travellers, or go on your own. Real proper Henley week weather understood, with the river sparkling, and the banks' trimmings of trees and bushes delightfully grateful to the eye in their greenery. How can a man spend time better than in working a skiff up from down river, even from the tideway itself, while this said Henley weather is on, and the labour you delight in physics weight to an alarming extent, or would save for restoratives judiciously administered? I never can make out why more of our young fellows do not go in for undertaking the journey by water, but then you can't get them to do that sort of thing. They are mostly very chary of signing on the voyage, and so miss much healthy pleasure.

Perhaps the reason why the little companies making from the lower reaches to the little town and back in the old-fashioned style are now so few is to be found in the indictment brought against the present generation by the tideway clubs' fathers and apostles, viz., that the new editions, though game for boat-racing, are not bitten as their elders were with the love of boat-pulling—such as boxing about in a pair-oared gig—as a pastime. "Work" is what the latter-day fine young athlete calls rowing or sculling, and he looks on it as a sort of penalty duty to be strictly avoided when possible, or, at any rate, as quite the opposite of amusement. Work! Well, I do not deny that exertion in various degrees is involved in skiff voyaging, short or long, but if you come to call that work (as the first professional gardener who had to cultivate for a living might digging, while grumbling that he ever got himself disqualified as an amateur), so you would going out for a turn on horseback, or going in for a swim. I thought that the Skiff Club in its promotion of that sort of racing might bring about a better understanding among the rising clubmen, but it does not—at least, I cannot trace its so doing; and I fear that until taste does alter, the lifting of metropolitan rowing, one of my pet wishes and aims, will not happen.

But this is digression. Where was I? Somewhere on the journey about Quarry Woods, to the best of my belief, envying the lucky folk fixed there for the summer, listening for the song of the weir farther up, wondering whether the towpath, reserved by arrangement about the point of the meadow where the menagerie was, would stand next winter's washing out, and if anyone would

ever repeat the brothers Louch's feat of running a steam launch (the *Black Watch* was the one they performed the feat in) up over Marlow weir against the stream in floodtime. There I was, friends, longing for someone to pension me off with space enough to be comfortable in a nice, small (but roomy), bungalow cottage establishment, with a little bit of garden (just a modest red-brick walled enclosure of, say, an acre), and enough run for a few fowls, a cob, and a cow or two; not what you could call a field, but a paddock of eight or ten acres. A chicken this was I counted in the hatching process. It was to be located up over the ridge of the beech wood "hanger" on the Cookham Dene side, not too far from the river, but on the chalk; a nice walk from Maidenhead, ditto from Marlow, with Bourne End handy, and plenty of bathing, boating, and all. Cataloguing these items for the benefit of fellow-passengers, I almost began to believe in the dream's realisation, and to consider myself a very lucky fine youngish fellow with such benefits in the future, and the best of enjoyment in the present—a good skiff, good company, the Anglers at Marlow with an interval for refreshment only just round the corner, so to speak, a lovely run to be accomplished right along by Temple Mills and Medmenham, Aston, Hambledon, Remenhan, the regatta course, and a sight of some of the crews out at the end of the journey.

A few years ago, seeing ahead the hard times which have since arrived, I suggested a possible sweet use of the adversity in that it might have the effect of making us cut down expenses at such functions as Henley Regatta

to reasonable holiday-making level. It has not been realised, but it would have been a good job. This and other fixtures like it have been, so to speak, carried right off their legs by fashion—fashion set, too, by people who have no true inward connection with the sport. These have turned the holidays which used to be taken reasonably and without ostentation into occasions for needless competition in extravagant display of all sorts. The lead has been followed, so that doing the regatta reputably (as the rest of the family consider) makes the entertainment costly beyond the means of the middle-class income. The game all the way through has too often not been worth the costly candles, and I take it that after a year or two, if we do get a bit hard up, as seems far too probable, more of us will be able to play it in a modest and comfortable way, and enjoy ourselves all the more. Let me explain that I don't wish to be too hard on the Thames-side tradespeople, hotel-keepers, and so on. There is often cause to complain of too lofty tariffs for riverside goods, dwelling, and commissariat provision; but if the folk who cater are to make their trade pay, they must get their bit—big or little—very quickly, and in a bad summer their season may vanish with little but dead loss to show.

Let the show be cheap or dear, it is to some of us one of *the* most enjoyable in the calendar of sport. You can get a lot of all-round pleasure out of it, more particularly if you sojourn in the neighbourhood *pro tem*. From Marsh Lock to Hambleton are reaches which for natural charms are hard, very hard, to beat. Henley itself is a pretty town, typical of that quarter of our island.

Most of us have a sort of affection for the grey old bridge which, alas! is rather too much like Ben Bolt's sweetheart's cottage, in that it is going to decay, but picturesquely venerable. The church is an old friend, as was the Lion; also the Angel and the Catherine Wheel, not forgetting certain out-of-the-way pubs. beloved of the well-informed, who do take much ease at these inns. Many locals are interesting, down to the hangers-about, who always strike me as if they tried to live each day all the year round as if they had just been discharged, paid off, or otherwise, from the militia. Nowhere except in such country towns do you find so many labourers, whose only apparent source of income is derivable from standing all day idle in the market-place, unless you can call habitual drunkenness a trade, occupation, or profession. No one can accuse them of idleness in this particular. Among the right class is always a floating population of good sorts, pleased to extend to you the hospitalities of the city. You can in regatta times get a very great deal of amusement for nothing in and about Henley, and, if you know how, may double your holiday by boating in ordinary fashion in the earlier hours of the forenoon when traffic on the river scarcely rises above normal proportions, and doing the regatta later as a separate course in the menu.

Regatta Reach is a charming one for the contemplative sportsman's morning paddle, when the crowd has not come out, but the waterside inhabitants, such as moorhens, water rats, dab-chicks, and the rest have not gone frightened into hiding but are busying about. Haymaking is almost always in progress in regatta week, and never is the scent of the hay-fields drawn over

your course more sweetly than down Fawley Court way early a-mornings. The cattle lead their placid lives as if no such word as hurry was in the vocabulary of the young, middle-aged, or old. On all evenings but one—Fridays—you may be at ease paddling in the gloaming, or as much later as you please. And to requote the contemplative man and turn to the sport itself, what a happy subject for contemplation he finds in the course as brought up to date!

One is saddened somewhat in comparing old arrangements with the very much superior new ones, because naturally you must fall to thinking of the friends gone for ever, who helped people the scene when forbears of young men whose names keep cropping up in the competitors' lists were making history as their sons do now. Only the other day booming (booming the river, I mean) was unknown; the start was above the Island, and the finish up by the bridge; steam launches were not projected, and watermen pulled the cutters that carried the umpires; sliding-seats and swinging rowlocks were not dreamed of, though fifty years ago Tynesiders slid on their two seats—their breeches and the boat's thwart; and the father of a swinging rowlock was commonly known as a swivel or crutch; a sculler with the old-fashioned fit-up was expected to finish his stroke with shoulder-blades flattened on a straight back, and not as if he had a hump on it. Henley then and Henley now are very different things. (Why, to show how vast is the difference, I may cite a fact which at one time would have been thought almost libellous on rowing's estate. Think of a Henley where no one got himself locked up!) That from life's

incessant march so many on an average must drop out is a fact one has to recognise; but, admitting that much, it does sometimes occur that the proportion who have to take their long leave seems to include an undue number of one's own friends. Perhaps those who are taken first are better off than those who are left, but it is sorry work having to lose them. The ranks of the old schools you expected to meet at Henley have been greatly thinned in the last ten years, so much so that, at any rate to me, there is more pain in passing along the barge-walk and missing the old familiar forms and faces from the different stations where year by year they used to be sure finds, than there is pleasure to be derived from the sport. Why is it, I have asked myself, while mentally reckoning up the number of ghosts I saw on the bank, why is it that I can and do take cheerful pleasure in paying visits to my old friends' graves, looking them up there as I would have called at their homes had they been in the flesh, and yet am downright miserable half the times at Henley? Standing at the horse barrier and counting the missing whose rendezvous it used to be, I have half made up my mind not to do Henley again. Not one of the little knot of quidnuncs who made headquarters there was in evidence. All were gone—scattered, invalided, dead—and I felt to be a stranger, almost lost, more painfully solitary than if I was alone.

Perhaps the very reason that one does so miss the old faces is, that one wants to share all the enjoyment with them. A Henley such as we are sometimes blessed with is the sort of bright benefaction one ought to keep in stock ready to be pulled out and gloated over when things are

going wrong; when the outlook all round, up above, and under foot is deadlly dull; when morally and physically the wind is in the east; when the grasshopper could very easily be a burthen if he was on the track to raise a chirp; and when, as the late Mr Stirling Crawford said of the also late Duchess of Montrose (his spouse), "You could quarrel with the angel Gabriel," though why that particular angel I never could quite make out. When we are a little more advanced with our Edisonian inventions and appliances, we shall realise Swift's involuntarily prophetic bit of chaff, and go a good deal better than extracting sunbeams from cucumbers, to be bottled for future use and to be taken as required. Scientific gents will be able to give us a dose on an occasion like this Henley, to carry about in pill or other handy taking form, and act as a perfect antidote to the blues—curiously enough, the trade name for depression arising from general greyiness.

What is it the young lady says in "Engaged," speaking of the gentleman whose legal relations to herself leave doubt whether she is maid, wife, widow, or what? "My Cheviot" (she calls him Cheviot because Cheviot Hill is his name) "has a noble nature, but if he has a fault it is that he is beastly mean." I am thinking of our "beastly manners"—never mind about the noble natures à propos of Henley Regatta. David Copperfield showed a very proper spirit, to my thinking, when on being charged three pun' sivin after a certain ecstatic ride he "paid, and thought it extremely cheap for so much joy." Plenty will bear out that I have not exaggerated a little bit the "joy" the

Regatta gives to its frequenters; how do they help with the great expenses necessarily involved in getting it up and through? Some do give liberally, that is so; but take the crowd, the well-to-do, freely-spending, high-living crowd one sees afloat, what percentage of that contributes a farthing towards the entertainment from which they profit? A mortal poor one. But, says someone, the Regatta is brought there without consulting them. I grant all that, but they do derive amusement out of it, and have no need to take it gratis unless they prefer to have something for nothing, and will not encourage sport till cornered. Now what struck me so strongly came in a curious way. Contrasting the bright scene, Regatta Reach in midsummer, "dressed" with the Henley crowd, and, in midwinter, as some of us have seen it, with skating on its surface, and so by easy stages I cast back to old-fashioned fen-skating matches. At these you would note all sorts and conditions of men, from the squire down to the labourer (the latter out of work, perhaps, owing to the frost), but precious few would you come on about the course who had not a twopenny ice ticket in their hats—not a ticket for an ice like a ticket for soup, but a brief showing that the bearer had practically voluntarily contributed twopence towards the meeting's exes., and was so doing his duty. What a lift to Henley's funds would twopence per head represent! I would suggest issuing an aquatic equivalent for a field or an ice ticket to be worn by those who pay their footing. The good-natured public might do a lot of good by wearing such badges conspicuously, because of the exhibition's moral effect on non-subscribers. There

ought to be plenty of money to be had towards the Regatta's expenses if recognised collectors get in touch with the crowd, which does not mind paying something for its amusement. Many frequently intend to make subscriptions, and would carry out their good intention but for the trouble of sending. There is the bother—it is a bother to some of us, you know—of writing, including finding the paper, the ink, the envelope, the pen, and the stamp, and doing the posting, and in the end the work is never done. But, say, the man with the plate or bag, or the lady—which or who is a much more deadly collector—collars you personally, your hand goes into your pocket, and there you are, you know, very little poorer, but feeling very virtuous at having done the right thing. Methodical people do not find the difficulty I indicate—at least, so I am informed. But, judging from the number of people who do not subscribe, there must be a power of unmethodical folk about.

I have been some time at the business of calling attention to trick-playing with the towpath and other paths about the Henley Regatta Course. A gentleman learned in the law, more particularly the law of Thames rights-of-way, wrote saying he was exceedingly glad I had taken the matter up. The barge-walk at Henley is of course on the Berks bank. There is no towing-path on the Bucks (Oxon.) shore, but an ancient, well-recognised footway which is annually extinguished. To this my correspondent alluded. He also repeated that the public have more rights at Henley than mere towpath privileges, because from Remenham Farm at least to the bridge there is a footpath identical with the barge-walk,

which means that so far as that section is concerned you are at liberty to use it without regard to your being engaged in navigation. Now, I do not want to interfere with the club enclosures on the other side, nor with the grand stand, which is quite unnecessarily poked out to the water's edge. Its occupants could see just as well if the towpath were not bunged up for them. I do not say that any particular harm is done, but precedent is created.

I do not go quite so far as does my correspondent, but if indulgence is granted for interfering pro tem. with the footpath, this ought to be formally stated and advertised. Many may not be aware of the existence of the pleasant footway concerning which I will now quote from my correspondent's letter:—"On the other side of the river a public path, provided with plank bridges across the little creeks, which leaves the Marlow road by the side of Phyllis Court, goes nearly down to the river, and traverses the waterside meadows close to the river, through the Fawley Court property. What I saw at Henley this year was that a considerable number of club enclosures had been thrown right across the footpaths. The illegality of the proceeding was undoubted, and it was a shameful thing to see that police were engaged to prevent people from going through the enclosures. It is certainly the Conservators' duty to prevent these interferences with the use of the towpath (quâ towpath), and for district councils to look after the highway rights. The persons stopping these towpaths even for a day, are liable to be indicted at Sessions for a nuisance. There is no legal power to stop a highway even for a minute ;

no authority has power to allow it. The danger is that in years to come the landowners will say there is no footpath by the side of the river, and will adduce the very strong evidence that once a year for many years the alleged footpath had been closed in places; arguing that *if there had been a public footpath there, of course it could not have been closed.* If the local authorities think proper not to interfere, they might at least assert the right of the public by sending their surveyor through the enclosures once during one of the Regatta days, and make an entry on their minutes of this proceeding."

Footpaths by or near the river ought to be particularly cherished. A footpath you know his Majesty's lieges have the right to use, whether they are connected with business on the river or whether they are not. But a towing-path that is not also a footpath is different. According to an authority who has studied Thames rights and Thames wrongs more than anyone else—John Bickerdyke, to wit—you have no business on most parts of the towpath unless actually engaged in towing. You commit a trespass directly you step to land on the strip between the water and the towpath, if you are not doing so for purposes of navigation. There's a situation for you! All this sort of chartered tyranny ought to be extinguished by Act of Parliament, so ought private fishery claims. Let holders be paid out, and the great water playground be made free once and for ever to the public. As I have written year in year out, we find good folk donating or voting thousands and thousands of pounds to secure land playgrounds, parks—Burnham Beeches, for instance—as lungs for the

populace. A vast area for recreation on the water might be similarly made free at quite trifling cost, considering what it means to the country at large.

The pity is that so few of those who clamour against abuses in the way of monopolies and encroachments manage to find the way to their pockets, and pull anything out to help those who work for them. You do not find many to give even their shillings. Still I must hope that all who can will help to bring about a better state of things, to get rid of these rights if possible. If value attaches to them, let the State buy them out and present them to the public. At present we are trespassing nearly all the time we are afloat, and mostly go worse as law-breakers the moment we seek to land. We have no business on the barge-walk unless fixed to one end of a rope, with a boat or float at the other. Walking is wicked, and standing still more sinful. In some places, as at Bray Reach, you can be charged for looking at the river, the somebody who puts up a twopenny-halfpenny bungalow can order you off if you happen to take an easy in front of his desirable rabbit hutch, and to dive and bring up stones is stealing, because they are private property. The public have for many years enjoyed privileges concerning Henley barge-walk without which they could derive very little amusement from the racing. These they were accorded on sufferance, and ought to be grateful for the same. How small rights the B.P. has on the river banks I am aware. Also that on starting to cut them down the clubs had a road easy to clear. But the dreadful part to me is that what should be a sporting federation

should begin to spoil other folk's sport. That is a terrible mistake from a sportman's point of view.

Have you ever sampled the Regatta town out of season—in March, say? I have, my working object being to see the practising of the Oxford Boat Race crew. Henley town was none too cheerful a spot to make holiday in that afternoon—no riverside place is out of summer, unless the day is bright—and the town seemed duller and sleepier than ever. Perhaps one tries it a little too highly because of reference to Regatta week. Market day scarcely livened it up. The Royal Hotel was in brown holland, so to speak; the Red Lion—on whose (the old house's) window-pane Shenstone engraved one of the most remarkably successful prophecies recorded regarding the warmth an inn might attain—had not a solitary bar customer to put in its window to make a show—as the Irish undertaker did with corpses; my good provider, Webb—who prepares every description of cooked viands ready for the table, and is so a blessing to Regatta visitors, saving them the trouble of laying in commissariat and bothering to lug luncheon hampers about—was almost out of work. The meadows on the Berkshire side were sodden with recent rain, and over the way one viewed the shore from Phyllis Court, Fawley Court's Dower House, and all the way down to the Rectory at Remenham as one did the Coronation procession route after the stands, which led to so much litigation, were removed, missing the floating stands the houseboats make. Without the piles and the houseboats and the big flotilla of small craft, the river struck me as being narrower than when parcelled out and

liberally populated. Not a launch, row, or sculling boat of any description was afloat. Only one fisherman wetting his line, as he told me, for the last time on a bad day at the close of a bad season, was apparent. You cheerfully missed the array of tents and fencing which so restrict circulation—as the French use the word—along the tow-path, and that scum of our river's population of whose tricks and want of manners the late Mr Alexander Pope wrote so feelingly in an inimitable imitation of Chaucer.

CHAPTER XVI

IN THE OFF SEASON

MOST people seem not to have the ghost of a notion that during the chilly half of the year Father Thames can be worth while, let alone that winter water-sport has any special points about it. I think I can demonstrate that they are decidedly out in these opinions or lack of opinions. Suppose they come and consider the lookout as I am seeing it at the time of writing. Such time is 6.45 A.M., and the prospect strikes me as simply marvellous, because I can see such a lot of it from my window opposite Tagg's Island, East Molesey. Surely marvellous *is* the word when, in late December, before seven o'clock a-morning, you are treated to good broad daylight—an early luxury for which I am duly and truly thankful. If there is one thing I do appreciate to the extent of its being an absolute necessary it is natural light. As I have previously mentioned, I would rather be cold and have good light, than be warm and deprived of the other blessing. But I began discoursing about outlooks. Mine is one worth much discourse if you are fond of the river. Away over Thames Ditton is the fiery red sun rising, warming the tone of old Father Thames, and making all things look bright and cheerful.

Already brothers of the angle are trudging up the barge-walk, intent on making sure of favourite pitches. Cold work, you are afraid? Bless you! the metropolitan bank fisherman does not mind cold. I would like to bet that if you met the last train sent out now from Waterloo on a Saturday, you would find get out at points more or less handy for the river patient sportsman, whose programme includes trudging some miles to selected spots, and waiting as best they may till daylight doth appear and a line is worth wetting. Cheery and inviting is the river for sculling—that is, absolutely perfect—and, what is more, quite free from chance of bother with craft. A nasty selfish thing to say, is it not, implying that you want all the good things yourself? Please do not take me that way, I only mean that so happens you would have no bother about keeping a lookout for steering.

Over the way the Island has been improved greatly, thanks to Mr George's moving the ship-building fixings to the Middlesex side of his eyot, so that you see a deal more of the land, which, with a little touching-up, can easily be made much more pretty than it was. You do not get so much out of a wintry morning on the river as you can out of a summer, but still there is plenty to go on with. You miss the bathers (I always wonder that there are any in the Thames, they are for the most part so badly treated), and here a word about *the* Christmas swim—the Serpentine Club's race. One or two writers have treated this as rather a desperately rash undertaking. I can wish them nothing better or more enjoyable than a dip in winter water—provided, that is, they are all right for dressing, and not obliged to

risk taking cold that way. Supposing that you keep the game up right through autumn and do not miss, in the winter there is no tonic made to compare with a quick little swim in ice-cold water as a pick-me-up.

Well, to get back, you miss—at least, I do—the bathers and also a lot of the birds. The old hawk is about, so are his natural enemies the rooks, who mind him so ferociously sometimes that life must be a burthen, not to mention internal gnawings owing to not being permitted to go and work for your living because of a mob of blackguards who fly when you fly, your way always being their way, and settle all round you directly you perch. Brer Hawk and Brer Rook are still in residence, so is another distinguished inhabitant whom I won't designate, liking him too much. But the small birds are few and silent. The lark's singing I miss (it is a thousand to one on a lark against a nightingale, and odds on a hedge-sparrow against the winner). The swallow and the martin, being many hundreds of miles off, cannot delight one with their manœuvres. Never a dabchick can I spot, but moorhens of both sexes there are, and busy prinking about in most self-conceited fashion. Has it ever struck you, gentle reader, that a moorhen is in mould as nearly as possible the same as an old-fashioned high-pooped man-of-war of the Drake and Frobisher model? The swans are, as always, doing the best they can for themselves. Down this way our birds were recently treated to Colonial company in the person of a "rara avis"—an Australian gentleman from Goring way, for whom change of air had been prescribed. My word! the black fellow

gave the whites a lively time of it. Some of them scarcely dared call their feathers their own. The invalid—a nice convalescent he or she was!—did not fight according to recognised rules, beating with the wings and endeavouring to drown by holding on to the neck; no, he pecked with straight action like leading in boxing. The geese are only a remnant, as will occur about Christmas time, and the ducks, too, are reduced in numbers, if not in circumstances. Our robins are, if anything, a little bolder and self-assertive in demanding food; the starlings greedier than ever, and the blackbirds bigger bullies over the poor thrushes wishful to beg a bit.

What loss you suffer in the trees being bare, save some of the early-blooming willow tribe—there is one at Ewell (L.B.S.C.R. station) which used to be white with palm in November—is more than made up by the better view you command of the smaller birds. And if the houseboats have lost their summer plumage, and are rather on the ghostly side than the bright and cheerful, their ferry craft are no longer stuck right in the fairway. The spry little bleak splashing about on the surface appear to be off, but the jack, so says a bank angler who has not had a run in two days, ought to be on. Our friends the dogs, no longer yearning for a swim, take it out in ratting on their own account, and the man at the lock has proper time to read his paper, and is only kept in practice by the steam tugs. Some things we do not get these wintry days, things all welcome in summer when the swallows are here, and the fieldfares, who are very fond of the Thames, are absent; but seldom, if ever, do you have such perfect water

for boating. This is the time for that diversion—if, that is, you are sharp and do not loiter; and this is the time when I am barred from doing myself good, as I was pleased to note friends from the Skiff Club did for themselves.

It always seems so strange to me to note how few of the racing army take advantage of two-day suburban fixtures to have a turn in the country, when the cost of a bed and the railway fare are about the same. Nowadays only a few of the "regulars" racing at Hurst Park or Kempton put up at a Hampton Court. The old connection you find at that most excellent hotel, the Mitre; the new generation apparently has no appreciation of the blessing it is to sleep in the country's fresh air. To me it reads a thousand to one on being down by the river with the weir's song for a lullaby and all Thames-side's attractions, not to mention the beauties of Hampton Court's gardens, at your service from morning to evening, free, gratis, and for nothing, against putting up in town. Not much are the attractions of the river just now, some of you may tell me. Not much, I grant, but anyway I would rather have country fog than London, and we do get a fine day sometimes, you know, as witness this one of the clear dawn. And if you are on the spot you may happen on one of those very, very still calm winter middays which, caught just right, are so extremely pleasant and enjoyable, if only you keep going from start to finish without stopping to catch cold. Again, you may behold the Thames coming down in flood, which is worth seeing, if it does not make you cross, as it does me. Cos why; to me a flood nowadays seems to be

synonymous with wicked waste on a wholesale scale, and I do not mind saying that this is a subject that ought to be vexatious. Half the year there is not enough water in the greater part of the Thames, partly because the supply is insufficient without counting the excessive demands of the water companies. These, who help themselves on a hand-to-mouth system, take just as much as they want for themselves, or to sell to distant companies ostensibly fed from other sources, and don't mind how low the river is, how navigation is interfered with, or how their excessive drain acts in bringing about epidemic. If you are there at the time of the "short" season, you will find their chimneys smoking pretty well all night and all day, and may hear the throb of the big pumping machines. Why can't they lay up stock when it offers itself to be taken in as it does every now and then? Were water treated rationally, that generously liberal provider Father Thames ought, after a real good "spate" to be excused from taxation for many a month to come, for we should have enough laid by to last for years. While the river offers for acceptance every now and then a tremendous number of millions of extra gallons per day, it is not to blame if the glut—a word I scarcely like to use, though the most apt and expressive for the purpose—has not been conserved and put away for the (non) rainy day or time sure to arrive in due course. At least, so we profess to believe, though no olive branches appear to be brought on board any of our craft so far. Then—I mean while the shallows are poking their backs through the stream, and small fry are being dried to death in the emptied dykes and grips—then, as we

know, the water companies will be pumping hard on the of-a-little-take-all-you-can-get principle. Not content with wasting all the flood water, we deliberately increase the wasted volume? I do not know whether what seems a natural consequence of the combined influences of the latter-day drainage system and enormous consumption of water by our great towns has been much thought of. While the demand grows and grows, we appear to be correspondingly less heedful as to looking after and conserving the supply. Probably experts are able to set me right on certain points, but I do not fear expert or any other contradiction when I assert that we *are* going the wrong way. Put in a nutshell, the aim of our drainage—land drainage especially—appears to be to collect rain as completely as possible, and hurry it off to the sea. This may be all very well for certain districts, certain soils, and certain individuals, but is not well for the country at large. I am told that the rainfall of the last few years makes a poorer average than that for corresponding periods. This appears natural, because more land is artificially drained each year, and more effectually drained, with the result that what moisture falls is made off with as soon as it percolates a little, and is, so to speak, bundled neck and crop, hustled from pillar to post, till it is got rid of at the rivers' mouths. Surely we can do better with it than this; we do not want swamps, but there is no need to go to the other extreme, and run off so much water before bringing it into use. Matters would be different if a system of storing, such as has been engineered above Staines, were widely extended for the benefit of the water companies, so as to turn floods, which

for the most part are very expensive nuisances, into blessings by using up part of them as cheap supply.

By and by the scheme adopted on the flat land at the back of Staines's London Stone—a very interesting corner this is, if you take the trouble to find out about it—must be extended, if we are to keep an all-the-year-round supply for London. The sooner the better, for it seems an unnatural thing altogether to be able to take the Thames as it is when a great push in the stream is sending the land-water back on the low-lying parts, so making floods, with millions of tons per hour racing past any fixed station you may choose—to take this and contrast it with the condition of the same reach during a long drought. When we have so liberal a service, for goodness' sake let us put the extra stock away for a rainy day, or what that means when you are saving up against days into which the rain raineth not for many days together. Pretty much wherever you go in providence is noticeable. Every little ditch is made to strenuously illustrate the water's going to the river and the river's going to the sea, which is a pretty version of various more familiar proverbs, as, for instance, one relating to larding and fat pig-esses. Sooner or later most of it must do so, and far more now than formerly, because rainfall is not permitted to lie on the ground long enough to be taken up into the clouds, and in that way made to serve over and over again as it used. What I complain about is, that we do not make it serve us better during its progress, by means of ponds through which the artificial drainage might flow, and by looking after rain-water. At lots and

lots of the places where elevation is considerable and in any but a wet summer many pounds have to be spent in carting water, you find only feeble attempts to make the best of a difficult situation. The rain comes, is rattled off without use made of it, instead of being caught in reservoirs. Just the same is done in towns. How many of our suburban houses have a rain-water intercepting tank? This soft water is, I believe, much prized. At some towns I visit I am favoured with offer of the treasure as a mark of esteem, etc. ; which is waste, because if there is one thing that I do heartily detest, it is soft water. But plenty prefer it. If only for watering the gardens it must be worth looking after, and so would be bath water. One of the best paying arrangements the amateur gardener in a small way could make is to empty the bath into an intercepting tank, which gives pressure enough to carry it some distance when required. I have been running on long enough on this theme, have I? Well, perhaps you would run on if you felt as unkind as I do, and came face to face with a stock grievance. Still, let us have a change of subject.

While one finds so many good folk keen on procuring or securing for the populace parcels of land catalogued as "open spaces," one means of putting us in the way of enjoying them strangely appears to be very nearly overlooked, viz., to open up view of these reserves by substituting railings for the dead-wall we so frequently find. When the tramway company which works the line through Hampton was negotiating for privileges to pull the roads about, and do a variety of things no individual would ever be permitted, we were, I believe, indebted to our gracious King

for charging the concessionnaires with putting up iron railings on the river edge of Bushey Park in place of the oak fencing, so far screening the Royal demesne from public gaze. Now he can see across the park who walks along the path between the Hamptons—Hampton Court and Hampton village, even in my time a pretty waterside hamlet, but now mainly given up to be a wholesale waterworks. These are, I regret to say, also very much factories of foulnesses, permitted to pollute the Thames, poisoning its flow, corroding boats' paint and varnish, killing the fish, and rendering bathing a dangerously dirty instead of a health-giving, cleanly habit. I have little sympathy with locals complaining of these things, because you could not stir them up to help themselves.

When the companies on the Middlesex side offered to make a terrace-road and walk along the whole river frontage and pay all costs, the inhabitants said no, being moved to such folly, not because themselves would not benefit by the operation, but through disapproving of the water companies being able to save expense by getting cheaply rid of the soil left in the reservoirs' filtering-beds. Equal idiots on the opposite shore acquiesced in a scheme, by which the water-takers over the way to Hampton destroyed almost every bit of growing bush or tree along the barge-walk, and land-marked their riparian boundary by erecting an ugly brick wall a mile or so long. The local councils affected were moved by the *Referee* to the pitch of wondering whether disestablishing the bushes and bigger growing timber—all greenery of that sort—was calculated to beautify the riverscape or render it less sightly.

In order to find out, they did, I believe, take counsel with someone who ought to know—the water company's own secretary or surveyor! This expert opinion guaranteed great artistic improvement, and a report to such effect was presented and unanimously accepted. Now you can revel in a prospect of brick wall to your heart's content, should your taste lie in such direction, but the greenery is off.

Intelligently treated for ornament as well as use, a railway reservoir embankment can quickly become a pleasing item in landscape gardening. I would never say a word against water-workers, any other body, or anybody making railway-embankment sort of edgings to their territory, if they planted them with the right kind of trees; the herb vegetation would soon come of itself. But you don't want brick walls in the scheme. With a little pressure we might have persuaded the company to vary its West Molesey wall-building. But there! the Council-vestrymen of the villages, the Balbuses of the Boards, a bit in the building line themselves, the Caiuses of various industries to whom the company or the company's men might be useful in trade, and the Agricolas of market gardening and milk-purveying persuasions, quite admired dead walls after being told on authority how charmingly pretty such artistic creations were. And there you were, or are, or the mile, mile and a half, or two miles of ugliness is. Its bricks stand to this to-day to prove my words.

Presently we shall, I suppose, have the same worthies protesting faith in mixed Thames water and machinery cleanings' muck being better than the ordinary river supply, which was quite good

enough to drink if boiled. You wouldn't fancy so to look at the oily scum scoured out from the Hampton Works, and subsequently gathered sometimes about Tagg's Island and on the shores. Neither would you quite believe in such adulterations and defilements improving the value of property or trade in the neighbourhood. Which, talking about the value of property, I was writing from that head, though I didn't exactly say so in alluding to the King's thoughtful kindness in opening up the view into one part of Bushey Park, which is public, as are other Royal parks, practically free to all who do no damage. Next to being able to go into one of these, the best indulgence is to peep in, a treat you can give yourself while going on your business without wasting time. Do you not think, readers, the Royal hint is good to follow up, and ways and means for disestablishing impervious opaque walls in favour of some kind of fencing permitting command of the land inside the enclosures worth considering? I treat of the parks Hampton Court way now, but there are others, plenty of them.

Folks who know the river in the off season can draw some material for philosophising out of the contrast between off and on. In one respect the off carries this distinct advantage: in bad weather you do not have the extra depression of feeling that the working and trading river population is seeing its yearly chance of getting a living grown anything but beautifully less. In a bad summer it makes me downright miserable to be about, watching pretty nearly the whole riverside community with no work to do, and losing out-of-pocket expenses at the same time.

Again—and this is something like philosophy—you realise that all your criticism of the river's management, however well based, cannot carry quite the force they would, if river people did not mostly desert it for going on for eight months in every year. I daresay that a good deal more *would* be done for the public in smoothing their progress up and down stream, if the fact could be overlooked that the great bulk of the pleasure traffic has a very short life. You may calculate the average demand for accommodation of all sorts. Dealing with this in equal instalments must be easy enough. But working on this basis would not anything like enable you to meet the strain of the busy times on the river—a situation which obtains in all businesses appertaining to Thames boating. During certain months in the year there is a rush for lodgings of all description, from swagger country seats to very poor apartments; maybe, quite a long way from the river. Then letters have so many customers that—like John Bull after a good harvest—they cannot find sufficient housing room. All hands have full employment, and carry themselves accordingly. If you want to hire craft you should speak in good time. Tradesmen have their shops full of orders. Hotels can pick among their patrons. The lock-keepers are kept busy throughout long days. A good deal of what is very much miscalled independence is manifested among the classes whose idea of work is to do as little as possible, and are rude in summer to those they cadge from in winter. In short, money is plentiful, and there is a glut of trade of all sorts, almost reaching congestion point on certain special occasions, as, for example, regatta.

In the dull times things are deadly quiet and life slow, but could business go on the high pressure lines sketched all the year round, everybody concerned in it could afford to keep up a big staff and flourish. So they might, too, if the brisk period covered the greater part of the year, or if we could have fixed dates for "the season's" commencement and termination; but the crop to be gathered must be got in in a very short space, and the harvest so made must be made to last over, frequently, many lean months. Too often what is considered river weather is turned on very late, and just as people are becoming persuaded that it will last, is turned off suddenly and completely before autumn has begun. One day you may be standing at a lock or going through it, noting the difficulty in making the passage owing to what appears to be inadequate provision. There are too many launches, punts, and skiffs, and all manner of pleasure boats (I do not mention tugs and barges, because they are mostly all-the-year-round customers), all wanting to get through in a hurry. No sooner is one instalment out than another is in, and you are almost persuaded that installing a second or even a third lock by the side of the one in existence, and spending a good bit of money on bettering such easements as the rollers, would pay the Conservancy well as an investment rather than a speculation.

Then, as I say, the tap is turned off, a sudden change comes, and, the weather bringing with it plenty of rain and cold winds, winter appears to have arrived before autumn is due, and the, in more senses than one, floating population has migrated after the fashion of the swallows.

Inspect the lock then, say, a week later than the visit alluded to. The keeper and his aids have already begun to regard craft coming within their scope as benefactors, giving them something to do to pass the time now that the crowd has vanished—boats, people, and all. Regular residents find themselves “considered” much more than they have been, as is evidenced by the wash being returnable at fixed intervals, instead of by irregular delivery dependent on the requirements of the birds of passage. Local manly youth is recognised more according to its own estimate of merit than during its trying period of competition against importation; hotel people begin to be quite glad to make the best of regular customers now that the flying brigade has departed, and the bankside loafers, whose idea of a fair price for carrying a bag was a little more than double what a cab would cost for the owner and his bag as well, begin to think that civility all round may be worth trying, now lamb is off and sheep’s head looks like taking the place of what, I believe, is known as the dangler. They and a very great number of more worthy persons, required while the boom was on, are quite superfluous now that the slump has arrived. In every respect accommodation is in excess of requirements, as it is for two-thirds of the year. That is the common lot of all going for a living out of river pleasure-seekers. I have been at some little pains to show that I try to be fair to all. I do see both sides of the question when saying that I think a good deal more might easily be done in regard to the latter if only in little things. For instance, who that had to use them would have the basin’s sides constructed of

stone, without provision for letting in plates of wood on which to operate with the boat-hook. There is no evident reason, either, why the water being emptied should be discharged where craft waiting their turn to go in have to lie. I am hoping for the happy days when a week's holiday pleasure-making on the river—to be counted as serious active service, and not on account of their "leave"—shall be a part of the whole compulsory duty of all Conservators and the officers who represent them, and they shall be bound to hand in full, true, and particular reports of how they got on and where they did not get on well.

In the spring the boating man's fancy lightly turns to thoughts of good water and pleasant going on his favourite river or the next best bit of navigation available. So surely as the sap begins to stir our riparian sylvia to animation, the elms to go dotty at their twig ends by reason of the bloom buds going towards a burst, the alders to break out all over tassels, directly the willow and sallow family (some of whose members start palm-making about the same time as the elder and honeysuckle put forth their green leaves, which is to say very soon after the end of November) tone their whips orange and all manner of greenery-yallery tints—the river starts to call. A many calls it makes, though very few choose to answer, being for the most part otherwise engaged. Old Father Thames is a chilly sort of customer as a rule in mid-winter, unless you catch him in his bright moments. Then he is good to visit—for instance, in calm, sunshiny, midday hours, with the surface smooth, the stream not racing, unencumbered by irresponsible traffic or much in the business line, the air

brisk, inciting to sharp, strong, short work after the day is aired and before its short-lived prime fades, the light dims, and the colour dies to leadiness. Mr Thames is, however, a very encouraging old chap in early spring, reminding you that if it is not always May, the merry month is only a little way off.

On the eve of every boating season, I make good resolutions for myself regarding the river, and mostly find the autumn clean played out without one of these being marked off as a fulfilled engagement. One is to do what I never yet could accomplish, viz., secure a full harvest of river rape, most appetising and wholesome of all wild-grown vegetables in my catalogue of such edibles, and hard to beat by the land-lubberly tribes cultivated with care. If there is one phase of work the unemployed waterside character does object to more than another, it is an odd job such as devoting an hour to filling a basket with the stuff ready to his hand, no matter how well he is paid therefor. You would think he would like to appropriate a dish or two for his own consumption. Because he can get it for the trouble of taking, not a hand or foot will he stir to help himself. Last year was a rare one for the stuff. I recollect being at Datchet just at the right time, when the rape had come along quickly, was thick, juicy, and brittle in the stalk. Then I wanted some badly, and a beer-eater of my acquaintance was in the hard throes of the half-sheep's-head season. Did he wish to earn a bob? Would a duck swim? Any sort of job would be welcome, especially with "half a pint" as a sub. on account. We got as far as the sub., but no further; and in the whole of my experience

I never succeeded in finding the long-shore "character" man who would do a job of this sort twice, so my resolution remains unfulfilled.

I have made resolve, and shall always feel more comfortable in my mind while I am sticking to my resolution, never to be about on the water any more unless armed with a little vessel of camphorated spirit with which to doctor the smallest little scratch, even a pin-prick. After hearing of great strong fellows laid on their backs for weeks all through chipping out with the handle of an oar or scull a piece of skin no wider than a flea's shirt-front, but enough to serve for Mr Bacillus to enter by, I shall certainly add good Doctor Raspail's antiseptic to the small dispensary I have hitherto considered indispensable in the lining of every gentleman's pockets. What with this and the old outfit, I am getting altogether the foundation of a chemist's stock for ordinary equipment. You may laugh if you like when I tell you that before adding this interesting preventive cure to my collection, it has been my custom or intention to always provision myself with two other boons and blessings in the quack way. On Boric Acid I have preached often enough as the best friend a taker of exercise can enlist in his service, if he wants to keep his hands and feet fit and free from blisters, corns, and other annoyances, but I do not think I have hitherto given away my great thirst-quencher or obviator, which is also in the Boric line, and that is tincture of myrrh and borax. With just a "touch"—say, one drop or two now and then—you can work for hours on a hot day, and not feel the least disposed to pull up and "go and see a man about a dog." Then

there is my own private patent specific for keeping the outside of your head cool while undergoing great exertion—as, for instance, in running, rowing, or boxing. Please do not think that I am gammoning, because I am not. I once dosed some members of a great metropolitan rowing club's grand challenge eight at Henley with *Sporting Notions'* decoction, and they blessed me all the while they were plugging away in a tremendous race rowed under a burning sun.

CHAPTER XVII

PEDESTRIANISM

OF all roads known in connection with pedestrian feats—or feet—I suppose the voyage from London-on-Thames to London-on-Sea is the most popular and well-known course, though the route now conventionally accepted as *the* one is not the way I like best. As a matter of taste, I don't think much of the Brighton road, nor any of these roads, for pleasure, walking, or racing purposes, and never have much, since at both ends and in many intermediate places the old-fashioned flint metalling was superseded by granite. I never found really good going anywhere on roads made like those on the route between town and Brighton, nor, as a matter of practice, have we anything like such nice going now on the average as before the pikes were done away with. Then the Trusts and those who farmed the sections of highway were bound on such roads as the Brighton, where was plenty of competition for traffic, to do the best they could for themselves by doing the roads as well as possible. Latter-day affairs may be all right for vehicles, but precious few are ever in good form for walkers, being all over little inequalities. The best out of England I ever was on were in Ireland and Ceylon—like an old-fashioned cycle track, but no

loose surface, are some of these. No doubt you can keep them better where traffic is light, and surveyors tell me that they must have granite where 'buses and those sort of machines go. If you want to see fine roads, try the Bagshot district, where the soil is sandy. They ought to be a lot faster than the Surrey-Sussex line. If a new Walk is to materialise, let us have a fresh route. The Portsmouth road is scarcely available, except for an out-and-home course, because of that choker, Hindhead, which is a stopper indeed. But a fine track might, I think, be mapped out going through the Ascot country. There is a point often missed by folks who talk about records or the London-to-Brighton road, or anywhere else, viz., that many good times are made under exceptionally favourable circumstances, while March winds blew to dry the roads and help the traveller on his way, and anyone who backs himself against fine weather records is foolish indeed, if he does not stipulate for equal or favourable conditions. To make the medals won properly commemorate the event, they should be engraved to record what bad going the trampers had and the other difficulties undergone. Wet tells against one in so many ways. In the first place, it makes the air heavier to go through and to breathe; then it causes your toggery to gather weight, which is a consideration; it keeps chilling you, which means further calls on the heart, which bit of machinery has quite enough to do to keep up steam for the physical exertion, and as to that last, what difference in that respect is there between going on the top of the ground and through the mud! A heavy man is wofully handicapped on greasy going, more especially if

the mud is not deep, and a welter cannot half act. As a general rule, the safest plan for coping with wet roads is to go wherever the water lies. You splash more, but the puddle's being there is usually a sign of sound footing underneath.

In that magnificent success the Stock Exchange walk of 1903 the weather was awful. Considering its beastliness, the times made by the winner and the first contingent were surprising, but nothing like so astonishing as the grand average. One can scarcely venture to guess what nine hours thirty minutes ought to represent, if the race had been walked on a really good day. It seems as though quite a big slice—several minutes—might have been knocked off; but you can never tell about these matters. As to records, I am aware that no record, as the word is generally understood, was set up here for the distance; but no doubt several of the competitors scored bests for their own experience, and it is fair to believe in these bests not fully representing their capabilities on good going. But then one must not forget a notable fact, which is, that for the most part a record is the outcome of a collection of almost accidental circumstances. Something—a two-penny-halfpenny something—happens at exactly the right time or the very wrong one, and makes all the difference between a classical and a merely good class performance.

A full history of the late E. P. Weston's historical long tramp would make amusing reading, even so long after its accomplishment; more so would the complete story of this little Yank's performances, and the pedestrian industry brought into existence through his example. Anyone setting out to make a long march

through a string of towns, and wanting to cover a certain distance within fixed time, would do well to profit by the late E. P. W.'s experience. You have not gone far on a journey of this sort before you find trouble begin. I am not now talking of personal physical worries—slight to speak about, but confoundedly trying to put up with, though incidental and pretty certain to occur—but of quite unthought-of obstructions one ought to provide for, but somehow easily misses taking into account. In the first place, anyone who is anybody at all as a celebrity, and whose undertaking is talked about, will soon have a great big dread forced on to him—one which probably he could never have anticipated.

If you said to a novice at the game—and there are not many who *have* gone in for it—"What about getting through the towns?" he would probably answer, "That is bound to be all right, even if there is a crowd," his mind dwelling more on possible objections by the police to the recent road-walking competitions, or ordinary mobbing, where a lot of people are on the move helter-skelter. With the latter he might trust the Force to deal. The real, the great danger few would guess, viz., chance of the ped.'s feet being damaged, as they easily can be, and were more than once when the great little Edward Payson Weston was on the march. No one would believe what a difficult job it was keeping a good-natured crowd from overwhelming that celebrity. To desire harm for the plucky ped., whose staying ability was his only real qualification for classical distinction, was far indeed from their thoughts, but all wanted to get as near as possible to and see the

American at close quarters. In the rush and crush the nearer attendants were pushed against and squeezed on to the Yank, so that now and then, do all the throng might to avoid mishap, Weston's heels got trodden on—cut into, as the term goes in horse-racing—with very painful effect. To prevent this, a bodyguard with plenty of weight is necessary, whose labours can be greatly eased if they are provided with a good long stout staff to carry among them wide ways. Ordinary shoe-leather is formidable enough when it comes on to your back tendon with a man's foot inside and the force of the stride, but in the clog-wearing district the brass-capped wooden shoon, whose clang on the cobbles was tremendous, were terrors. Sturdy, perky member though E. P. W. was, he was unable to prevent the clogs getting on his nerves—a peculiar feat to accomplish, but effected nevertheless—and if he happened to be a bit tired his heart got right down into his shoes, which, you will say, was the most dangerous location.

Weston's memorable long-distance wobble would have been a big financial success, only for one of the drawbacks I mentioned. The idea was for the walk to advertise his celebrity, and so draw big houses for lectures delivered en route. And promising enough the programme appeared till an unwelcome fact forced itself on the financing promoters' understanding. People would pay to see Weston, the man who was walking, and take the "libretto" of the lecture in as part of their money's worth. But really all they wanted was to see the man, and be able to say that they had managed so much. As things worked out, catching glimpses of him as he came

into the towns where he was to speak a piece, or going on his way out, furnished all the opportunity they needed, free, gratis, and for nothing. There was no need to "part" for inside accommodation, the outside show was good enough. Besides, such as desired to be present in what the lecture managers considered a proper way, viz., by passing the pay-box, and paying, be it understood—were unable to so much as approach the buildings engaged. These were so beset by the free sightseers who took their places outside betimes that the others were crowded out. Hardly any of the performances paid more than the rent of the halls, and the same will, I expect, be the case with anyone going on the E. P. W. lines. Perhaps another day I may give off a little more about the Weston boom. Now I will leave the topic with one extra remark, viz., that I am not certain whether the walker's job was not really easier than some of his followers. For weeks on end the gentlemen of the Press spent the greater part of each and every twenty-four hours living in a draughty little 'bus, squeezed up with a cargo of stale sweaters and such. A big rowing club's dressing-room on a muggy wet day was by comparison a sweet and balmy retreat. I was once appealed to on a most delicate point in connection with amateur pedestrianism. Very comical I call the transaction on which I was consulted. You see, down in North Devon the road-walking fashion struck, and threw out roots to the extent of ten-guinea cups, and such appreciable premiums subscribed and road-walked for by amateurs. I forget whether amateur is exactly the word, or the term gentleman-amateur was the description

to which competitors were required to belong. Anyway, amateur will do well enough, and we will get on, leaving the status at that. Now, it appears that a local artist, a nimble cattle-drover who won a race to which a fine pot attached, raised some doubts as to his bonâ-fide amateurism by going round at the end of the journey and making the usual collection for the loser, as it is called in boat-racing—or, rather, for the winner, meaning himself. In effect, he ingeniously combined road-walking with gate-money, and personally capped the spectators.

The point had never been raised in that part of the county, and I believe there was some disposition to treat the financial eccentricity as merely an outbreak of amateur expenses in a new form. Moreover, purists argued that the gentleman who thus got himself up a testimonial and saved trouble by acting as his own treasurer had not actually walked for money, the superior equivalent for the old-time shower of browns being an unexpected, unadvertised supplement in the honours list. Therefore, said they, his amateur status remains in at least the same condition as it was. The *per contra* party asked whether money was not money, and hadn't the conquering hero annexed all the money he could on account of his walking and winning. These propositions being incontrovertible, no more remained to be said—at least, in their opinion. Still, the same artist was permitted to have another go at gentlemanly amateurism. He again won; he once more took the hat round. If the matter was one in which advocates were permitted (and paid well), I should, as pleader, play the compensation for disturbance racket on

the court. Clearly this drover couldn't be driving fat cattle or thin, and going in for amateur racing at the same moment, and he was as much justified in getting allowance for what the Northern Rugby Union footballers schedule "broken time," as swell cricketers when they go for a holiday to play in Australia.

A goodly crop of amusing examples in pedestrianism and "tapping" might be easily collected had one the time, and possibly the drover whose attention to the bawbees and upwards are here referred to was prompted by some old 'un who remembered what ancient peds. used to do. Before grounds were so numerous, and the B.P. less difficult to please, it was a commonish thing for quite good-class long-distance men to set themselves a biggish task on the road, and seriously go to accomplish the same, though no stakes were concerned and gate might not be thought of. For days and days they would toil on the road, depending for subsistence almost on what could be picked up for them by pals who industriously canvassed lookers-on, and almost certain that if they put up a good performance some kind-hearted notable in the sporting world would start a subscription, the inventor heading the list. Hard cheese the walkers or runners got sometimes, but as a rule they did fairly well. The last open-air performer I have come across was the very veteran indeed athlete Spencer, who marked out a track for himself on the Knavesmire, opposite York's race stand, and with great pluck did some exceedingly good walking in long daily instalments at a smart pace.

In a way the six days' go-as-you-please contests at the Agricultural Hall and elsewhere

had their uses. Most certainly they demonstrated that our people can cover far greater distances in a week's or longer tramp than was deemed possible, and that was worth something. They had their uses, as I mention, and their humours, comical and grim sometimes. George Hazael's lecture on gameness will live as a classic among those who happened to hear him and knew the circumstances, though it may not strike outsiders as particularly funny. This great ten-mile runner, who subsequently developed into a grand performer at 600 miles or so, had little stomach for his first 142 hours' fray after sampling it. He was engaged to make things lively at the outset of the first Islington wobble with a big field, and did some fine running up to 50 miles. Then, having earned his money he retired, and, so history declared, waited developments among those who elected to mortify the flesh by struggling on. George waited; so did his cat's-meat barrow, for the purpose of taking away any dead 'uns he could pick up. While very busy waiting he was pitched into by Sir John Astley, who blew him up for not being game. "I ain't game," says Hazael, "not a bit" (he was, though, when he wanted to be), "and I don't care about being called game, either. You come along o' me for a minute, Sir John, and see what gameness means. That," indicating a tent from which proceeded groans, "is," we will make the name, "Smith, of Glasgow. *He's a real game 'un now,* and if you so much as moves the canvas he'll holler, 'Don't come anigh me, my feet's awful.' And this," pointing to another, about which was no sign of life, "is Jones" (he wasn't Jones, but that does not matter), "of Newcastle. Asleep

he is, but very game till he went off. He couldn't keep anything on his stummick for two days, and he's been fast off ever since. No, Sir John, I ain't game. I leaves gameness to the likes of these—much good may it do to 'em."

Grand gameness many of the competitors did show, to be sure. Why, some started without money or other means to go in for six days' and nights' racing! When I say started, I mean set out from home, perhaps half England's length away from London, and tramped to Islington on scant fare and with "scratch" equipment. For sustenance during the race itself they trusted to Providence, and as to attendants' care, without which one could scarcely hope to have any chance whatever, they had not so much as thought about it. One sturdy chap I recollect well, a cast-iron man, able to stand anything—assaults with a claw-hammer, I guess, so long as he was hit on the head only. This athlete had enough to carry him on, and as attendants were not laid on for him gratuitously, he dispensed with them on the every-man-his-own-attendant-and-if-you-want-a-thing-done-well-do-it-yourself principle. When rubbing down was required, he rubbed himself down; were refreshments needed on the track, he fetched them for himself, acted as his own caterer and cook, sponged himself for a livener, and, as I happened to write at the time, was quite equal to doing his own lap scoring, and blowing his own trumpet if the band's music did not suit him. What do you think he did later? Why, he started a six days' walk of his own somewhere in the Midlands, and did actually score his laps as he completed each circuit of the track, *and* obliged with solos on the key bugle, thus saving

expense and making sure of being properly attended to.

What manner of gait does or rather does not constitute walking? The Australasian Amateur Athletic Union's definition strikes me as a workable sample: "Walking is a succession of steps, and in contradistinction to running (wherein both feet may be off the ground at the same time), in walking there must always be contact with the ground with some portion of one of the feet." Rules are also that the heel of the foremost foot must touch the ground before the toe of the other foot leaves the ground, and that the body must be kept strictly upright, unless the walker leans forward or stoops from distress. I wonder if very fast walkers ever do quite act up to the rule. Years ago I got myself very much laughed at because, in order to determine whether a ped. was lifting or not, I lay by the side of the track to watch his feet. Very likely one might look ridiculous at the time, but the move served its purpose. The walker was passed fair by the official referee, but I was prepared to swear that you often could see daylight under both of his feet at the same time. In the old days of professional walking, when one caution was customary, you very frequently found sensible walkers consider their friends' interests by lifting as hard as they could till the caution was administered. To act otherwise must be wickedly wasteful. As soon as "no caution" was inserted in articles of agreement, the earlier paces were surprisingly reduced. While a ped. felt entitled to a warning he was almost in duty bound to earn that same. I recollect a fine illustration of etiquette in this regard. A

gentleman who once backed a man to walk another a mile straightway on the turnpike road was advised to "play the game," and tell his nominee to run like blazes, or words to that effect, till he was pulled up by the referee. "Not sportsmanlike," said he. After the race he met his thoughtful councillor. "Did your man win?" the latter inquired. "Mine was the best walker," the gaffer told him, "but he didn't win." "How was that?" "T'other man ran like blazes all the way, ours didn't; the referee was not fast enough to get close up and caution the winner."

So poor old Bill Lang, "the Crow-catcher," died in penury, did he? I could almost see that coming when the Manchester Racing Company shifted from New Barns over to Castle Irwell. The old man used to keep a little shop opposite the shilling entrance to the course, where he ran a sort of cloak-room for the many things racing men carry, and dispensed hot-pot. Every little helped, and I suppose that the difference between taking and missing the small profits attaching to the business meant comfort or the pinch of poverty. A beautiful runner was Lang—a perfect mover who, like Teddy Mills, seemed to carry his weight independently of leg work. For his height he had a very long stride, and kept his form wonderfully. In the early sixties Lang was very hard to beat. Of course, he and others used to finish behind Deerfoot, the Seneca Indian, when Martin ran a troupe for performances all over England. Bennett-Deerfoot was *the* draw for the public, and the races, taken quite seriously by the multitude, were little more than exhibitions. So were some matches made

for money, according to the articles, with Deer-foot meeting our men. Occasionally came a straight one, and then was seen fine running. I forget what Lang did in a trial near Mitcham when at his best, but it was getting very close to four minutes for a mile, and encouraged his friends to bet that he ran the distance at Newmarket on a course of their choosing in four minutes and an odd second or two. This mile was mostly down hill, and I believe it finished by the Subscription Rooms in the High Street. A muddle was made. In the first place, the odd seconds were knocked off, though Lang could do "four" for certain; then the money was laid out to disadvantage; and to make the trial more difficult, the dust was carefully swept off the macadam, so the runner was jarred more than would have been the case otherwise. The whole job was bungled. Still Lang did the mile in four minutes two seconds.

In those days good professional peds. were plentiful. They and their gaffers could do well enough, for the public took very lively interest in their doings—and wagered. Conditions have altered now; the class from which Lang sprang no longer have masters. Hardly ever do we find a match for genuine money of weight, though on occasion plenty is betted on amateur races. In the North you can wager to win a good stake while the Langs and Richardses, the Millses and Mackinstrays, and the Jack Whites of the present day are running under Amateur Athletic Association rules. Often I ponder over changed conditions, and wonder whether all the reformation operations we have experienced are for good or not. Betting always crops up in this

connection. Here is where it comes in. When Lang and the others mentioned were in their prime, professional foot-racing was a recognised trade, dependent for existence on wagering among the runners' supporters and the gates drawn to see the racing. Physical education and, what is a great factor, too, in health-promoting, directly and indirectly, hero-worship were both being promoted. Being able to wager made folk keener than they otherwise would be; our being made better by Act, Parliamentary or parochial, has now practically killed "pedestrianism," though it may, perhaps, be said to live as athletics. Funny, is it not? to think that had Lang been born in 1885, instead of in 1838, he would probably be getting a good living as an amateur runner instead of being a professor. The winnings would not come in such large instalments, but the income would not be so precarious. As it is, a moderately smart sprinter can live well on getting through two or three heats in handicaps, and never being in a final. No surer, easier way of making a respectable income offers in any branch of life.

One day, while I happened to be watching a nipper walking for dear life, and making his labour just as hard as he possibly might by reason of a perniciously tiring action, yet doing his five per hour, a point in road records occurred to me, and I fancy it may be interesting. How are milestone miles calculated? in the middle of the road? or (as would be fairer, because you have no business, despite familiar advice, to keep in the middle of the road) in the centre—between the edge of the going and the actual half-way of the two sides, in other words, a quarter out from

the edge? We know that, as a rule, a long-distance performer on a track can best the chain, because he is able to take his way well within the foot or eighteen-inch limit for official measurement. On a long road trudge, let alone the "cabbage" to be made by skilful steering inside the centre line, big slices as they aggregate can be cut off by dodging across from point to point on a winding roadway. As I frequently have occasion to mention, I am only a believer in milestone or other measured mileage, if I happen to know that the distances have been gone over, and who the goers over were. In passing, let me remark that the view the *Referee* took of the proper side for a pedestrian to select when journeying on a road—viz., to meet the wheel traffic—seems to be upheld by various authorities. I mention this because the right rule of the road in this instance is of very great consequence. For example, in case a walker came to be damaged by or interfered with a vehicle, and compensation one way or the other turned on right side or wrong side, with something to say anent contributory negligence, an established rule must be most valuable. Also the circumstance serves here, because most of us are only guessing when we credit this, that, or the other walker with doing so many miles in a certain time and on a certain road. That came to me also as I took stock of the youngster, who not only worried all he could out of his unfortunate self in scarcely using his heels at all, but religiously stuck to his side of the way, following all its bends and curves.

Where I can see so many who take up long walking suddenly going to grief is, because they

will want to start before they are ready. If they undertook to go a (for them) specially long tramp at their customary pace, there is no reason why, being sound to start with and comfortably shod, they might not go on for ever, but they lay themselves out for something special, and then all their work is set differently. Their bodily weight is newly adjusted, because of access in speed, their leg and foot action is altered, and the wear and tear on the sole and heel of the feet comes in places not accustomed to the job. It is the trying to put on pace that kills the inexperienced tramper's feet, particularly since the friction experienced is almost novel. You must remember that you keep on doing the same thing over and over and over again with the same sensitive tools, and that when the least thing goes wrong with any of them, the injury is apt to become cruelly progressive. I have often spoken of this in relation to long-distance walking, admiring the wonderful powers of the little combination of bones, tendons, sinews, flesh and gristle which have to move all of a man's weight, and bear friction repeated, say, some two thousand times a mile. Multiply the number of strides a walker will take per mile by the number of miles, say fifty, and then look at the figures. Fifty times two thousand that makes, one hundred thousand times that bit of a foot-pad comes down and has to carry the walker's weight. *Non vi sed sæpe cadendo*—you know the rest about the drop of water's wearing away the stone. (I know, too, but I am so horribly ignorant that I never yet could be brought by scientific friends to comprehend how a softer material can wear into a harder.

According to my lights this ought not to be done, and the whole of the Atlantic Ocean might attack drop by drop one little pebble, and make no difference to it, because the drop would be a bad loser each time it came at the stone.) Well, when the drop, otherwise stride, has a hundred thousand falls in sequence, no wonder that it wears itself away, whatever it may also do to the stone, otherwise track, to be covered. If you might make sure of keeping sound, many feats very great under ordinary circumstances would not shape half so big as they do now. Let me point out to the inexpert two points to be taken into consideration. The first is that you cannot get at the necessary rate per mile for a far journey by the ordinary rules of arithmetic. For instance, walking at the rate of four miles per hour will in all probability *not* get you twenty-four miles in six hours, although that conclusion does appear correct on paper after you have done the little sum. But you see it is very improbable that the ordinary toddler can go on his way for half a dozen hours without a break; every little stoppage means raising the necessary average rate of speed. Having attendants to wait on you on the road, hand refreshments, find you a seat if you want to change clothing or boots, and be useful in various ways, will save a deal of time; but these luxuries may be costly, and the walker laying himself out to stay a great distance must, under ordinary circumstances, lose considerable time. We all know what nonsense is talked about four miles an hour being a steady, easy gait for anybody marching in ordinary get-up, and many who ought to see my point forget the

waste in calculating times and distances. If you want to be pretty certain of getting forty-eight miles in twelve hours, you ought to be almost sure of ability to go all the way at the rate of four and a half miles in each sixty minutes, so as to make up for stoppages, whose total does accumulate at an alarming pace.

To the good men, tried stayers, my advice is not to train late for stamina, but, cultivate speed, and instead of laying themselves out for long, tiring walks, go for sharp race-yourself-out bursts of two, three, or four miles. Speed is really the making of staying. In fact, in my opinion there is scarcely such a thing as staying, as a test, put by the side of pace. Of course I write this in full understanding of what staying means conventionally, but I am dead sure that the man with personal physique to stand long strain does himself harm rather than good by going in for a course of preparatory long work in place of educating himself in high-pressure racing.

Apropos, let me reproduce a part of a letter from a gentleman, an old hand at road marching—Mr Gillespie, of that very excellent sporting institution, the Essex Cycling Club, often promoters of long walking races. He writes, or, rather, wrote in September 1902 (I carefully preserved his letter), just after I had delivered myself of opinion that Mr Monte Holbein took the wrong line in trying himself for his Channel swim in a series of long courses. Cultivate speed was my motto, and I sought to make my argument good. If I had an approved stayer engaged in a fifty miles' journey, he should never at any time go more than twenty miles at a stretch while he was in training, say for six

weeks. But I would take him in hand to sprint repeatedly for all he was worth.

Mr Gillespie laid himself out to do ninety miles at the rate of four and three-quarter miles per hour all the way, and got six minutes inside schedule time, and did what he undertook with most satisfactory results. Here is what that gentleman wrote me to confirm my theory :

DEAR MR GERAINT,—Knowing the interest you take in long-distance walking, I enclose you an account of a twenty-one hours' tramp of 90 miles last Friday and Saturday. I am writing to tell you my experience of following the training you suggested in *Sporting Notions* a few weeks back re Holbein's methods of preparation for his cross-Channel swim. I am and always have been a great admirer (and in a small way a copier) of his methods of getting fit for a journey. Hitherto my greatest distance *on end* has not exceeded 67 miles. I have done about four 50 miles, six or eight 45 miles, and so on ; and he has always taught me that mileage put in before a race is just the same as putting money in a bank : it is there to draw on. When getting ready for a 50 miles' race I have therefore done about 600 in the last six or seven weeks, and, following his advice, I have certainly never yet "had the knock"; because I can't walk *fast* enough to get it, I presume.

Now I come to your method, which I determined to try for this jaunt. You say, "provided it is known the man can stay," etc. Now, I knew I could do that *at a pace*. You then advise training at shortish distances at a fast pace. I adopted your plan. I began getting

ready about four weeks back, having kept fairly fit and well at weight (11 st. 13 lb. down to 11 st. 9 lb.) by cycling all the season. For the first two or three weeks I used to walk from 10, through 12, 15, 18, to 20 miles a night over a *hilly* course round Claybury, and on to Abridge after dinner, four nights a week at, say, 5 (or $5\frac{1}{4}$ in places), and come home wringing wet into a hot bath. Then for the last week I chucked the road, went over to Canning Town Track, and did an hour stripped, doing about $6\frac{1}{4}$ for four nights, rested two days before I started on Friday, and the report will tell you the rest. I may add that I was not walking against time, but merely to do the journey. I made a time schedule out at $4\frac{3}{4}$, and got six minutes inside that. I thought I should possibly do 4 all the way back, but as I had no intention of forcing myself I didn't quite do this; but as proof that your plan is right, I may say I did the last 2 miles (to make up 90) inside twenty-two minutes.

Now, your plan was quite contrary to all my previous experience during the last five seasons, but in my case it has proved the right one, and though I should have ridiculed it two months ago, coming from anyone with less experience of the game than yourself, I'm not pig-headed enough to refuse to burn my boats when I can see better ones waiting for me.—With kind regards and thanks, believe me, yours faithfully,

E. R. GILLESPIE.

CHAPTER XVIII

WAR GAMES

So far I do not hear that the *Referee's* proposition to have miniature rifle ranges as well as the recognised types set up all over England, for purposes of instruction and amusement combined, has been seriously taken in hand. Without repeating reasons why I think much good would come through giving this idea effect, I wish to ask whether some business "heads" cannot be induced to look on the subject from a commercial-speculation point of view. To come from great to small, I am told that one of the best paying factors of a fair is the primitive telescopic iron funnel arrangement familiarly known as a shooting gallery, and that the makings out of these when business is fairly brisk are something almost beyond belief. Experts in the technique of graduating ranges and projective power of rifles could surely very soon turn out on scientific principles galleries to give us plenty of practice at very, very moderate cost, and at that leave a handsome margin to repay cost of instalment and maintenance, with such attendance as might be necessary, and provide fine working profit. If, as I originally suggested, the rifle to be used should, while carrying only a short distance, be constructed as regards stock,

pull of trigger, weight, etc., to be as nearly as possible of the accepted army pattern, then a great many of us might be getting well on the way towards becoming useful shots, doing all our practice of evenings after business without cost in time of going to open ranges, and taking up the affair as an agreeable, amusing way of passing time. That such practice would do all necessary I do not for a moment argue, but where one could go in for perfecting himself at the real thing over open ranges, a thousand could be "getting along nicely," if they might make believe, with miniature ranges laid on for that purpose as plentiful as billiard tables in hotels, clubs, and public rooms. It seems to me, looking at the project as a speculation only (which is not at all what I do), that there ought to be tons of money in the spec.; just as much as there was in rink-skating while the furore lasted—the wheel skating, I mean. Miniature rifle-range shooting might easily become a raging fashion, and bring us into the habit of keeping the practice up afterwards as a permanent institution.

Lord Methuen told the Hayward's Heathens, when opening their miniature range in 1905, "He saw no reason why villages should not arrange friendly competitions with each other, and why as great interest should not be taken in rifle-shooting as anything else." That is what the *Referee* said when starting the original proposition, which Lord Roberts made his text in his appeal to the nation. I went the length of hoping to find some day a miniature rifle range attached to most hotels (with some sort of a repeal of the Licensing and Gambling Acts, this

last by way of a serious joke), so that we might as naturally say, while waiting for a meal, "Come on, I'll shoot you for two somethings and bitters," or, "the farthest out to pay drinks round," as offer to play "fifty up" at billiards with like intent to make a friendly wager and pass the time. No earthly purpose can be served by trying to persuade those who do not understand the strength of the sporting instinct in Englishmen what a pile of mischief has been wrought by knocking out opportunity for a little flutter in domestic games on licensed premises. This is an old, sore subject with me. I see such a lot of the harm done. Curious, is it not, how unequally the law is made to work. If you or I, good readers, being eager to advance this miniature rifle-shooting business, did, happening to own an hotel, install a baby range, a thousand to one that the best way, almost the only sure way, to make it go would be to get up little sweepstakes and induce the habit of shooting for "wet" money, which is to say, drinks, who pays the score, as was customary with the noble game of skittles, now declared illegal. You must not play for money nor money's worth—not even at ring-the-bull; and a landlord whose tap-room table is marked for shove-halfpenny becomes a subject of suspicion to the licensing magistrates. All manner of pains and penalties attach to getting up a Derby sweep, and as for crib and other card games, over which quidnuncs smoked their pipes and sipped, not gulped—as is the fashion now in these drink-up-and-go days—their couple of grogs per night, flat burglary is not in it.

As I say, if we had a baby range you might

not shoot for a bottle of ginger-beer, the loser to have first drink, without chance of being locked up, or at least prosecuted; but you are at liberty to go to Bisley and gamble all day in pools for money, not innocent money's worth in refreshment, but hard cash. Good luck to those who wish to do so, and are illogically indulged in their desire for "fluttering," say I. I am not for a moment suggesting that to advance rifle-shooting education the laws of the land should be abrogated. Apropos of a scheme which in its sporting relations I was first to exploit, I would but direct attention to the difficulties caused by undue interference with what is an Englishman's nature. A little wager is just the one thing wanted for him to make pastime more palatable, and, as I pointed out in my original plea for miniature ranges, this sort of rifle-shooting has in it all the elements of a quite lively sport.

Such practice as inns afford is condemned nominally because of its inferior nature, but mainly on account of the venue, where apologies for ranges are in vogue. If one begins to enlarge on the licensing question as recently interpreted, there is no knowing where anybody of fair mind and common sense will stop. Here we are daily preventing more and more the humbler classes from finding comfortable home quarters within their means, or, at any rate, cutting down their chance of affording more than bare housing accommodation. Improvements for the poor mean about the same thing as bringing Marie Antoinette's sponge cakes as a perfect substitute for bread up to date. They are too badly off to be able to pay for lodgment you can reasonably

call a home, and they may not resort to their natural clubs, the pubs., or, if they are so privileged, are cut out of all manner of harmless amusements. A goodhearted sportsman, chief constable of a Northern county, said to me the other day, "What ought I to think of myself? I won ten shillings last night at the club playing mild Bridge, and to-day I am bossing a prosecution of a very respectable little publican who permitted a raffle for rabbits left over from a customer's stock at the end of his trade." Stop folks from playing at rifle-shooting in public-houses! I would give prizes to encourage it if I were the beaks. Everybody ought to learn to shoot, educate his eye and his hand as best he can, and until any one and everyone has a range provided free, for goodness gracious' sake do not let us crab any sort of opportunities people create for themselves.

My original idea was to make rifle-shooting, as a sport or pastime, lead up to efficiency for more serious purposes, and while leaving further and more formal developments on one side, to try and put all of us in the way of getting used to the weapons, and to cultivate taste for target practice as a preliminary for serious business if the practiser desired to go on. What seemed to me a great inducement was the extreme informality of my scheme, which would, in a way, put education in what is evidently one of the first duties of a Briton almost on a par with a game that can be taken up anywhere and put down as promiscuously. I want that there should be no more difficulty about a man's having a turn with a rifle, if only at a miniature range, than at a billiard table. There ought to be in every little

village a range usable by artificial light, and a penny - in - the - slot feeding arrangement for ammunition and the use of a rifle, part of the profit on whatever rate was charged to go to pay a qualified custodian. Let me put in a special word for a class which I know very intimately, the staff of training quarters—I mean at this moment a special word for them regarded in the light of stuff to make defenders of their country out of. My observation of racing stablemen is that they are just the very sort to teach themselves rifle handling at these miniature ranges, for so long as I can remember shooting has been a sort of craze among the fraternity. Lads and apprentices are as eager to get a gun in their hands, with a chance of knocking something down if they let it off at the right time, as the ordinary young human boy is to possess his first pocket-knife. Three things the nation owes to itself—compulsory (failing voluntary) education in handling a rifle, riding, and swimming. Immense cost is involved in latter-day catering for educating the poorer classes, and taking most of their responsibilities off their hands as state concerns instead of domestic, so that a premium is put on improvidence, and gross earnings seem to be looked on as income justifiably dispersed on from hand-to-mouth principles, with somebody to “come down” in case of mishap or illness, and the like. While this outlay for education, etc., has to be incurred, the State ought, at least, to “go to the insurance office” and make its bounty-brought-up ’uns swim, so that the outlay on them should not be wasted through drowning. Similarly, everyone ought to be made to understand rifle-shooting, and be

taught to ride. I am also correct in putting the proportion of the population who have had opportunity to acquire the art of sitting a horse decently as very small. That being so, as assuredly it is, might not general thankfulness felt in that, should call for capable riders arise, there would be a certain supply of many thousands educated in equitation at the cost of the turf's owners, trainers, and so forth? Let me notice a consideration that cannot be dismissed when contemplating a large increase of gun-owning, viz., the bother about accidents with firearms, mostly toy things sold to lads and boys who ought not to be trusted with any more lethal explosive weapon than a poker, and that not loaded. See here, my masters; the holder of a shooting iron is bound to take out a licence to carry it, is he not? He is. That is settled, and, what is more, the moment he becomes possessor of the munition, from a rifle to an air pop-gun, he is open to be fined for not holding the proper excise permit. What excuse do you find pleaded day by day when possession of the one article and not the other do not run together? Why, that the purchaser meant to go straight off and buy a licence, but didn't. Now let us twist the case round to sensible bearings. If these worthy folk who fancy carrying revolvers and such, more particularly the cheap sort, do want to go straight and pay up the gun licence, what harm can come to them or anyone else if we work in a little regulation requiring licence first and purchase to follow at the licensee's will when he times his deal? Set up a rule that the retailer of firearms may not sell goods of that sort over the counter, except to the customer able to produce

his gun licence. There you are, no prejudice to a soul legitimately, no check on lawful trade, but a tremendous brake put on indiscriminate traffic with folk who ought not to be trusted to carry firearms, much less present them, as they do, at poor friends who may not live to remonstrate against irregularities.

While long-distance road races were rather by way of a craze, all manner of class or trade competitions were held. I was thinking over the matter again after I wrote of the walking clubs, and was struck by a somewhat strange omission from the list of establishments and corporations and guilds who had organised the sport. Very easily one *can* overlook reports of such affairs, so I do not say that racing of the kind has not happened, but within my lookout I certainly have not noticed any return of regimental or other walking races, got up on the lines with which we are fairly familiar by now. Now, you would at first sight count on the army men to be among the earliest to follow the road-race walker's lead, for it seems almost so necessary in training and practising soldiers for unaided mobility that you would have expected such trials to have been institutions of very long standing; for of all people in the world our professional fighters can justify attention to this department. Next time I get a chance I mean to have a look at the regulation pattern army blucher or boot. So far as I can recollect, there was more German than English in the make, I mean shape, of the footgear, and most decidedly a great deal too much heel and at the same time not enough of it. The men were propped up with unreasonable height under their heels, and

not sufficient width or length. I meant to have gone into this subject a long while ago, after reading the instructions I came across in some French villages. These, relating to the shoeing of reservists, were very business-like and sensible, only erring in the natural direction of French taste for highish heels. In this connection I frequently mention to friends interested in the manufacture, the curious difference between the average boot and the ditto shoe. No difficulty is experienced in finding a boot with a good, square-at-the-back, wide and long low heel, but when you come to wanting the same thing in a pair of shoes, you have, if I may be allowed to put it so, the devil's own job before you are treated to your own way.

We hear of schemes for improving our army's effective strength, and I may remark we have known the authorities very hard and obstructive where regimental fast marches were engineered with a sporting ideal in them, but I have never heard or read what I may call authorised discussion on the best means for getting about the country or countries' troops who had to depend solely upon their own legs for locomotion. Our population, if brought up to jog in the way it should go instead of walking, must present a by no means elegant spectacle. At the same time, if superior efficiency in commanding mileage per hour or day could be considered desirable—which perhaps is doubtful, seeing how much imperial and other legislation is directed towards limiting individuals' usefulness by cutting down working hours, and, apparently, working speed—the shuffle should command strong appreciation. Little children, directly they want to put a little

pace on, break into a jog-trot "on their own," and, dodderers only as they are, will go a surprising distance—many miles in a day—without taking any harm, provided always they do it in short spells by many instalments, very frequently punctuated by a momentary pull-up, an interval for some slight refreshment preferred.

When I get talking on this theme I never can pull myself up without an effort. Please let the importance of the interest be excuse for letting myself go this time, and permit me to add—pray do not laugh—that I do not for a moment believe in walking at all at a natural pace—at any rate, as the best nature of pacing for humans. You will laugh, I am sure—as sure as I am that I am right in saying that we should all be doing our getting about more quickly and more easily were we brought up to go on as we begin as soon as we really feel our feet; not where the shoe pinches, I am not on that. A little child *will* trot about in a shuffling sort of run, and so moving do three times as many miles per day as it can walking with less exertion or distress. A pretty spectacle, you say, for eldsters, and I agree with you that, as public opinion is, we should seem a funny lot going about our pleasure or business at a very undignified double. True for you, but leave dignity out of the question. I saw quite enough while the six days' go-as-you-pleases were on to satisfy me that the double, the porter's sort of flat-footed shuffle, is the most paying of all gaits, because it involves no marked action, otherwise effort.

My own idea as to the sort of walking called marching is that we may have been for generations or ages sacrificing speed and ease to

conventional requirements for uniformity of action and appearance. Drill-sergeants labour as they are directed to shape all sorts of figures by one model—that an unnatural one, too—and impose a certain set mode of action regardless of anything much except appearances. I put aside the high, artistic, acrobatic dancing-master elegance, requiring him or her to take the ground first with an elegantly pointed toe, leaving the heel to take care of itself as a humble follower. Never mind about that. What I want to understand is why we should be drilled into turning our toes out? Of course, if the soldier—or, for that matter, civilian—is to stand like his wooden effigy, always strictly at “’tenshun,” then describing a V between the tips of his toes and his closed-together heels may be requisite to prevent his getting tired and toppling under the weight of his armament and accoutrements. But for walking—why should marching be a different action from walking?—where does the advantage of twisting out the toes, which mean the feet, come in? I will be bothered if I can see how that sort of turn means profit. Myself, if I were to be put in charge of a lot of men going out to fight or learning to prepare for that same, and doing a lot of pedestrian exercise under difficulties, I would, if I wanted advice, rather go to a tried athlete like the great little Mr J. E. Dixon, a hundred-miler, than to all the drill merchants in the Army, taking them in that capacity and not on experience in the field. I believe that marching has scarcely been studied at all from one very useful standpoint. Just now I wrote of horses’ “tired” pace. Do you understand that expression? Probably not. What I mean is

this. A man, horse, or other animal set to a long job may for a while do work in more or less artificial ways, and, let me add, save himself or itself by varying the methods—a most important thing to bear in mind. But underlying all other modes of carrying on is the style either inborn, natural, or become second habit through automatic adaptation to circumstances, and to that particular way the one involving a minimum of exertion will, horse or man come at last, being beaten more or less, yet game or compelled to go on. And I am as sure that this last should be the first, the ordinary mode of progression, as I am that Army instructors would be far more useful if they were ordered to teach recruits tricks of old travellers on the road, instead of holding and carrying themselves to shape like Army fashion plates. “Action,” we are told, “is everything”; but one may ask how much “everything” is supposed to include. Let me just suggest one point worth thinking over. Race-walking alleged to be fair heel-and-toe we know, also any number of unlicensed methods declared to be spurious imitations through which disqualification comes—and the debarred is able to get most speed on. Suppose, for the purposes of our argument, that, fair or not, mixing, lifting, or whatever you call it, is more economical than marching like a policeman, which is the description told off for some “fair” walkers who run on their heels with a bent knee. If we study mobility, and we most decidedly ought to do so, all sorts of unfair walking should be taken into account. The best possible mode of progression might then be discovered by a fluke—which, in other words, means accidental invention.

Of course we know that animals of various sorts go in all manner of forms. I wonder, when our very mixed lot of war horses were at work in South Africa, what gait the foreigners—Hungarian, South American, Indian, and Australian gees—adopted for themselves, or were compelled to drop into? Authorities differ about the trot as a natural instinctive style of action. Personally, I have little faith in trotting—for the horse, that is, who has to carry a burthen; and though the rider's rising helps to ease the weight's incidence, which military saddle-bumping accentuates, at the best it seems a bad pace. Now, so far as I have seen, nothing beats the bushman's jog, a nondescript kind of amble. You see the colonial sitting a part of his horse, with his legs well forward and his body well back, and the horse amble, amble, ambling all the blessed day, and night, too; and ready to go on ambling again. Do the Boer horses wobble along like this—I mean the home-bred quads, who stand so much work?

Personally I believe in individuality dropping into the most profitable method if left to itself after experience in acquiring habit. Letting personal peculiarity have its way is one thing; bringing all sorts and conditions of shapes, frames, and constitutional idiosyncrasies to one uniform mould and pattern is another. Possibly to hit with military ideas of fitness, uniformity is necessary. That may be desirable or not—not, I should say. But if we are to be rough-hewn to pattern, no matter how divinity or somebody else has shaped our ends, for goodness' sake let us work up to the best model. I *shall* be glad to hear what some of our long-distance walkers

think on the proposition. My own view is this—that striding with the foot to come on the ground straight fore and aft, or nearly so, is the most economic way of walking up to a certain speed. The foot's deviation from a straight line by turning out your toes must make a markable difference in the length of each stride. There are many paces in a mile, so that ever so trifling a gain per stroke mounts up. When you come to multiply the profit or loss by the mileage of a day's tramp, what must that mean to a tired trudger?

I know this, that while I am pottering about taking notice, I find that the chaps who turn their toes in, as drill-sergeants would say, but who really are putting their feet down pretty nearly straight, generally cover more ground in their stride and get over it more quickly than the regulation formal marchers. I am not talking of the "workmen" adept in borrowing a little extra reach by screwing the hip, and so making tracks right and left, following almost in a right line, but of what you may call ordinary walking. The grower responsible for producing two blades of grass where only one grew before, deserves well of his country—at least, so we are told. According to my views, the Army notable capable of introducing a more rational idea of foot drill, so as to make our forces go farther with the same amount of labour as was formerly expended, or do equal distances a little more easily, will, in my way of thinking, be a real benefactor, a good deal in front of the agricultural gentleman.

We have divisional cross-country championships among our athletic clubs, and they give fine

lessons in mobility. Think what training of this sort might mean in making communication between points in war time. Would it not be a good plan to institute races on these lines for each regiment, with major competitions leading up to a grand championship of the whole Army. Mobility has such very serious business aspects to our Army rulers, it seems to me they ought to be very busy organising sports, drills, and training systems whereby to educate our soldiers for real active service so as to get the most out of them, while, in another sense, taking the least out of them. Judging according to my lights, the amount of waste we allow is simply awful, and I always wonder that a rational costume crusade for many occupations has not been started, and led to great changes. Just to show what I mean, suppose a fresh start could be made in fitting out the police. Let a fair statement of their duties and requirements be scheduled, and a good prize offered for evolving the best method of equipment. Of course, I know that with "the force" you must be handicapped, because, to an extent, mobility has to be sacrificed for the sake of looking after the circulation. Still, taking that all in, do you not think we might tog our friend Robert a little better about the legs, so as to give him a chance of making faster time should smart pursuit come within his province? But there, I am talking of putting the police into knickerbockers, although theirs is mostly slow work, while our cricketers, to whom a trifle of extra pace is valuable, stick to wearing trousers. Put three men of identical form on a mark to run a hundred yards and have them all triers. Number one shall don flannel trousers of ordinary

make, number two knickers and stockings, and number three the 'Varsity correct costume from the waist downwards. Wouldn't any sensible speculator like to bet odds that he placed the three, and wouldn't he be morally certain to win every time? Instead of which we see lots of our athletic soldiers of the King, whose trade requires speed, and for whom lightening any actions or labour by ever so little may mean life or death—we behold these gallant warriors, drilled to uniform pattern, encased in upper and lower garments which hamper every movement. Look at a Life Guardsman's get-up, and ask yourself how you would like to walk twenty miles in skin-tight breeches, built apparently on the assumption that the Household Brigade is made like a Dutch doll, and made horribly draggy by being chained down at the feet as one used to use straps in riding. I wonder what amount of waste exertion all this sort of rubbish entails.

Of late years we as a nation are, I confess, better, more rationally shod than we used to be. Common sense, among the man part at anyrate, has begun to rebel against shoemakers' cruel tyranny to an extent, and our pedal digits are given a fairer chance. I am not for a moment arguing that good shoeing is an easy matter, because it is not. All the while I have been going I have sought in vain for *the* ideal boot or shoe. If it is of any service to readers, I may fairly mention Chester, in the Waterloo Road, as a cordwainer most amenable to instructions, who knows a lot himself and will do what you ask. He is a real good man, and I give him a word because many friends I sent to him endorsed my recommendation. But all the Chesters and the

rest have never yet been equal to inventing the desideratum, either what you call a boot, one that will ventilate sufficiently in the upper, or a shoe with holding power in the waste (which a boot possesses) to prevent your foot from driving forward, so virtually shortening your socks' or stockings' feet, and making your toes grind together after a while. The genius to perfect this idea ought to be voted a peerage, and have his fame kept green by a memorial as big as St Paul's Cathedral. There are appliances, I know, not quite in the nature of boots or shoes, but we will not count them in here.

We cry out about Chinese child-torture, and talk of French and other foreign national deliberate foot-crippling in order to dodge military service. (Thousands of Egyptians who wilfully maimed themselves for Army qualification, were told off to labour—and die, alas! by the thousand—as labourers in forming the Suez Canal.) We do cry out, don't we? And the malpractices sound and are very dreadful. Friends, as we are shod, a very large proportion of the population is rendered next to impossible for much pedal labour. Of course, the way in which people can put up with deformed digits and joints is wonderful. Some whose toes are dreadfully distorted from nature's mould overcome the drawbacks. But go to a public bath and take stock of your neighbours. Tell me how many out of a dozen do not present a sorry sight with the big toe forced over the first of the others, possibly outraging a joint to the extent of bringing about a bunion, or the little one wedged under the next. Grandmotherly government is distasteful to us all, and the idea of organised inspection in this

regard would no doubt be resented. Yet really something ought to be done to prevent the lamentable reduction of efficiency of which I complain, a deterioration altogether unnecessary and most easily avoidable.

CHAPTER XIX

COUNTRY DIVERSIONS

To please the majority of correspondents I should half the time devote myself entirely to country notes. You would scarcely believe, readers, what a host of friends the *Referee* and its humble servants find through treating various districts in what I may call a friendly way. To me very great compliment stands in that a large proportion among those who address us at this office—not knowing myself personally from Adam, or Eve, or the Serpent, commonly called “pinch me” in my part of the country—are ladies professing themselves altogether indifferent to sport, but pleased to peruse my *Sporting Notions*. That is very nice and flattering, is it not? And mentioning the same is almost as far as a modest man may decently go free from suspicion of self-praise. Country life is my chief delight, and so far as my humble powers go in dealing with it, the more I do from the real thing—none of the indoor studio games for me if only I can get out—the better do I amuse myself. Do you know that what with one good unknown (personally) friend and another, I could go a long way towards illustrating my roundabout notes. Now and again somebody—notably, an old rowing member, a S. E. gentleman—forwards me

a whole batch of photographs pictorially covering ground I have been over. That is rare and good, and kind and thoughtful. As good—better, may I be permitted to say, without ingratitude to one set of well-wishers—comes from colonials, old countrymen in the far off, who write on my paperchases, covering ground they knew, and being for the little while only home again, seeing the old lands and the old people, or their types.

To all and sundry of these, who recollect our land as it was in the not long ago, I say get back as soon as you can, and take a look at it before its face and its inhabitants, with their changing customs, alter out of knowledge and possibility of recognition. Civilisation, so-called, has told up to a point in gradually increasing strength to produce a level of monotony, rubbing off corners in manners and customs, outward and visible signs of picturesque individuality. Unhappily now, from slow progression, the march of interest effacement has changed into a gallop. Stay of a sort has been put on the process of modernising buildings, fashion of the hour being to revert to old models, thereby assuring to the next two or three generations a somewhat representative Old English style in architecture. Our installing new houses on old models will, in the by-and-by—which you and I, reader, will not see—puzzle the antiquarian and architectural student of the times to come. Not only houses, but furniture, plate, fixings of all sorts, are formed on, for choice, Queen Anne, or early Georgian samples. Up to a certain point a thing is new. With the first blush or taint of freshness worn off—wear or weather outside, and even under cover, soon does

that—the well-turned-out goods, chattels, or château practically are of no age but for all time granted kindly use, and soon arrive at a common platform. How clever must experts of A.D. 1950 have to be to discriminate between specimens from baronial halls down to Hackney Road Sheraton chairs of best possible material and workmanship, replicas of ancient originals, and the last-named themselves!

A few will be equal to the occasion, perhaps, and a-many profess like ability. Whether they are right or wrong can matter little, since so long as the thing, whatever it is, is there to the eye, and sound, not shoddy, originality as understood in connoisseurs' vocabulary is of no moment. I can foresee the state of affairs indicated coming to pass, so that our successors will be at least as well off as we old 'uns are in certain regards. But, according to my forecast—and here I go no further than a very few years—they will miss a deal capable of making life a little more pleasant, because of freeness and independence of unwritten sumptuary laws in personal equipment and habit of the working-classes. With quite genuine sorrow I note the next to universal extinction of garbs several and peculiar to trades, handicrafts, and labouring pursuits. My brothers who labour (I am a labourer; I work more hours per day, more days in the week, all the year round, than any trade unionist may), if I could don a garb conventional to my graft, believe me I would, unless by so doing I might bring myself under accusation of self-advertisement. That is my feeling in the matter. Time was you knew craftsmen by their get-up, and a good sensible time it was. Nowa-

days gamekeepers and brewers' draymen are almost the sole relics of the custom. In the not long ago an artisan was as proud of showing what he was as soldiers and sailors are to carry the King's uniform. Moreover, as I said before, each section's wardrobe was to a very great extent the most utilitarian devisable—a development of experience through generations. It ensured a maximum of necessary protection with a minimum of wear and tear on account of the special occupation's more partial stress. Now, not to put too fine a point on it, you find the British workman clothed as one who, called from clerical work, enters into labour—skilled or otherwise—just as he is “fetched” or taken. I do not claim that he is ashamed of his calling. At the same time, the old craftsman's pride, round which City Companies were built to a great extent, in great degree has departed.

You must take me with a grain of willingness to go along with the times a little when I tell you what is my idea of one thing most lacking in, say, the agricultural staff. Most of you recollect charming pantomimes presenting farmyard scenes, harvest homes, haymakings, and the like, with, almost inevitably introduced, the good old-fashioned St Valentine's Day chant, bringing Humphrey with his flail to rhyme and mate for purposes other than versification with Dorothy or Betty, a charming maid, carrying the milking-pail. You do, do you not? And a pretty spectacle stage-managers made of it. What did it? How was the front of the house fetched? Mainly by the costumes, and these were from nature or the real thing, if smock-frocks and milking-pails are nature. Put the grouping on

now true to contemporary nature ; where would you be? Hodge, the ploughman, with his last year's Sunday best reach-me-downs, is not pretty to look at, and as to Betty, with her pail, in feminine outward adornment of fashion up to date of purchase, she is of the town towny, instead of being countrified. All this sort of stuff is foolish and paltry, wasteful of money, conducive to ills, chills, rheumatism, and so on, and downright distressing to the æsthetic tastes of an old buffer. It seems such a pity that all the country workers will insist on bringing themselves to a level of uninteresting uniform and uniformity. I believe that the old-fashioned garb for working is the most suitable for the occupation, and the cheapest. When you knew a man's trade by his habit he was most conveniently apparelled. Properly considered, a smock-frock of fifty years back, with its quiltings, ruchings, and geometrical figurings was a work of admirable art. Never mind about the æsthetic view of the garment. What I want to know is, where do you find equivalent protection for an out-of-door exposed-to-the-weather worker? Can you, my objectors, name anything more effective in protection, cheaper, more lasting, or giving greater freedom for action, taking one consideration with another? One more word to writers who assume my ignorance on labouring. Of several kinds of what is called labour I made plentiful experience when I was younger, especially when trying to get myself fit. Most farm work I put on a high platform as skilled labour. Always have I written up the farm hand, especially the treasure who can do so many things from being practically a vet. to thatching. But as a mere item in the

hewing of wood and drawing of water ranks I have experience, for I have taken my turn with piece-workers of sorts, carriers of burthens, loaders and unloaders of cargoes, and have never found such work harder than lots of what we call sport or play. Anyone who has tried himself in the company of labourers of this sort is not likely to write them down.

Go where I will, I too often find the hind on the second-hand lay in his wardrobe, not a specimen figure who, meet him where you will, is to be ticketed for certain as what he really is. Here I must except the shepherds of the South. From (my) time immemorial they have been and still are markable by three things—their dogs, their umbrellas (a shepherd on a day off will carry a gig umbrella or its little brother in the middle of blazing summer), and a “cast out of service” military overcoat. We hear a lot of slop supplies to the soldiers. The great-coats served out can’t be so bad, since after they are returned into store or sold by retiring Tommies these upper Benjamins serve shepherds of the Downs for years and years and years, through all the bad weather of the four seasons. The way I came to think about the dying out of trades’ uniforms was peculiar and roundabout. While doing Liverpool November Meeting, my out-of-the-way Lancashire landlord produced, on Mersey’s banks, a copy of that very excellent indeed paper, the *Sussex Daily News*.

Hailing me as a frequenter of that county, this worthy marked my copy with an account of some industrial sports got up at Iford. Do you know Iford down by Newhaven? says he. Do I know every stone in the road, the tiny church

packed almost out of sight, the big tin buildings, the farm, and market gardens? Actually an unknown reader once sent me his own painted water-colour drawing of the place, just because I took it in my travels and printed the notes in the *Referee*. And—well, I know every inch, from the face of the Downs to the Ousey river, after which Lewes must have been named. And do not I wish I could have been there to see the day's sport—sack-mending against time, ploughing, lamb-clipping, hay and straw cutting; also perhaps a flare-up in the refreshment tent after the speech-making was finished, with ancient shepherds and farm-hands giving an out-of-date song or doing a step, as I have seen them many a time—and a jolly good step, too, the sort Goldsmith wrote up and Charles Reade glorified. Mr Gorham, who won the Grand National with Shannon Lass, promoted these sports, good luck to him as a sensible, kindly, thoughtful sportsman. Such ought to be held in every parish to encourage good and sharp work.

Often have I pleaded for blending work with the competitive element classed as sporting, so I need not say how interesting this sort of game must be to me. But I will, for the benefit of those who may not grasp the individual idea—handicapped, unfortunately, it is, by trade unionism—put a case to them. You are aware—are you not?—how an athlete or a horse can deteriorate through missing a pacemaker, and for want of a lead fall into a jog-trot humdrum state in which all seems to be going well, while the performer is not doing him-, her-, or it-self justice. A false standard is set up to the operating person or animal's complete satisfac-

tion. All is so very satisfactory. Behold you, when call comes for extra effort, the dull, drag-along pace has become habitual and the spurt is not producible. By trials such as Mr Gorham brought about you arrive at a true standard, and induce a moral effect on the practitioners which is simply invaluable. It is thirty years ago since I wrote a leader in the *Sporting Life* putting views to this effect, and advocating a trades' sporting champion meeting at the Agricultural Hall for indoor crafts and others in the open, and I have never left off hammering to knock into the nation the benefit derivable from these sports. Further, as you are aware, I hold that business, especially handicrafting and labouring, ought always to be adorned by its sporting possibilities being brought into prominence. Why should only unproductive exercises be classed as sport? Work is full of sport if you will take it like a sportsman.

Apropos of my sumptuary ideas on trade or class costume and equipment, I was once challenged how I should consider myself—appropriately togged up while on business bent as a sporting journalist. The nearest I can do is to say that I wear this year's clothes, if I have them; failing up-to-date outward adornment, I snow brown, not being able to snow white, so put up with and put on these of as little remote build as possible. I am afraid this is an un-lucid description. By way of apology for shortcoming, permit me to offer a little Press story, which, as you have not heard it, I will now relate to you, changing names. In the very early days of the *Sportsman*, its staff included a real Robertsonian "Society" "Caste" Bohemian contributor, well

educated, first cousin of a lord — versatile, talented, and able to turn his hand to anything. A very fast-going set in their way was his, and on occasion one or other might be run in. Not to put too fine a point on it, we did know what it meant among us, and there was a deal of bailing out. Poor old Billy, "The Man in the Street," as he wrote, discovered himself one night to be "The Man in Bow Street," held to answer a charge of drunkenness. Naturally, he did not want the case reported, so sent for a bosom friend, editor of the *St James's Gazette* as it then was, who undertook to do the needful. So he did, in a way, for he smuggled off duty the present Grossmith senior's father and the late John Hollingshead (who between them farmed Bow Street Police Court for reporting purposes) on the understanding that he was to do their work for them free. What do you think this editor did for his friend as a joke? The latter, poor chap, while celebrating his release, read in an evening paper that "William Ffoulkes Ridges FitzStevens (these were his own names, at any rate, he gave them correctly), a shabby man, *attired as a sub-editor*, appeared before Sir Thomas Henry on a charge of drunkenness, and was fined five shillings," etc.

Sometimes I take the liberty of lumping myself in with the body known and generally described as sportsmen. Now and then I feel as if I should be a trifle inclined to resent being ruled out of that category, as conventionally constituted. Often, while reckoning up qualifications generally considered necessary, I am inclined to declare myself out. Here I speak of what are usually called field sports—at least,

some of them—and including, at any rate, all pursuits entailing taking of life from any animate being, unless profit of one sort or another, or guarding against damage attaches to the slaughter. All considerations as to humble creatures being made for our use, and incidentally so devoted, I put on one side. Man may, or not, have been intended to boss the universe, free to kill beast, bird, fish, insect, reptile, and all the rest, also his own kind if he so pleased and was able. Whether he ought to claim such license as a matter of privilege is scarcely worth arguing, because he assumes and always has assumed the right (and has acted up to it) to clear the earth beneath, the sky above, or the water under the earth—which it is not exactly—of any mortal creature on justifiable counts, such as getting a bit in money or money's worth, food, raiment, or safety, or saving himself from inconvenience, and would be extremely foolish if he did not fight for his own hand.

Personal consideration makes the fundamental principle of all savage and civilised law, and I suppose scientific gents could show how all virtues and vices spring from a common well of pure selfishness, with expediency adulterating the output, as, for instance, the popular brand known as civilisation, of which some lifetaking is a branch labelled sport. Now please understand that I am not declaring myself a namby-pamby sort of person in taking the line I do, because I am not. I have been devoted to field sports all my time, and detest the anti school's doctrine which seeks to interfere with hunting, shooting, fishing, and the like. But I *have* come to set my face dead against killing for killing's sake, or on

what may be called injudicious grounds. In this regard I do feel rubbed the wrong way in reading of some specimen hunting, when the creature devoted to destruction by the collector has its sphere of usefulness, as a delight to the eye or a subject for study,—and gets done for on its earliest appearance, being individually monopolised instead of permitted to remain and range at large for general appreciation. Execution, for useful purposes or to prevent harmful encroachment on civilisation's estate, justifies itself. On the other hand, the libellous principle fastened on the nation in "It's a fine day, let's go out and kill something," makes the merciful man squirm—at least, it does your humble servant.

What started me on these lines—at least, to open my mind about the business—was reading stories of the alleged doing to death of the St James's Park missing pelicans, and, I may add, coming across a very interesting article on rare migrants (all killed or shot at) in the *Badminton*. Poor old pelicans—domestic fowls as they had become—I wish the murderers who bagged them, after their deserting our metropolitan waters for a holiday to see the land, might experience all terrors and remorse ascribed to the Cornishmen who shot the owl, and, going by the angels on the tombstone "slate" repented killing a "Cherrybeam," because of its pictorial monumental resemblance to that continually crying, fanciful, artistic creation. How was it one of the *participes criminis* identified the defunct in the ancient poetical legend? "'Cos in its picture on the slate you'll find no legs nor any part behind." Something like that I know, but

it is years and years since I got hold of the whimsical old Cornish book with the rhymed story in. We do advance by leaps and bounds in kindly regard for what we are pleased to call humbler creatures, who, the more you know of them, teach you what a powerful lot of intelligence—instinct we are pleased to term it; I wonder what they think of our instincts—they possess.

I wonder how many people who read this protest will recollect a late "character" of the town near which I write these Notions—a quite influential worthy, Mr Billy Boxall, the gentleman who, according to tradition, signalised receipt of his first scarlet hunting coat by putting it on directly he got up in the morning, and, lost in admiration of his present splendid appearance reflected in the bedroom mirror, absent-mindedly proceeded to show himself off in the High Street "mid nodings on" save the Southdown Hunt livery for upper part and as continuations flowing nightshirt tails, to the great edification of the populace. The education movement of the time being submitted for his criticism, Billy Boxall "summed it up" in short and strong with "edication is a cuss," a sentiment in which, perhaps, the Government may be found agreeing presently. I have found my plea for giving rare migrants of sorts a more kindly welcome than a dose of shot carries met on educational grounds, in that to forward its ornithological branch we ought, and necessity exists, to acquire and preserve (first knocking their life out) specimens for study. Well and good that is, after a fashion, but another way might be to let the birds live, and give the country a chance of studying them

in their habit as they do live. For all educational purposes the rare migrant, a more or less temporary settler on our shores or about our lands, can be quite satisfactorily represented in museums and such-like depositories by specimens acquired where it is plentiful. It would be ever so much more precious if the rarity of migration to our territory was not summarily determined as far as gunners can make possible on a first appearance, and if we gave a stranger a chance to repeat the visit, and possibly confer the favour of its presence on us for good, long or, at least, frequent spells. The education made to cover indiscriminate or, at any rate, systematic slaughter of these innocents answers, I think, to Mr Boxall's long-ago denunciation as a "cuss," a word one feels inclined to bring in to express sentiments on hearing of the hunt to destroy the St James's Park pelicans, because they went astray to see the world and life, which for them meant death.

As I have been letting go on what I consider indefensible cruelty in sport, I beg to put in a word to clear myself against suggestion of being against ordinary field sports with wild animals or game birds as quarry. Indictment and defence of hunting and game-shooting have been aired to staleness. As regards food supplies, no word need, I think, be said, but about the others—vermin is the dirty word, to be correct—I venture to make one little note, viz., that while we must all set up for ourselves an interpretation of the word cruelty, you cannot get over a certain argument—nay, more than a plea or connection—a fact, viz., that sport obviously stands between the most notable of our ferinæ and extinction.

That sportsman, for the sake of indulging their taste in hunting, pay the price of their quarry's preservation is a trite enough observation, but true, and I recall it now because of otter hunting's spread. Fishermen, especially Thames brothers of the angle, are the otters' deadliest enemies, forgetting in their case all about living and letting live. They set a price on the animals' heads, and glory at news of Hone or other artful trappers bagging the pretty creatures, whose damage to a river's stock of fish is variously estimated by natural history authorities: these differ very widely, some declaring that no real harm is done. Let the balance between the parties be left to settle of itself; what I was going to say is that I am a great admirer of the otter; he gives me much more gratification when I can spot him, which is very seldom, than all the angling I am likely to get in Thames' flow or anywhere else, and yet I never feel so pleased as when I hear of somebody's starting a pack of otter hounds. As a lover of fair-play I would rather that Mr or Mrs Otter might not have so many hands or feet and teeth and spears against him or her at one time as the beastie has to put up with, being perhaps unfairly handicapped—one little body asked to beat a crowd. But, as a writer in one of "The 'House' on Sport" charming annuals explained, otter hunting means otter preserving. So soon as a pack is installed the critter becomes a valuable personality, and keepers will take care that their interests in this regard are duly protected. They will do the protecting themselves, good luck to them. Protect, in order that their protégés may be chased? Well, yes, we know all about that. Otters

couldn't be hunted unless they were there, and more are alive at the end of each year than if no one cared to hunt them. Better live and take the chance of being settled as a party to sport than be trapped to extermination point.

We have in certain museums collections of birds, native and permanently resident with us for their natural lives, also of visitors, frequent callers, and temporary lodgers, with whom all English lovers of natural history are, or, we will say, would wish to be, familiar. For instance, in the South Kensington branch of the British Museum's Natural History Department, one of the most frequented sections is that for which birds are set up very cleverly indeed. Pity 'tis they have to be killed for the purpose, but that can't be helped. You are shown their eggs and their youngsters, also themselves, all in their habits as they lived. Not the least charm about the presentation is the *mise en scène* in reproduction of their homes in trees or bushes, curiously selected lodgings, shelters in houses, in banks, or on the ground. The more one knows and learns about such companions to be met with in the open, and their habits, also habitats, the greater enjoyment can be derived from association with these humble friends, who sometimes may be our friends the enemy, as, for instance, when the student is a gardener of sorts, and the bird also goes in for that line of industry and recreation after the manner of its bullfinch or greenfinch kind. You do not take much stock in people about whom and their ways of carrying on you are uninformed, nor in common or uncommon objects of the animal or vegetable world so long as they rank as strangers. When you are, so to

speaking, introduced, or can tell about each other by repute, the case is quite different. And even a little knowledge of our wild birds or animals makes for increase of pleasure in outdoor rambles. Being only moderately educated in this respect, you, instead of passing, as a chance wayfarer might, through a strange town, move among a population whose histories and methods are familiar, and acquire the habit of looking out for them more by token that you can pretty well time and place individuals, being accustomed to their "runs," and knowing where to expect them to crop up. Why should not the Government scheme for informing us concerning birds and beasts be adapted to our trees and plants—more particularly to the very, very extensive family of flowers too frequently lumped together as weeds?

He who makes two blades of grass to grow where but one came before is to be accounted a benefactor to his species. Similarly the philanthropist who provides means for educating us to recognise and so take interest in and make pleasure out of acquaintance with our wild flora should deserve well of his country, in that he makes us understand what a lot of "blades" there are of which we have been ignorant. How many thousands are there like poor me who would be very grateful if afforded opportunity to go to school in a public museum, and there study artificial wild flowers with a view to identifying the real articles out of doors? Very many, I think, who with a little help of this sort could meet on a common platform for comparing notes on trekking about the country. I go trapesing through the land all over England, and by virtue

of observation grow familiar with a vast number of vegetable friends' faces, but for the life of me cannot call them by name. Of course I do know many, but they make only a small instalment. That is not for the want of trying, either. But you so seldom find a companion properly loaded with learning, and somehow I do not get on with books on such subjects. If I could drop into local museums and see counterfeit presentments clearly labelled, I would do a great deal better. A very pretty show the collections would make. In all probability volunteers, enthusiasts in their way at this branch of knowledge, could be found to undertake the work more as a labour of love than for the sake of profit.

I wish, while bearing up for nature-study, to call attention to a danger. Unless authorities speak pretty plainly, we may find much harm come out of what ought to do nothing but good, by turning attention to a most charming study—leading students into fresh air, and the nearest they may reach to country life. But please look at the little matter and what it may mean. We look like creating an army of collectors of plants, flowers, butterflies, moths, and all manner, and we do not want collectors but observers. Collecting on a small scale is harmless enough, but in regard to wild, that is, articles not proprietorially claimed, is at best selfish, because one personally appropriates what any number may enjoy. Would I bar folk from gathering a bunch of wild flowers? Well, if you put the question another way, thus: Would I wish a single soul who desired such a posy to be without one? I say no as strongly as I can. But, look you friends, there may not be enough to go round,

and it is hard that some should be obliged to do without altogether. Take the Thames. If the Conservancy had not framed a rule and told their men to make folk understand that they meant enforcing protection for the old Father's garden, some of his and our favourites would soon become extinct, because the public took to nature-studying as collectors rather than as observers pure and simple. I have for long desired to start a giving, instead of a taking, guild of good sorts, who do not mind a little trouble and perhaps expense in introducing flowering plants and the like to localities, and colonising them there so as to decorate our land beyond its present adornment. Districts might exchange parcels of plants, seeds, cuttings, and so on for mutual benefit, and given co-operation from the public, river-banks, easements, roadsides, and all sorts of sites be rendered beautiful. But unless nature-study stopped short at taking the things home to study, the labour of love might prove in vain. I do not want to prejudice the movement—rather to encourage it all possible. At the same time, I think the little warning I have given is necessary, and trust that if the note has not yet been sounded, the directors will point out what too free collecting means, innocent as it may be for each separate individual.

Can anyone tell me that snow benefits roads and paths? It may be an agent for good, helping to mend those of our ways, but I doubt that. In any case, I have no hope to realise my wish for a patent snow distributor to direct its application—the snow's, please understand—to the land it does it good to and where it is wanted, at the same time leaving our tracks of sorts free for

locomotion that we may possess them, ride, walk, drive, cycle, and—I suppose I must say it—motor-career in peace and comfort. I would add, too, to the close portions, all ice practicable for skating, sliding, bandying, etc. I should put in curling, only I believe that roaring gamesters—is this designation correct? I trust so—prefer at least some snow. Townfolk make big outcry against nuisances incidental to snow. With them is Mr *Sporting Notions*, so far as personal comfort in cities, large or small, goes. But I submit that the country sportsman suffers far more than the town dweller or frequenter. I am informed that in certain places, municipal, parochial, or council authorities do clear their thoroughfares and make you fairly comfortable—sooner or later. But that cannot well be done in the country, and what is the result? Why, that for the majority most of the pleasure in outdoor life is destroyed, wasted—absolutely wasted. You cannot drive “any sense,” neither ride nor walk nor cycle with ease, accuracy, safety, or credit to yourself. Overhead the sky may be clear and bright, and the air delightfully cheering; all is just as it should be for winter exercise and enjoyment, “instead of which” the snow messes (good word that) the whole show. At least, it does very often for days after its fall—and it spoils the ice, but only outside such consideration I am always very glad if frost brings good ice. Please follow my wording. I *am* not pleased, very sorry indeed, when the frost which makes ice bear, good ice or bad, stops outdoor operatives from wage-earning. Bad, hard luck that is. I never forget that same, inevitable as it must be, and I can’t say my little say and willingly miss

expressing myself sympathetically on the subject. That being understood, I can safely record feeling satisfaction when, if cold does come sufficient to make ice, said manufacture is of good quality. For, looking through the whole catalogue of English sports and pastimes, I find no item on which young folks are quite so keen as diversion on the ice. Perhaps I judge too much by myself. Possibly I do, probably I do not, in classing the woes of disappointed and the pleasures of realised hopes in the matter of skating or sliding more intense than come with any other sporting amusement.

Maybe I exaggerate a little, but, in my view, boys—elderly, old, middle-aged and young—whoever have been on skating pleasure bent, know no such fascinating, attracting, compelling summons “come and be in it” as the indescribable, unmistakable song of the freshly used ice-field. What do you say? A mere matter of air-bubbles on the top of the water under, and their displacement through weight pressure over the ice! Likely enough that is so, in a way. But the ring of the steel-ridged shoon makes up the complement, and the music acts on your nerves like a quick-step dance tune. Leave alone scientific explanations of very simple cause and effect materially considered; we are not talking on such lines. Let me speak for myself in declaring for the bubbly, roly, whirly, swishy, very-much-alive-and-brisky harmonious blend as the call most potent to yours truly for active sporting service, and also in awakening memories of happy days. I give their due to the thud of the football and the “wood’s” ding on the cricket ball, the “whurruck” of a boat’s crew’s oars as a stroke is finished, and

the plunger's splash recording a swimmer's header, the babble of a pack of hounds running, and the other more peaceful harmony from a fisherman's reel, and—not to multiply samples—let me put in a very comprehensive etcetera. None of them prompts me so much to be up and doing, joining the gay throng—or words to such effect—as does skating's call.

I believe most boys will be with me, and if only for their sakes I do rejoice because of seeing plenty of good ice. Will my young, youthful, human friends forgive me if I ask the sensible ones to try what they can do with less reasonable sorts who, directly ice appears on our ponds, go madly mischievous, and do their best, which is a very bad one, to ruin their own and others' prospects of amusement, breaking the ice and throwing all manner of rubbish on it? Parents and guardians, schoolmasters and mistresses, also you boys of England—please help, all of you, to wipe this silly, selfish practice out. Frequently the *Referee* has made this appeal against, as we will hope, thoughtless folly which is on all fours with knocking a hole in a boat because you can't use it for a day or two, breaking up bats if a cricket pitch is temporarily unfit for service, or setting fire to a theatre closed on occasion.

As those conversant with the history of the National Skating Association should be aware, its secretary has, ex-officio, the mystical gifts of a medicine-man practising in the weather department, more particularly as a rain-maker. I have often thought—seeing how instant relief, for such as frost does not suit, comes through the National Skating Association's magic thaw-making—what a pity it is we do not have ice in

summer, even the slippery, in an illusive sense, sort that flatters would-be sliders and skaters only to deceive. Then, when drought came and water ran short—if it ran at all—the cereals threatened to be very short in the leg (except wheat, which is a glutton for heat), the roots were puny and the hay thin, the roads dusty and the pastures scorched up, you would know where to turn for relief. I will not catalogue the list of other methods considered correct to adopt under such conditions. Let us lump them, simply for contrast between their inefficiency and the sovereign-remedy-bringer. Go to the National Skating Association with samples of sere leaves off the forest trees and blight-laden garden pets crying for rain, and put it—I mean put the whole pitiful condition—to the secretary. Ten to one you might lay on the hon. sec.'s at once making out a list of skating fixtures, and telling me that I should go to him if I wanted rain.

Talking of skating and accommodation therefore always reminds me that in my opinion we are very slow in engineering rinks for the purpose, artificial lakes of small depth which might be made highly profitable when the season was propitious, and would not entail much waste of increment in other years. In places the system is carried out on low lands easily flooded, and the water lying on them for a while does no harm (or little) to the grass. I always wonder that some of our racecourse companies handy to London do not experiment in this direction, and can imagine their shareholders' satisfaction when, frost interfering with their steeplechase programme, they might be in receipt of fine gates from the skaters—the baked potato and penny

ice idea being materialised, you see. The scheme cropped up because of the London Athletic Club's being obliged to shift from their old quarters at Stamford Bridge, and the general difficulty found in making athletic grounds self-supporting, not to mention paying their way. Would it not be possible to organise an establishment on a grand scale? A lot of capital must be involved, but, well engineered, receipts should be commensurate where provision for all manner of outdoor sports could be collected in one great holding, with tracks for cycling, running, walking, trotting and what-not formed alongside a piece of water suitable for boat-racing, swimming, and skating. Ground is worth much nowadays, and is daily rising in value, but that last is a consideration telling rather in favour of the project's hopefulness, because it in a way ensures against loss should the worst come to the worst. Speculating in liberal spirit, you may add playing-fields for football, cricket, lawn-tennis, croquet, and bowls, and, further centralising, set up halls for indoor athletics. I am sure there is money in it, although for many sports drawing a sufficient gate is now difficult. May I be excused for saying, regarding existing grounds, that mostly they are hardly well done enough. The best accommodation is not so good as it ought to be, the appliances are antiquated and insufficient, and the spectator-public insufficiently encouraged.

With regard to *the* country diversion, which I never can keep away from—walking, rambling, fossicking, exploring, and in general “seeing the land,” people are much too apt to shy starting if the weather is not perfect. As I am told a very celebrated author remarks, in one of the inter-

vals when he, comparatively, talks English, "Englishwomen" (and men) "afraid of the weather might as well be shut up."

There is anyhow almost an even chance of the weather's improving as you go on; and at worst, so long as you can keep going till you are landed at your stable, no amount of wetting ought to hurt you; and, while we are on the subject, ought not the Faculty, who in some cases do such wonderful things for invalids, to manage something in the interests of the able-bodied? According to my notions a great big "*à fortiori*" ought to come in at the end of any good open-air cure story. If the weak and vulnerable, by reason of their weakness, can be brought into better case through sleeping practically in the open, and so long as they are not unduly exposed to stuffiness and heat are able to defy cold-catching or catch-colding conditions, what about the robust? Will not the medicos relieve them of one of the greatest troubles in life, having to cosset themselves up and cart a big burden of clothing wherever they go? This is a slight digression from country life and walking reminiscences, perhaps. If you please, I admit all that, but readers have asked me to go into the land-voyaging line of business, and if you are not free to go as you like off the hard, high road by bridle-path or footpath, occupation road, green lane, roundabout, and short cut, or even do a stroke of trespassing, where does the pleasure of going-as-you-please come in? A big subject, a very big subject indeed, this fresh-air cure is, worth far more serious consideration than I am equal to giving it. For purposes of these Notions the bearings to be made most useful to

me are that, following up the open-air treatment's apparent lesson, the ordinary citizen ought to be independent of weather, and so not fight shy of taking his proper allowance of outdoor exercise because of rain.

You cannot make people fond of strong walking exercise and so healthy by Act of Parliament, any more than you can make them innocent through the same agency. A goodish bit in the latter direction is attempted, however, and if one may not fairly say that we have legislation directed towards promoting the first, we must admit endeavour to arrive at the same end to which liking for—or, at any rate, practice of—walking leads. All manner of rules are invented to regulate conditions of life indoors and render them satisfactorily sanitary. Our dwellings and factories, halls and theatres are to be cut out to certain prescribed patterns, so as to prevent overcrowding and the promotion of disease through insufficient drainage, etc. The liberty of the subject, which goes so far as permitting him to keep as unfit as he can be, and so make himself a very effective agent for spreading diseases he takes unduly easily, does not extend to suicide, settling oneself double-quick. Yet, so long as he is free to invite illness he may do his suiciding a bit at a time. I am afraid that if I were made Boss Sanitary Officer of the Empire, I should be after trying to introduce rules compelling everybody to attend to his own state of fitness, as well as be particular about the house he lives in; I would, too, require parents and guardians to bring up their young 'uns somehow, so that they should learn to appreciate and make use of the good gifts in

scenery and country air always at their service free, and to go generally a great deal more "on their own" than you can now persuade them to do.

To my mind, one of the greatest gifts to be prized and cultivated by the worker especially is the faculty of readily playing a lone hand. That makes all the difference in the world to the busy man whose time is precious, because—mind, I say no word against sociability—he can use up all his odds and ends of off-duty spells. He is free to start when he likes, go as long or as short as he likes, and in whatever direction he likes, at his own pace, alter his programme as he likes, and leave off ditto. Most precious is the companion, the chosen friend of cognate, sympathetic tastes; who can be a boon worth much sacrifice. But, unhappily, seldom will two persons—no matter how well inclined—be able to be dismissed at the same moment, and be free for precisely equal spells of liberty. So in accommodating matters quite a large percentage of time is wasted for one or another. People call you selfish for holding such views, but a body must cut his coat according to his cloth, and it is good to be able to enjoy yourself fossicking about by yourself—hatting, I ought to say, to be correct—though pleased enough to pick up a mate. Of course you must get into the right groove for playing a lone hand, and, by the same token, if you start properly equipped you never can be lonely, because at every turn are friends and acquaintances, appearances and problems, from the clouds and the waters down to the tiniest living things of the air, earth, and water, from the giant sylvia to the most minute lichen, the conventional or

eccentric processions of vegetation, birds, and animals (wild or domestic), and insects (their habitations, friends, and enemies). Really we as a nation must be very short of such acquaintances, or surely some of our finest playgrounds could not be so woefully neglected as they are.

If I tell you where and in what company I do these notes indite, you might think I was a little off my head, seeing that one of my companions, who stays with me for hours reclining on a bit of newspaper, is a snow-white, bantam hen, guaranteed fifteen years old, a high-bred dowager, who in earlier years was accustomed to take prizes as a black, and has since passed through stages in which her complexion varied between black with white predominating, and black on white, and has now ended up snow white—a rare old pal, this little bird, who never lets you speak to her as one does to a pet dog without saying something pleasant back in a small, chirpy voice. She is, too, the bravest living thing I ever saw. All manner of enemies capable of crumpling her up, without knowing they had exerted themselves, she has put to confusion by her dauntless front, and in all her trials and troubles her pluck has carried her through. I do not believe that she would accelerate her usual gait by a foot an hour to get out of the way of a Bengal tiger. She would be much more likely to pull up, look him full in the face, and tell him he was no gentleman. That sounds more like the creation of a disordered brain—does it not?—than a solid fact. Mrs Henney-Penney and self, good readers, are all right enough in our heads at present, thank you, and I am not romancing, neither do I in telling

you of a lovely charming creature brought to me a day ago to look at. An old soldier of my acquaintance caught a pure white blackbird, a perfect warbler. He made the capture not half a mile from my house simply by running after the bird. A prettier thing than this bird's eye, pink with an orange rim, you will not often find. He is very healthy and happy, quite tame, and in beautiful plumage.

[The concluding paragraph is taken from "Sporting Notions" in the *Referee* for April 8, 1906—the last piece of work Martin Cobbett ever did. The description is characteristic of his tenderness to all live things. Mrs Henney-Penney is still alive.—Ed.]

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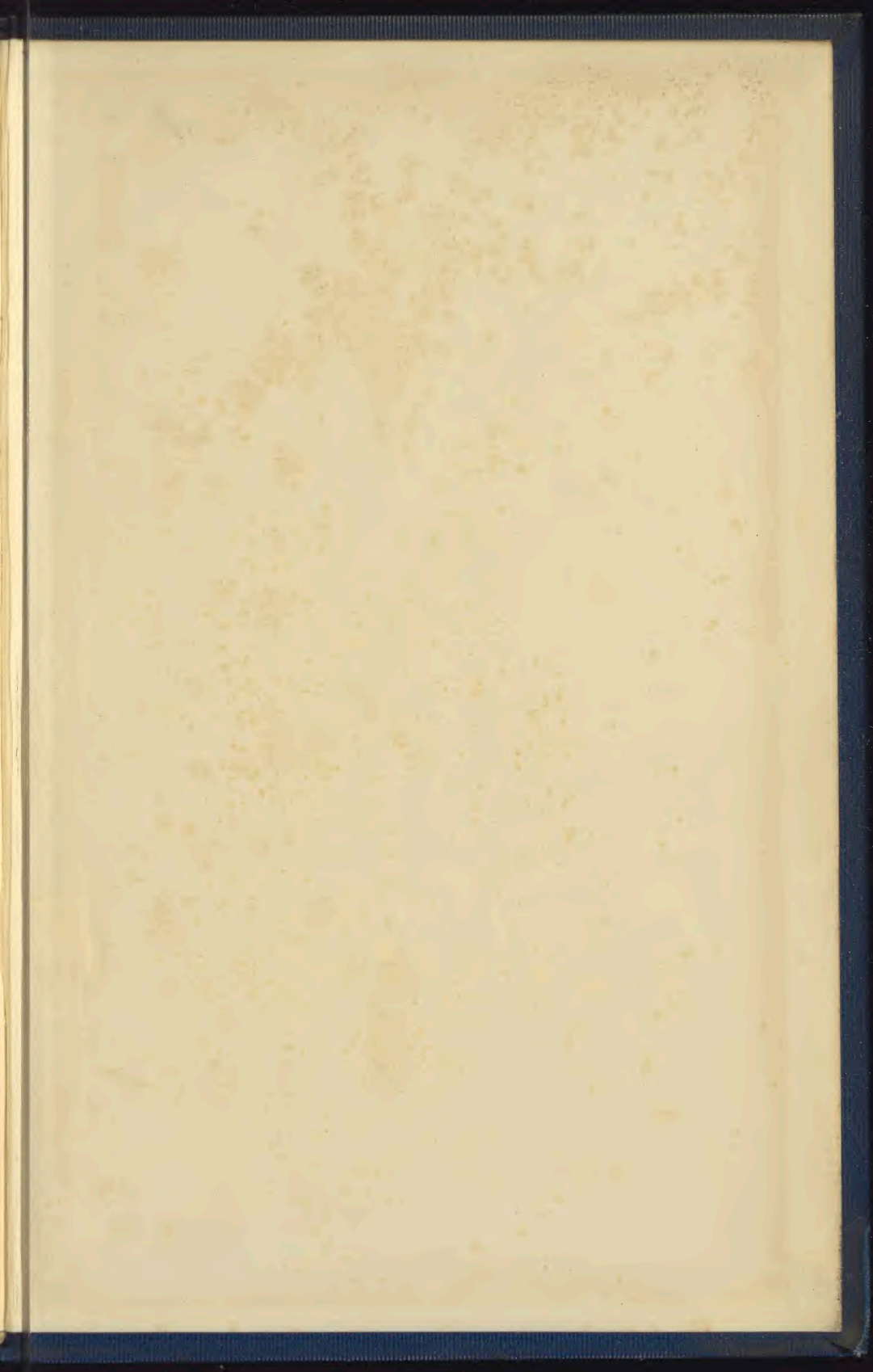
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