

ON ENGLISH COURSING.

IT EXCELS HORSE RACING IN POINT OF EXCITEMENT.

The Hunting of a Hare With a Single Greyhound—Vivid Description of a Hunt—The Great Care Bestowed Upon the Beautiful Animals.

Without a doubt the British Islands are par excellence the home of hunting, and, until recent years, the first place in horse racing was held by the English turf. But there is a sport unknown in this country which far exceeds horse racing in point of excitement, exercise for the spectators and in being free from any chance for "crooked" work. I allude to coursing.

Coursing means the hunting of a hare, not with a pack of beagles or harriers, but with a single greyhound, or, more generally, with two. Since public coursing became a recognized fact there have been three varieties of the sport: Private coursing, in which a person or party of friends "course" for their own pleasure, and open and inclosed coursing meetings.

Open coursing meetings consist in a series of "courses" or matches run in public in the open country, where the hares are in their native state. An "inclosed" meeting is one where the hares are, some time previous to the meeting, driven into a paddock at one end of a large inclosed field in which all of the courses are run. It is at these meetings that the trials of "sapplings" or young dogs are always made in order that the dogs may not be overtaxed in the open country.

The origin of this sport is uncertain, but we know that so early as 150 A.D. Arrian wrote a treatise on coursing. Besides this authority we have proofs of its antiquity from the reliefs which have been found in the excavations at Pompeii and in Egypt. In many of these a man is represented holding a brace of dogs in leash in precisely the same manner as they are now held by the "slipper" at coursing meetings. From time immemorial private coursing has been a favorite amusement in England, but it was not until the time of Charles I. that the first matches were decided in public. Since then public coursing has become more general, and in 1835 the first coursing club (the Alstead and Eildon) was established on the grounds where the now famous Waterloo cup is annually run off. So the sport developed until 1836, when the Waterloo cup was inaugurated as the coursing Derby, and, although much larger stakes have since been established, this cup stands pre-eminently the prize of the coursing sportsmen, and the dog that wins it is deservedly pointed to as the best dog of the season.

The coursing season opens in September either at Haydock Park in England, or at the famous Mountrassil in the county of Down, Ireland. Both of these are inclosed meetings, and at them a number of "sapplings" trials are run off. (A sappling is a greyhound that has been whelped after January 1 of the year in which he is tried.) The season continues until the end of the following April, being somewhat interrupted if the winter frosts are too severe. Generally in midwinter coursing is almost at a standstill, except on some of the southern club grounds. A slight frost, however, is a great desideratum during or immediately before a meeting, for it hardens the ground and the horses are always in better running condition at such times.

The mode of procedure is as follows: On the evening before the meeting opens, a dinner is given in Liverpool, at which hundreds of the most famous coursing men in the United Kingdom attend. After the dinner comes the "draw"—that is, the names of the 64 dogs entered for the cup, are placed in a hat and drawn one by one. The first drawn runs against the second, the third against the fourth and so on until the "draw" is complete. The "Kreket" cards are immediately printed and circulated among those in the room, and after a few minutes, allowed to study the draw, the chairman calls for order. There is silence; the secretary or chairman calls the names of the first brace of dogs, and in a moment pandemonium reigns. Book-makers have come in, and offering bets for or against the two dogs at "short odds."

Short odds means the betting upon the individual course of these two dogs. Another rap, from the chair, the books are silent, and again the uproar begins. The chairman has invited bets on the next couple of greyhounds, and so it proceeds until the card is called off. The excitement becomes more intense, for the betting at "long odds" has begun. This means taking odds against the entire six courses and "running out" the chance of any one dog winning the cup. At long odds it frequently happens that as much as 100 or even 200 to 1 is offered; but in the case of a favorite the betting often lies as close as 3 or 5 to 1. So it goes on until the 64 dogs are disposed of, and then everyone seeks his bed in order that he may be up with the "hark" to reach the famous Alstead meadows in time for the first course.

And now we are on the battle ground. As a rule there is a succession of sharp frosts at this season, and the marshy ground cracks under our feet as we make our way towards where the greyhounds are waiting, with their trainers, for the beginning of the sport. Close by are the judge—who is she only one on horseback—the slip-steward and the slipper—the office of the latter being to slip the dogs from the leashes when a strong hare is driven by him. The betting that began in Liverpool is continued here on the field itself, and the babel of nearly 100,000 voices of those who have come to see the great cup run is only eclipsed by the "beaters"—the men who are beating in the brakes and tufts of marsh grass—as they drive the hares towards where the slipper, slip-steward and judge are standing, the former holding the first couple of dogs in anxious expectancy.

It is a gay scene and an inspiring one. Thousands of wreaths of blue smoke curl and swirl skyward from the cigars and pipes of the dark mass of spectators, who line the side of a dyke or bank in as orderly and soldierlike fashion as if they had been drilled. Everybody is warmly clad, and among them can be seen the bright head dresses and rosy cheeks of many a thousand fair lovers of the leash—some of those sport-loving ladies having traveled hundreds of miles to cheer the prowess of a favorite hound, or sympathize with him in his defeat.

The hum of the voices, the yielding of the dogs, the shouting of the beaters and the betting men—all of these sounds seem to cease suddenly. The slip-steward has raised a white flag signaling to the beaters that a hare is coming. In another moment and everybody is watching in the direction of the slipper, for a hare comes bounding along at full speed. Seeing the crowd in front the timid little creature turns from it and rushes wildly past the slipper. Now a thousand hearts are beating with sup-

pressed excitement; the slipper has shown the brace of dogs the hare, and the graceful animals strain every nerve and muscle in their endeavor to escape from the leash and hunt their natural quarry. There is a sudden shout "They are off!" Yes, and off with a vengeance, too. The slipper has given the hare about 30 yards—or perhaps 40 yards, he pulls the string and like arrows from a bow the hounds seem to fly rather than gallop after the hare—so smooth and graceful are their movements. And now the frantic yelling of the betting men rises above the suppressed murmuring of the onlookers, and every eye is strained to watch the "run up," i. e., the straight run to the hare.

See! the fawn dog draws out; he is full two lengths ahead—his long tail straightened out like a pennant in the breeze. And now they are getting closer and closer to the game little "pussy" and the excitement of the onlookers grows more intense. The fawn seems to be about to make a dash and kill, when—presto!—the cunning little hare turns sharply to the left and the black dog takes the lead. Again the hare turns—still in favor of the black—and now the racing points are equalized. Suddenly the fawn makes a desperate spring. She has jumped across a drain, and the two dogs fly across it, landing upon the other side at the same instant, so great was the impetus of the fawn's rush. The hare turns again—slightly favoring the black. This dog is now one point ahead—but only by the accident of a favor. Suddenly there is an approving shout from the spectators; the fawn has made a desperate drive and overtaken and passes his opponent (this is called a "go by" and scores a point). It is a glorious course and a "bang up" hare. But that fawn dog is full of fire and speed and intelligence; he determines to end the battle at once and makes a terrific drive to kill. He only "flecks" (bites a tuft of hair); there is a short, painful scream from Miss Pussy, who turns almost at an acute angle to escape her hunters, but at that instant the black dog "runs into her" and effects the kill.

Each dog wears a silken collar of red or white—according to his position on the card. In this case the fawn wore the red, and the judge, who has galloped beside the dogs to watch every point of the course, now takes a red handkerchief from his pocket and waves it on the breeze—which denotes that the fawn dog has won. Some uninitiated reader will probably ask: "How can the fawn dog have won when the black dog killed the hare?"

It is because the former greyhound "ran up" more points, and therefore showed greater speed and skill. In the course we have just described the actual killing of the hare counts but one point. Oftentimes, after a long "grueling" course the points of both dogs are equal, and in this case the judge signals "no course" by taking off his cap. In this event the course is run again after the next couple on the card have finished their match. And so it goes on until the 32 trials are finished. Then the dog who won the first course is put on the leash with the winner of the second, the third winner against the fourth, and so on until only two dogs are left, when the "final" is run. This meeting occupies three days or, if the weather is exceptionally good, it is not an exaggeration to state that more money changes hands at Alstead than at the famous Derby or any other horse race meeting in England.

And now it will be interesting to learn something of the beautiful dogs that are used in this sport. They are, as a rule, rather delicate, but they are so well cared for by their owners and trainers that they are enabled to undergo a very great amount of hard running and fatigue. Racing greyhounds are fed once every day—about 3 p.m.—and mutton broth, toast, vegetables and similar foods are given them to the diet being varied from time to time according to the condition of the dog. For instance, when training for a meeting some trainers give their dogs port wine and sheephead stew with biscuits and vegetables; but each trainer has his own method, so that it would be impossible to enumerate all the menus here. The dogs are taken for a long walk every day—if possible along a hard road, in order to harden the pads of their toes, and are frequently allowed to "school" or romp in an inclosed field or lawn.

ROB F. WALSH.

THE TRICOLOR OF FRANCE.

How It Came to Be Adopted as the National Flag Long Ago.

Some seventy or eighty years before France was involved in the flames of the revolution—that is, at the epoch of the war of the succession, when she was in close alliance with Spain and Bavaria—it was thought desirable, says All the Year Round, to distinguish the allied soldiers by a cockade, which combined the colors of the three nations—the white of France, the red of Spain and the blue of Bavaria. To none of these incidents, however, would it be wise to attribute the origin of the historic tricolor and cockade adopted by revolutionary France. At the outset there seemed a likelihood that green—which Camille Desmoulins had popularized at the Palais Royal—would have become the national color; but men remembered in time that it was that of the livery of the Comte d'Artois, the most unpopular of the Bourbon princes, and it was thereupon discarded. A proposition was then made to assume the colors of the City of Paris—blue and red, as Dumas reminds us in his "Six Ans d'Après." To these were added the white of so many glorious memories, because it had been selected by the national guard, and was faithful to the throne and its traditions. Not until some months after the capture of the Bastille was the tricolor definitely adopted, when Bailly and Lafayette presented it to Louis XVI. in the great hall of the Hotel de Ville, and the convention issued a decree in which it was described as consisting of three colors—"disposées en trois bandes égales, de manière que le bleu soit attaché à la garde du pavillon, le blanc au milieu, et le rouge flottant dans les airs"—that is, in equal vertical sections, with the blue inward, the red outward and the white between. This is the historic flag which Napoleon's legions, in conjunction with their eagles, bore victoriously from the Seine to the Elbe, the Tagus, the Bordinio and the Danube; which they planted victoriously on the walls of almost every European capital.

Where Hot Stuff is Palatable.

The quantity of pepper, particularly red pepper, that is consumed by the natives of tropical countries will be deemed incredible to people who live in more temperate regions, but there is a physiological reason for the use of these sharp condiments. The use of red pepper in the tropics braces up the digestive organs when impaired and relaxed by the great heat. In other words pepper is nature's tonic against hot weather, and the more liberal use of it in warm-time might be beneficial even to the natives of the temperate zones.

SAVED BY A BIG GRAY RAT.

Professor Churchill's Thrilling Experience in a Caving Arizona Mine.

"You were asking about that stuffed rat in my room," said Professor Churchill, the mining expert, to a New York Sun man. "The story concerns an experience that made my hair curl. I was once retained to report upon the workings of a mine called the Little Whoop Up, in southern Arizona. On an adjoining claim was another mine called the Atlas. A dispute arose. The Atlas people claimed that the lower tunnel of the Whoop Up had been bored into the ground and a half million in ore taken out. The first thing to do was to make a survey of the Whoop Up, and of course the Whoop Up people objected. Finally an order for the survey was secured by the court and Dr. J. E. Parks and I were sent to make the survey. There are tricks in trades, and the Whoop Up superintendent knew a few. When we reached the mine he said that the tunnel we wished to explore was in a dangerous condition. There had been a cave, the timbers were rotten, and so on. It meant a 10 to one chance that we would be crushed if we tried it. Of course, we classed him as a liar, though he turned out to be right."

"We worked our way in the tunnel until we ran against a jam of fallen timbers which were sound and were plainly arranged to stop our progress. Parks went back for an ax, while I worked at the roof with a pick to dislodge the center pieces. I succeeded and had climbed half way over into the other side of the tunnel when there came a terrific crash of loose ore from the roof. It fell on both sides of the timbers, pinning me in a hole which would have been a grave right there but for a few sticks which held the mass of ore above. The place was barely large enough to move in, and I knew it was certain death in a few hours unless Parks could dig me out. Even then I believed I was gone, for I did not know how much ore had fallen. In a few minutes the air got heavy, and my eyes began to feel drowsy, and it seemed like the roof and sides of the hole were closing in on me. This oppression and drowsiness increased until I was forced to hammer the sides of the place with my fists and head to keep awake. Still not a sound could I hear from the outside, and only the slow crumbling of ore was heard. The fawn rat was getting into my brain, and I think I was actually insane with the fearful dread of being buried alive. Anyhow, I remember dropping to the floor of the hole, and giving a few faint shouts which echoed back into my ears. I had given up all hope, and was almost swooning when I heard a strange scraping sound above me. I yelled, and received no answer, and then I threw my body against the wall and tried to pick out the ore from between the lodging timbers. Still came the queer, scraping noise which seemed to come nearer and nearer and sounded not unlike the steady grinding of a saw. It seemed to last for hours, though it could hardly have been a minute after when a bit of earth dropped to my feet from the upper end of the wall, and along with it came a big gray mine rat, who saved my life, for he left a clear hole for his trail, and through it came a breath of fresh air that gave life to me. The fellow had bored his way from the shaft side of the cave. I stayed there two hours after that until Parks found the cave, got help, and got me out without breaking the air hole. I caught the gray rat, too, and kept it well fed until he died, and wouldn't take a lot of money for his skin now."

Wonderful Texas Mirages.

"You don't have to go to the Desert of Sahara in order to see mirages," said Lee Buchanan to the reporter at the Laclede. In Texas these phenomena can be everywhere seen in wonderful forms as are everywhere produced in any part of the world. In that portion of the State marked upon the maps of the olden time as a desert where no plant can grow or breathe thing can live, but which is now up into immense wheat or grazing fields, I have experienced the most life-like and natural optical delusions of which the entire prairie appears to be a delusion. The air is so rare that heat is perceptible, even from carrion. As a man rides along he sees before him beautiful groves of majestic trees, which, when reached, prove to be mesquite bushes three or four feet in height. Over the plain are what appear to be stakes six or eight feet high, which in reality are Spanish daggers about a foot in height. The entire plain being called "Staked Plain," from the fact produced by this plant. The best mirage cloud pictures are to be seen about Amarillo, where beautiful lakes appear to be, but a mile or two away, and strangers almost invariably ask if they contain fish. Views of the gulf are occasionally had, and once a steamer in distress was seen, and it is reported that a steamer had been lost at sea at that time.—St. Louis Globe.

He Measured 80 Inches.

In the resting place of the old kings of Denmark, the Cathedral of Roskilde, a recent visitor notes that there is a column against which a number of monarchs have been measured and upon which their different heights are recorded. One of them is Peter the Great, and we learn by this means that the shipwright czar measured no less than eighty Danish inches, equivalent to something like six feet ten inches in our measure. Only one other of the sovereigns was taller than Peter, Christian I., of Denmark, who, according to this authority, was just a trifle over seven feet English. The czar, Alexander III., is about six feet one inch and is about a couple of inches taller than Christian IX. of Denmark and about four inches taller than King George of Greece, neither of whom, nevertheless, is what would be called a short man. It is worth noting that in the same ancient cathedral where this column is to be seen Saxo Grammaticus, the Danish historian from whom Shakespeare borrowed practically the entire plot of "Hamlet," lies buried.

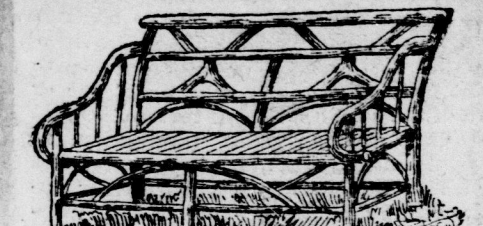
A Good Story of Browning.

Lord Coleridge's lecture on "Education and Instruction," delivered last June in the Salt Schools, Shipley, Yorkshire, is published in the Contemporary Review. Included in the article is Lord Coleridge's story of Browning: "He once rebuked me in a way which I relate for the comfort of those small, striving souls who watch his fights and try to follow his course in vain. He was so kind as to give me many of his volumes, and he knew I honestly read them. Soon after he had thus been given me he asked me how I liked it. I replied that what I could understand I heartily admired and that parts of it I thought ought to be imitated; but that as to much of it I really could not tell whether I admired it or not, as I could not understand it. 'Ah, well,' he said, 'if a reader of your caliber understands 10 per cent. of what I write I think he ought to be content.'"

PRETTY RUSTIC WORK.

Pleasant Employment for Winter Days and Evenings.

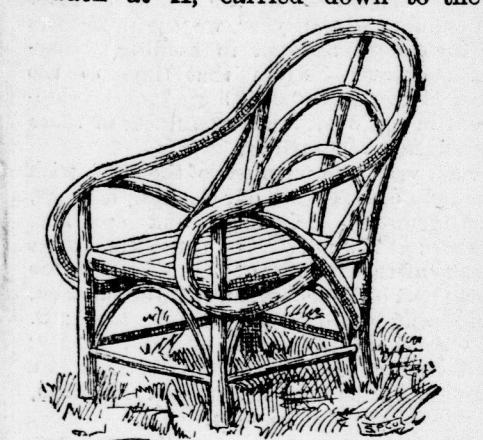
There is nothing more pleasing to the eye, or more acceptable than a rustic chair or settle, on porch or lawn; and



RUSTIC BENCH.

yet the purchase of these things is often so expensive to be possible for the average purse. Two home-made articles seen on a recent trip have led me to think how easy to make and substantial such things can be. The first, a long and broad settle with a high back, I came upon suddenly to my surprise and gratification, on the veranda of my friend, C. D. Tylee, at Ste. Therese, Can. It has a high and comfortable back and solid legs to which the seat and arms are mortised. A seat is made of round sticks shaved flat on the surface side, and the whole is well braced and graceful, as the cut shows. The arms are made from natural crooks found in the woods, the mountain laurel serving admirably. In reply to my enquiry I was told that the young son of my host had constructed it, and had become quite an adept at such work with a little practice.

The second is a chair, capacious, with a seat like that of the settle. It has stout legs supporting the back, and the arms are well braced by crooked sticks neatly mitered and nailed in place. It possesses the advantage of being quickly made, as there are but few pieces to it. A long, limber sapling, such as can be got by the thousand in any dense, second growth timber, can be fastened to the back at A, carried down to the



RUSTIC CHAIR.

forward leg below the seat and neatly pinned or screwed on, bent about over the forward leg to serve as an arm, carried back to the top of one rear post, fastened and bent around to the other, carried down to the forward post and fastened, bent still again and run back nearly parallel to a point on the rear post midway between the seat and top to correspond with the opposite side on which it started. If this chair is not to be left in the weather, grape vines serve a speedy and satisfactory purpose. In the manufacture of camp chairs the vines of the wild grape are without parallel for this purpose. This chair was made and is in use at the charming farm home of L. D. Smith, St. Albans, Vt.

From these few suggestions other articles of furniture may be easily made; they include plant boxes, urns, fences, gateways, swings, porches, summer houses and a score of other useful and at the same time ornamental things.—Hollister Sage, in Country Gentleman.

A Plum Grower's Experience.

Geneva, N. Y., is in about the same condition as to climate as Ontario, and S. D. Wilder's experience in plum growing contains valuable hints for our horticulturists. His attention was attracted to plum growing by visiting the Hudson River fruit section where they were raising the Reine Claude, packing the fruit in barrels and sending it to New York by the night boat, netting \$200 or \$300 per acre. He had a newly planted apple orchard and he went home and planted 300 plums between the rows. These began to produce the fourth year a net return of \$10 per tree. The tenth year the Baldwin apple trees produced a barrel each, bringing \$1.50 per barrel. He dug up the apples and replanted to plums. There was not as much difference in price then as now, and he would not advise the sacrifice of an apple orchard, or the exclusive growing of plums. The culture of apples was not keeping pace with the population, and not far in the future there would be a demand for more apples than there were trees to produce them. The Hudson river plum orchards were ruined by the black knot and this would destroy any orchard if the trees were not examined thoroughly twice a year, and the excrescences cut out. Spraying with Bordeaux mixture would prevent leaf blight, and careful following it up year after year would result in healthy foliage. He caught the curculio with a wheelbarrow supporting an inverted umbrella made of stiff ribs five or six feet long covered with cloth. The centre was over the forward side of the wheel and there was an opening on the front side large enough so the machine could be rolled up with the wheel touching the tree. When the machine was in place the limbs were jarred with an implement much like a lame man's crutch, the cross piece being covered with rubber. After jarring, the bugs were swept with a small broom to the centre of the receptacle, and transferred to a pail containing a little kerosene. Bugging was commenced as soon as any curculios could be found and kept up for two or three weeks.

As for varieties the Reine Claude de Bavay was the most productive and salable, but it was not fully hardy at Geneva. Next came Lombard, which was hardy, healthy and very productive, but ripened at the wrong time, coming into the market in competition with northern peaches. Field was another excellent market sort. After these came Bradshaw, French Damson, Gneil, Hudson River Egg, Coe's Golden Drop, Stanton, and Monarch. The Monarch was the best late plum, ripening the last of September. Those mentioned were all European varieties, or seedlings therefrom. The American or Canadense varieties were not desirable for cultivation in western New York. There was a third class of plums, however, that promised much. This was the Japanese. The Japan varieties have a very thick, heavy foliage that seems to be able to stand all kinds of fungoid diseases, and the trees are hardy to twenty degrees below zero.

THE TALE OF POVERTY.

YOU MAY NOT BELIEVE IT, BUT THE POOR ARE GENEROUS.

They Are Not as Unyielding as Mountains, Nor as Cruel as the Sea, When They Listen to a Tale of Woe Like or Worse Than Their Own.

Go often enough into any humble quarter of any city in the republic and you will see acts that will stir your admiration for the masses who are so completely unknown. You might suppose that in their narrow dingy abodes, ill-fed and ill-clad, ever fighting the hard fierce battle of life, they would be as savages. Why or how should they have minds to think of, souls to feel for, the woes of the unfortunate about them? They could not be blamed if they were unyielding as the mountains, as cruel as the sea. Are they? Let us look!

In this tenement, consisting of three little rooms, is a family of six—four small children. The parents are ill, caused by bad air and insufficient food, and may die. The neighbors have given of their slender store to buy a few comforts. Two women across the dirty hall have left their washing, and are taking care of the little folk. When that is done they will prepare the simple meal, will administer the medicine prescribed, will put the tenement to rights so far as it may be righted. In these plain offices they will occupy four or five hours, most precious to them in earning their daily stipend, and never think how good they are. Other women will then come in and watch by turns with the sick couple. So these invaluable kindnesses will continue until death or recovery makes their service for the time superfluous.

In a dark basement, through whose rattling windows the noonday light scarcely struggles, a baby has just been born. It lies weeping on a soiled, ragged quilt, as if to protest against entering so grim a corner of a relentless world. The mother, young and not uncomely, appears happy, even in that dismal cellar, smiling faintly at a wrinkled female, who, having volunteered for the occasion, has hobbled down from the top story to render, unsolicited and uncompensated, such assistance as she may. Other elderly females, hearing of the new birth, are brought thither by sympathy with the event, and are eager to proffer their assistance. The father, ordained like his order to repeated paternity, was called away at sunrise to his task—was cleaning the streets—and knows not what his fellow-scavengers, unconscious of sarcasm, term his good luck. He will be only less happy than his wife when he is told of what has occurred in his absence.

Happy! Can he be happy, born to indigence, ceaseless labor, and ever-frowning destiny? The majority of the prosperous would be in the depths of despair, would hardly care to live, were their lot his or hers. Surely happiness is relative. The very poor, invariably wretched as they must appear to the rich, have their compensations, after all. One of these is the will, without pondering or self-felicitation, to do good where good is most needed and fortune most malignant.

The poor, in order to be resigned to the world, must be optimists. May it not be that they who have least cause for contentment possess the largest share. May not the poor be too engrossed in austere deprivation to reflect on what constitutes contentment? Is not there formless faith generated by lack of leisure, by grinding, consuming toil? Can this be another disguised compensation?—Harpers Weekly.

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