

"KEEP A STIFF UPPER LIP."

There has something gone wrong, My brave boy, it appears, For those your proud struggle To keep back the tears. That is right. When you cannot Give trouble the slip, Then bear it, still keeping "A stiff upper lip!"

posting-inn in England that is kept up in the unchanged style of the ante-railroad days. The post-houses are gone, but the posting stables are filled with hunters; the travelling public have fled to the swifter lines, and Wansford is forever deserted of them; but the old "Haycock" keeps up its old cheer, and Tom Percival, who boasts that he has had the Princess Victoria for a guest, and has slept five dukes in one night, has little occasion to complain of neglect. The good wine that needs no bush still makes his cellar known, and no one should criticise English cooking until he has dined once at the Haycock. Nowhere is the inn-maid of whom we have read so much to be found in such simple, tidy, and courtesying perfection; and nowhere, in short, can one find so completely the solid comfort of hostelry life. Half old farm-house and half wayside inn; with a marvellous larder, through whose glass-closed side the guest sees visions of joints and jams and pastry in lavish profusion; backed by a stable-yard where boys are always exercising good horses; and flanked by a yardful of quaint clipped yews—the old house at Wansford (in spite of its dull-looking road front) is worth a visit from those who would get out of the sight and sound of steam, and see the old, old country life of England. The visitor is not numbered and billeted and pigeon-holed, as in the modern hotel; but the old fiction of host and guest is well kept up. Your coming should be announced in advance; and you are received as in some sort a member of the family, whose ways are made to conform more or less to the wishes of yourself and your convives, mainly young swells from London, who are few, and who are there as you are, not for business, but for rest, good living, and regular sport. Three packs of hounds are within reach; and on the days when none of the meets is near, there is always the "larking"—the training of young horses—to supply a good substitute, as far as the riding goes. One who cares for hunting pure and simple, rather than for the gay life of Leamington and Cheltenham, cannot do better than to make the season, or a part of it, at the Haycock, with regularly engaged horses for as many days in the week as he may choose to ride. It costs—but it pays. One is none the less welcome among the guests for being an American.

FOX HUNTING IN ENGLAND.

[CONCLUDED.]

My second day was near Stratford-on-Avon—on Ay von the misguided English call it. The meet was to be at Goldicote House, one of the "fixtures" of the Warwickshire Hunt. There were about a hundred persons, including a few ladies, and one little bareheaded "blue-coat" school-boy (from Thackeray's school), who, with his folded umbrella, long skirts, low shoes, and yellow hose, was in for as much sport as his Christmas holiday would give him. As a further penalty for want of forethought, I was reduced to riding a friend's coach-horse. However, the reduction was not great, for whether by early instruction or inheritance, he was more than half a hunter, and gave me a capital look at the whole day's chase; while his owner, on a most charming black blood mare, being out of condition for hard riding, kindly applied himself to urging me to severer work than one likes to do with a borrowed horse. He introduced me to a venerable old gentleman in a time-and-weather-stained red coat, velvet cap, and well-used nether gear, mounted on a knowing-looking old gray, and attended by his granddaughter. He could not have been less than eighty years old, and his days of hard riding were over; but constant hunting exercise every winter for over sixty years had protected him wonderfully well against the ravages of time, and it is rare to see an American of sixty so hale and hearty, and so cheerful and jolly. I was told that if I would take him for my leader I would see more of the run than I could in any other way with such a mount as I had. He seemed to know the habits of the foxes of South Warwickshire as thoroughly as he did every footpath and gate of the country, and he led us by cross-cuts to the various points to which Reynard circled, so that we often had the whole field in sight. It was not an especially interesting day, and the fox got away at last among a tangle of railway lines that blocked our passage. My old Mentor, who had given me much valuable instruction in the details of hunting, was vastly disgusted at the result, and broke out with, "Ah! it's all up with old England, I doubt; these confounded railways have killed sport. There's no hunting to be had any longer, for their infernal cutting up the country in this way. I've hunted with these hounds under fifteen different masters, but I've about done, and I shan't lose much—it's all up. However, I suppose we could never pay the interest on the national debt without the railways; but it's all up with hunting." At that he called away the young lady, bade me a melancholy "good by," and rode half sadly home. I galloped galloped back to Stratford with my handsome old host a little more knowing in the ways of the field, but without yet having having had a fair taste of the sport. Seven miles from Peterborough, in the dismal little village of Wansford, near the borders of Northamptonshire and Huntingdonshire, is, perhaps, the only remaining old

with my prudence—when the fox, who had found straight running of no avail, came swerving to the right over the crest of the distant hill, closely followed by the hounds, and, in splendid style, by the first flight of the field. Soon he crossed a brook which was fenced in with rails, and the horse-men all had to make a long detour, so that I, who had been last, now became first. I had the fox and the hounds all to myself; my horse was fresh, and the way was easy. My monopoly lasted only a moment, but it was not a moment of tranquility. Finding an open gate and bridge, I followed the pack into a large low field, surrounded on three sides by the wide brook. The fox was turned by this and ran to the right along the bank; at the corner of the field he turned again to the right, still keeping by the edge of the stream; this gave the hounds an immense advantage, and cutting off the angle, they came so closely upon him that with still another turn of the brook ahead of him, he had but one chance for his life, and that was a desperate one for a tired fox to consider. He did not consider, but went slap at the brook, and cleared it with a leap of nearly twenty feet. The foremost hounds whined for a moment on the bank before they took to the water, and when they were across Reynard was well out of sight, and they had to nose out his trail afresh. He brought them again to a check, and finally, after half an hour's skirmishing, he ran down a railway cutting in the wake of a train, and got finally away. Incidentally here was an opportunity for an English gentleman to show more good temper and breeding than it is one's daily lot to see. He was one of a bridgeful of horsemen watching the hounds as they vainly tried to unravel the fox's scent from the bituminous trail of the locomotive, when, full of eager curiosity, one of the ladies, middle-aged, and not "native and to the manner born," but not an American, rode directly on to his horse's heels. To the confusion of my lady, the horse, like a sensible horse as he was, resented the attack with both his feet. His rider got him at once out of the way, and then returned, bowing his venerable head in regretful apology, and trusting that no serious harm had been done. "How can you ride such a kicking brute?" was the gracious acknowledgment of his forbearance. In this storied little island one is never for long out of the presence of places on the traditions of which our lifelong fancies have been fed. Our road home lay past the indistinct mass of rubbish clustered round with ivy and with the saddest associations, which was once Fotheringay Castle; and as we turned into the village my companions pointed out the still serviceable but long-unused "stocks" where the minor malefactors of the olden time expiated their offences. We reached the "Haycock" at three, a moist but far from unpleasant body of tired and dirty men, having ridden, since nine in the morning, over fifty-five miles, mostly in the rain, and often in a shower of mud splashed by galloping hoofs. By six o'clock we were in good trim for dinner, and after dinner for a long cosy talk over the events of the day, and horses and fox-hunting in general. My own interest in the sport is confined mainly to its equestrian side, and I am not able to give much information as to its details. Any stranger must be impressed with the firm hold it has on the affections of the people, and with the little public sympathy that is shown for the rare attempts that are made to restrict its rights. It would seem natural that the farmers should be its bitter opponents. It can hardly be a cheerful sight, in March, for a thrifty man to see a crowd of mad horsemen tearing through his twenty acres of well-wintered wheat, filling the air with a spray of soil and uprooted plants. But let a non-riding reformer get up after the annual dinner of the local Agricultural Association and suggest that the rights of tenant farmers have long enough lain at the mercy of their landlord and his fox-hunting friends, with the rabble of idle sports and ruthless ne'er-do-weels who follow at their heels, and that it is time for them to assert themselves and try to secure the prohibition of a costly pastime, which leads to no good practical result, and the burdens of which fall so heavily on the producing classes—and then see how his brother farmers will

second his efforts. The very man whose wheat was apparently ruined will tell him that in March one would have said the whole crop was destroyed, but that the stirring up seemed to do it good, for he had never before seen such an even stand on that field. Another will argue that while hunting does give him some extra work on the repair of hedges and gates, and while he sometimes has his fields torn up more than he likes, yet the hounds are the best neighbors he has; they bring a good market for hay and oats, and, for his part, he likes to get a day with them himself now and then. Another raises a young horse when he can, and if he turns out a clever hunter, he gets a much larger price for him than he could if there were no hunting in the country. Another has now and then lost poultry by the depredations of foxes, but he never knew the master to refuse a fair claim for damages; for his part he would scorn to ask compensation; he likes to see the noble sport, which is the glory of England, flourishing, in spite of modern improvements. At this point, and at this stage of the convivial cheer, they bring in the charge at Bala-klava, and other evidences that the noble sport, which is the glory of old England, breeds a race of men whose invincible daring always has won and always shall win her honor in the field;—and Long live the Queen, and Here's a health to the Handley Cross Hunt, and Confusion to the mean and niggardly spirit that is filling the country with wire fences and that do away with the noble sport which is the glory of old England! Hear? hear! And so it ends, and half the company, in velvet caps, scarlet coats, leathers and top-boots, will be early on the ground at the first meet of the next autumn, glad to see their old cover-side friends once more, and hoping for a jolly winter of such healthful amusements and pleasant intercourse as shall put into their heads and their hearts and into their hearty frames and ruddy faces a ten-fold compensation for the trifling loss they may sustain in the way of broken gates and trampled fields. I saw too little to be able to form a fair opinion as to the harm done; but when once the run commences no more account is made of what is carefully avoided when going at a slow pace, that if it were so much sawdust: fences are torn down, and there is no time to replace them; if gates are locked, they are taken off the hinges or broken; if sheep join the crowd in an enclosure and follow them into the road, no one stops to see that they are returned: we are after the hounds, and sheep must take care of themselves. I saw one farmer, in an excited manner, open the gates of his kitchen-garden and turn the hounds and twenty horsemen through it as the shortest way to where he had seen the fox go; his womenfolk eagerly calling "Tally ho!" to others who were going wrong. I have never seen a railroad train stopped because of the conductor's interest in a passing hunt, but I fancy that is the only thing in England that does not stop when the all-absorbing interest is once awakened. Whatever may be the effect on material interests, the benefit of this eager, vigorous, outdoor life on the health and morals of the people is most unmistakable. Such a race of handsome, hale, straight-limbed, honest, and simple-hearted men can nowhere else be found as in the wide class that passes as much of every winter as is possible in regular fox-hunting; and to make an application of their example, we could well afford to give over many of our fertile fields to ruthless destruction, and many of our fertile hours to the most senseless sport, if it would only replace our dyspeptic stomachs, sallow cheeks, stooping shoulders, and restless eagerness with the hale and hearty and easy-going life and energy of our English cousins. Hardly enough women hunt in England to constitute an example; but those who do are such models of health and freshness as to make one wish that more women had the benefit of the amusement both there and here. It is very common to see men of over sixty following the hounds in the very elite of the field; they seem still in the vigor of youth. At seventy many are yet regular at their work; and it is hardly remarkable when one finally hangs up his red coat only at the age of eighty. Considering all this, it almost becomes a question whether, patriotism to the contrary notwithstanding, it would not be a good thing

for a prosperous American, instead of settling down at the age of forty-five to a special partnership and a painful digestion, to take a smaller income where it would bring more comfort, and by a judicious application of the pig-skin to rehabilitate his enfeebled alimentation. Fox-hunting is a costly luxury if one goes well mounted and well appointed. It can hardly be made cheap, even when one lives in his own house and rides his own horses. With hotel bills and horse-hire, it costs still more. As an occasional indulgence it is always a good investment. My own score at the Haycock was as follows,—by way of illustration, and because actual figures are worth more than estimates. (I was there from Thursday afternoon until Sunday morning, went out with a shooting-party on Friday, dined out on Friday night, and hunted on Saturday.)

THE HAYCOCK INN. Jan. 2. Dinner and wine, 10 6 Bed and fire, 3 0 .. 3. Breakfast, 2 0 Apartments, * bed and fire, 5 0 Attendance, † 1 6 .. 4. Breakfast, 2 0 Dinner and wine, 10 6 Apartments, bed and fire, 5 6 Attendance, 1 6 .. 5. Breakfast, 2 0

STABLE. Conveying luggage from station 2 6 Dog-cart to Shark's Lodge, .. 10 0 " Oundle, 12 6 " Peterborough, 8 0 THOMAS PERCIVAL. Jan. 4. Hire of hunter to Barnwell, 4 0 " hack " " " " " 10 0

Eight pounds, twelve shillings, and sixpence; which being interpreted means \$47-30 in the lawful currency of the United States. The hunter and hack for one day cost \$23.52. An American friend, living with his family in Leamington (much more cheaply than he could live at home), kept two hunters and a hack, and hunted them twice a week for the whole season (nearly six months) at a cost, including the loss on his horses, which he sold in the spring, of less than \$1,500. I think this is below the average expense. The cost of keeping up a pack of hounds is very heavy. The hounds themselves, a well-paid huntsman, two or three whippers-in, two horses a day for each of these attendants (hunting four days a week, this would probably require four horses for each man), and no end of incidental expenses, bring the cost to fully \$20,000 per annum. This is sometimes paid wholly or in part by subscription and sometimes entirely by the Master of the Hounds. One item of my friend's expenses at Leamington was a subscription of ten guineas each to Warwickshire, North Warwickshire, Atherstone, and Pytchley hunts. Something of this sort would be necessary if one hunted for any considerable time with any subscription pack, but an occasional visitor is not expected to contribute. A stranger participating in the sport need only be guided by common modesty and common-sense. However good a horseman he may be, he cannot make a sensation among the old stagers of the hunting-field. Probably he will get no commendation of any sort. If he does, it will be for keeping out of the way of others,—taking always the easiest and safest road that will bring him well up with the hounds, not flinching when a desperate leap must be taken, and following (at a respectful distance) a good leader, rather than trying to take the lead himself. However promising the prospect may be, he had better not do anything on his own hook; if he makes a conspicuous mistake, he will probably be corrected for it in plainer English than it is pleasant to hear. One of the memorable days of my life was the day before New Year's. Ford had secured me a capital hunter, a well-clipped gelding, over sixteen hands high, glossy, lean, and wiry as a racer. "You've got a rare mount to-day, ir," said the groom as he held him for me to get up; and a rare dismount I came near having in the little measure of capacity with which Master Dick and I commenced our acquaintance, before we left the Regent. He was one of those horses whose spirits are just a little too much for their skins, and all the way out he kept

* The run of the house. † We are apt to consider this a petty swindle, but it has the advantage that you get what you pay for.