

An English Country Gentleman of the Old School.

BY RICHARD GIBSON.

"Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey,
Where wealth accumulates, and men decay;
Princes and Lords may flourish, or may fade;
A breath can make them, as a breath has made;
But a bold yeomanry, their country's pride,
When once destroyed, can never be supplied."
—Goldsmith.

I am not going to give you a polemic against wealth, or the coxer thereof; but at this Christmas season a line upon a class now extinct, a class it has been my privilege, however, to have known. Why it is appropriate to write of them at this season is because it was at Christmas he (or they) more particularly shone. "Peace on earth, good-will toward men," was his motto, and never was he more happy than when making others feel the same. I sing of the

"Fine old English gentleman,
One of the olden time."

I knew him and loved him — no youngster could fail doing so who came within range of his hearty cheer or within ken of his honest, sonnie face. The one I have in view was at least 70 years old fifty years ago. His dress never varied, summer or winter, and was a black melton coat and waistcoat, drab kerseymer breeches, with gaiters, a broad-brimmed, low-crowned beaver hat, and when riding or attending market the gaiters were discarded for a pair of mahogany-topped boots. On state occasions a blue coat with brass buttons, a canary-colored waistcoat and breeches, silk stockings, with shoes and buckles, formed his outfit. I was a youngster spending Christmas with an uncle. The hounds were to meet at his (my hero's) house between Christmas and New Year's; he had a cover that never failed to hold a fox. And it was a popular meet. Of course every schoolboy home for the holidays that could get a mount did so. Never shall I forget his words, after saluting the master when the hounds arrived,—"Fine entry this, My Lord," referring to us youngsters—most of us out for the first time, and eager as any young hound. And if by chance one of us happened to be up at the death, and so was duly and truly entered by having been "blooded" (smeared over the face with the mask), he was a hero for the rest of the year to the other boys at school, and at night the run had often to be described, not forgetting the "View Holloa," "Tally Ho, gone away, gone away," finishing with the "Death Holloa," often bringing the masters to the room, expecting a murder was being committed. The songs appropriate to the occasion were those always sung by the men when they gathered on festive occasions, and "as the old bird crows the young ones learn." So

"A southerly wind and a cloudy sky
Proclaims a hunting morn,
Always led. Then would follow,
"Do you ken John Peel," which was as surely echoed.

To say that this "English Gentleman" was worshipped by the boys would be to state the question very mildly—their ambition was to be like unto him. I remember once while on a visit to Mr. E. Bowly Cirencester (a perfect specimen of the host), now gone aloft, we were walking past the cover, and noticed some cubs scurrying in and out of the hedge. Meeting the gamekeeper,—"James, I told you to feed those foxes?" "Please, sir, I've killed all the hens and ducks."

"Indeed, then, you must buy more at once." Such was the sentiment. As a writer in a letter to the "Spectator" puts it: "I would only advise you, Mr. Spectator, to take care how you meddle with country squires. They are the ornaments of the English nation, men of good heads and sound bodies, and, let me tell you, some of them take it ill of you that you mention fox-hunters with so little respect." But I must get on to the Christmas ceremonies, and leave the youngsters dreaming and talking of Tarquin and Furrier, of Will Coolah and Tom Sebright. Christmas for youngsters in England is a perfect Elysium. Not that they go wild, but there is a relaxation of the proprieties, or etiquette, if you please. Good-will towards all is the sentiment.

Christmas Day itself is observed as a holy day. While good cheer prevails, it never loses its religious tone. The good things are consumed with thankfulness and with a hearty good-will towards all. But it is especially observed as a season wherein all related should meet and participate around the home altar. If there is a son or daughter within reach it is the season of festive gathering, and never missed unless something very much unforeseen occurs. The old English gentleman of whom I commenced writing observed this season with great enthusiasm, for not only was his own family to be reunited, but as many others as he could induce would be there. And no more cheery welcome

judge of him only as a blood-thirsty fox-hunter, or as a convivial *bonhomie* sort of a being. Not so. He was the confidant and adviser of the neighborhood. His opinion was sought, and lawsuits were almost unknown. His home life was so methodical that only the clock could be said to be more regular. When occasion rendered necessary he could leave his home duties for a run up to London during the session, and such an event as the Christmas stock market or Smithfield Club Show was never omitted. Allow me here to digress to say that the year after I met my yeoman at the cover side, I accompanied my father to the Smithfield Christmas market. He usually sent up about

30 head of extra prime steers, I mention this to get in a little sketch of Old London. We stopped at the Saracen's Head, Snow Hill. I was eleven years old; had just read Dickens' Nicholas Nickleby. I could fancy I could see Wackford Squeers in the coffee room. And of course boys of that age and date took what they read in print as perfectly true (some of them have learned better since). I felt scared at night that I was bound for Dotheboys Hall when the porter woke us up at 3 a. m. This was on a Monday morning. On the Sunday the salesman (there were even cattle commission men in those days) looked them over, put his mark (Scissors) upon and paired them up. "Would you believe that I had seen cattle tied up by the head in pairs to be sold in London's only market! Such is a fact, and the business was all over by 8 a. m. Newgate was just opposite the Saracen's Head, and at every hour when St. Sepulchre's bell struck the time I was dreaming about Cranmer, and Latimer, and Ridley, besides Col. Blood, et al.—who all quietly departed this life in the Smithfield, which was now being used for the more enlightened purposes of displaying food for the million. I guess some joker may make a play upon the word enlightened, but let her go. Cranmer did say, as I read, "He would light such a torch as would never be put out in England." The year to which I refer was Christmas, 1550. And I also had the opportunity of seeing the original Crystal Palace, which was erected mainly through the efforts of the late Prince Consort, in Hyde Park. There are three things in my varied experience that I shall never regret seeing, viz., the original Crystal Palace, Old Smithfield, and Dickens' Saracen's Head. 'Twas here I again met my old friend; he had some steers for sale, same as my father. This letter is getting too long. I would like to give a better home view of one of England's most staunch and lovable characters. When I say one, this is but a sketch of one whose prototype could be found in most every parish.

He was a Tory by birth and instinct. He had the highest opinion of the value of land and land owners. A merchant, a manufacturer or a shopkeeper might be tolerated, but not associated with. Church and State was a strong platform, and a dissenter was a rebel against the Constitution, and ought to be treated as such. He believed every word in the Bible as he read it. No geologist in his day had had the temerity to suggest that the seven days in which this world was made was not to be literally construed. No Voltaire or Tom Paine caused him to doubt for one moment everything he read. Colonel Ingersoll

had not mystified the multitude with such a crafty combination of words as would make an archbishop almost waver. He utterly refused to meet socially a Whig, and a poacher ought to be banished to some foreign country where lions and tigers abound, so as to give him a chance to follow his particular bent. If there was any one thing or being that he utterly abhorred, it was a something that would shoot a fox (no sane man would think of doing so), and ought to be consigned to the nethermost pit at once. As a friend, none could be closer, but one had to show his worthiness before he enjoyed that privilege. Outspoken to one and all, the poor were equally in his thoughts as those who were rich. He craved nothing from the latter, but to assist the former he considered his duty. He was



The Earl of Minto,

OUR NEW GOVERNOR-GENERAL.

The above is a very good portrait of Sir Gilbert John Elliot Murray Kynnmound, Earl of Minto, the new Governor-General of Canada, who a few days ago took up his residence at Rideau Hall, Ottawa, and who has been warmly welcomed back to the Dominion. Many readers of the FARMER'S ADVOCATE will no doubt remember him as Viscount Melgund, who was Military Secretary to Lord Lansdowne when that nobleman was Governor-General (from 1883 to 1886). During that time the rebellion of half-breeds and Indians broke out in the Northwest Territories, and in restoring law and order the present representative of Her Majesty did signal service for the country in the field. Indeed, it is in the military field that our new Governor-General is best known. He was formerly of the famous Scotch Guards, and in 1879, during the Russo-Turkish war, he was attached to the Turkish army. In 1882 he served in Egypt, and, as we have said, he went to the front in 1885 to aid in putting down the rebellion in the Canadian Northwest. Though no longer in active service, he still takes a delight in promoting the national defence, and is commander of the Scottish Borderers, Volunteer Infantry Brigade. Lord Minto is a most successful sheep-breeder, his flock of Border Leicester-Cheviots (crossed) being justly celebrated. He has carried off many prizes in shows all over Great Britain. His Excellency is also a breeder of horses, both Thoroughbreds and Heavy Drafts, but not on an extensive scale. He takes a great interest in agricultural affairs, and is regarded, as was his father before him, as a model landlord. The family estates embrace 16,000 acres, chiefly of good arable land, in Roxburghshire, where the principal seat of the Minto family has always been, and in the County of Forfar. Lord Minto has a high opinion of Canada as an agricultural and stock-raising country. Though a dozen years had elapsed since he resided in the Dominion, he did not forget what he had seen and heard here when he came to make preparations for assuming the position of representative of Her Majesty in Canada. He at once sold off his fine carriage horses, relying upon his knowledge of Canadian stock to replace the animals when he came to this country. That he has been well suited, the last issue of the FARMER'S ADVOCATE, in chronicling the purchase for His Excellency of the handsome first-prize team owned by Mr. R. Beith, M. P. for West Durham, proved. Lord Minto was very happily married to Hon. Mary Caroline, daughter of Sir Charles Grey, fifteen years ago. They have an interesting little family, the eldest of whom, Lady Eileen Nina Evelyn Sibell, was born in Ottawa, on 13th December, 1884.

could be had than his "Merry Christmas" in notes not forced, but the words seemed to well forth from a heart and lips that even did not half express the feelings of the speaker. Christmas Eve was the time of the great festivities. After the shades of night asserted their prerogative over the ruler of the day, the yule log was hauled in, and the ample fireplace made to glow, such as our Canadian readers, of all others, can appreciate. The older folks opened up the festivities by dancing the minuet or quadrille, and then retired to the "other part" after partaking in a round of turn-trencher or blind-man's-buff, there to play cards, leaving the younger ones a freer license, wherein the mistletoe was a main factor. This has only shown one side of the yeoman, and my readers up to now will