

Those who remain to see the end remark hopefully that the huntsman "is not beat yet"—nor luckily is his horse, or that of his whip, and aided by a turn of speed and a knowledge of the line of the deer, they have got to the heads of the pack before they penetrated into the fastnesses of the neighbouring plantation. A blast on the horn, a rate and a crack of a whip, has stopped the pack, well-trained to do so. And so it is essential they should be, at whatever cost, in a country where this manœuvre must be so often repeated. But now the huntsman has his pack in hand, and it is for him to recover the line of his hunted buck, or else go home. He knows well how far they brought him, but all the ground forward of this point is foiled by fresh deer, and it will be no easy matter to keep clear of the lines which he knows to be wrong. Yet he has a strong opinion withal as to where his deer was making for, and very carefully and with judgment he holds his hounds forward on a wide swinging cast clear of foiled ground. See at the very end of his cast they hit a line, apparently a cold one, but those who know how the scent of a beaten deer fades away to nothing, become hopeful. The hounds too are very keen on the line, though they can hardly carry it on. At a soft place the master catches a glimpse of his slot, and is reassured to find that he is on the line of a single male deer at any rate. See, too, how the deer has followed every little watercourse and rill, however tortuous; none but a hunted deer would do this, and excitement becomes doubly keen after the late reverse, as the hounds' pace quickens and quickens, till the field is galloping again. Now they come down to the banks of a small stream, and carry the line down the water, to where the banks are covered with a dense growth of blackthorn. Suddenly all scent fails on the line, but every hound has flashed out, and on to the bank with his head and bristles up, "feeling for the wind." Look out! he is here! and ere the words are spoken the *hunted buck* bounds from the thicket and strides over the heath almost like a fresh deer. And indeed many, who see him think that he is a fresh found deer, but those who had a good view of him in the morning know well that their huntsman's skill and patience and his good pack of hounds have brought this excellent chase to a satisfactory finish, in spite of every difficulty. The buck runs gaily as long as he is in the open view of all, but as he gains the bushes his head droops, his tail drops flat, his stride contracts, and he shows that "tucked up" appearance which in all quadrupeds is the indication of extreme fatigue. The hounds are close on him, and he regains the stream only to plunge into the deepest pool, and with head erect, and noble mien, he "sets up" at bay. The first hound that dares to approach is instantly driven under water, and crawls yelping from the stream to dry land, but the pack is at hand. The fallow deer can offer no resistance like that of his noble red congener, and in another moment the scene is a confused mass of muddy water, a dun carcase, a pair of antlers, and struggling hounds. Into this chaos descends the active whipper-in, an open knife in one hand and a hunting whip in the other. One rate and the coast is clear—a flash in the sun—a wave of crimson rolling down the stream, and then two or three men are hauling the dead body of a magnificent deer up the bank surrounded by the pack, whose deep baying is answered by the long blast of the horn and the thrilling whoo-whoop of the huntsman.—*The Hon. Gerald Lascelles, in the Nineteenth Century.*