

Jex Molyneux of Kingsbury Park and Master of the Delabere hunt, a foxy-looking little man, with red hair and red lids to his sharp eyes, is on the course betimes, and regards it with complacency as being the very thing to suit to a T the speedy Miss Dolly. Already, in imagination, Lord Elmsdale's money is snugly and pleasantly in his pocket.

Elmsdale, whose habit it is to be late for everything, only reaches in time to walk over the course with his especial clique, and on a hasty survey, they pronounce it moderately satisfactory on the whole, although heavier going would in all probability suit their book better.

The place they distrust most is some double posts and rails, which, to their keen judgment in such matters, bode evil to the horse that may chance to hit them hard.

Notwithstanding this, on returning to the ring, they back The Chief for all they can get on, making him favourite at 2 to 1 taken freely.

3 to 1 is booked to money about Miss Dolly and 5 to 1 on Coxcomb.

Of the others, Middlemarch alone is supported.

The saddling-bell rings, and the jockeys quickly divested of light cover-coats, are ready for the fray.

The first to canter past is Miss Dolly, and she certainly does not belie the lavish eulogiums of her owner, as with her easy, beautiful stride, she gallops past the stand with several voices in the excited crowd shouting—

'There's nothing like *blood* after all?'

Next comes Coxcomb.

Coxcomb is a superb little chesnut with a coat of gold, the best of shoulders, and fine weight-carrying quarters.

In fact he would be a perfect picture were it not for his twisted fetlock joints, which although they don't act against him, are terrible eyesores to real connoisseurs in horse-flesh.

He has been trained by a celebrated sporting son of Mars, and is ridden by Hanson, one of the best of jockeys.

Middlemarch is a good-looking hunter, but plough and more more fencing would suit him infinitely better, still there is very little doubt but that he is fit and well, and certain to stand up, for a finer fencer never went over Leicestershire.

His rider is Coleman. Slasher, Spitfire, and Will-o'-the-Wisp, beside others, follow in succession, but for what purpose they figure on the field is somewhat enigmatical, as unless all the others come to grief they can have no ghost of a chance.