

Last out of the saddling enclosure, just as if it was done for luck's sake, comes the favourite, and as he walks down the course with his trainer by his side, nobody can help hoping that he will come off victor.

The Chief is a dark brown, about 15-3, with a head and eye betokening the best of tempers combined with the highest courage.

His sloping shoulders and deep girth look like both staying and going, and glancing behind the saddle, the jumping power cannot be doubted.

With his intelligent head stretched out, as he quietly champs his bit, he looks just the animal to put unlimited faith in, to carry bravely, either to the fore or to the charge.

His owner and trainer consider the race a certainty for him, and duty has been thoroughly done him, for the polish on his coat would be a credit to Danebury, and the muscle stands out all over him.

And Elmsdale, as with hands well down, he gallops past and over the hurdles, looks the right man in the right place.

They get off from the starting point at the first attempt, and Jex Molyneux, taking advantage of his light weight, goes to the front and makes the pace hot, with the remainder following in a cluster on his heels.

The first three fences are safely negotiated, but approaching the double post and rails, Slasher rushes at them and taking off too soon, comes down heavily. He rights himself quickly, but his chance—if he had one—is gone.

The rest get over safely, and Molyneux taking a pull at his mare, Middlemarch goes on with the lead, the others being well up.

All are now sailing splendidly down hill, and the excitement each moment grows more intense. The Chief, with Middlemarch by his side, clears the brook like a bird, closely followed by Coxcomb and Miss Dolly.

Spitfire goes over with a splash, but Will-o'-the-Wisp jumps right into the middle of the water.

The rest ascend the hill, the pace being still uncommonly good, and the lot keeping excellently well together.

Nearing the bank, Coxcomb races for the lead, and clears it at two lengths in front of the favourite, amid vociferous cheers from his owner and his brothers-in-arms. Middlemarch and Miss Dolly are with them, and both go strong and well.