

THE FATHER OF THE TURF.

An Interesting Chapter on the Early Days of Racing.

It is the usual practice of historians to go back into far antiquity and trace the beginnings of things. Were we disposed to follow this example, we should not go far to find as remote as those of Athelstan in search of the origin of horse-racing in England, for Joseph Strutt, no mean authority, informs us in his *Sports and Pastimes* that the foundation of the Turf was laid by the first great man who figured on the turf. We prefer, however, plunging in *medias res*, and without troubling ourselves to ascertain when and how the taste of the English for horse-racing originated, shall be content with stating when it first took definite shape. The Turf, as we understand the term, can hardly be said to have been established before the commencement of the last century, when the famous Adolphus Arabian, so-called from the nobleman who introduced him into England, appeared upon the scene, and became the founder of Britain's best blood in horse-flesh. Little is known of the life of Arabian beyond the facts that he measured fourteen and a-half hands, that he was originally given by a Mr. Coke to the proprietor of the St. James Coffee House, and that he died honorably at the age of 25, in the Cog Magge Hills, in 1753. It is possible that he was preceded by another famous sultan of the stud, the Hierarchy Turk, whose advent has been placed at 1669; but this is doubtful. Our merry monarch, Charles II., undoubtedly had more for horse-racing, and indulged in it to some extent at Newmarket; but the animals which ran then were wholly different from the thoroughbreds of the eighteenth century. The reign of Charles, however, is noteworthy for having produced the man to whom memorial tradition has assigned the proud title of "Father of the Turf." The gentleman alluded to is the Duke of Devonshire, Tregonwell Frampton, Esquire, of Moreton, Dorsetshire, who was born 1642, and appears to have filled the post of Keeper of the King's Running-Horses, to William III., Anne and George I., and possibly Charles II., and James II. In an age of amateurs Frampton was essentially a professional, and matched his horses, cocks, and greyhounds, against those of his contemporaries with a professional astuteness and skill which rendered him almost invincible. There are two portraits of Tregonwell Frampton extant; and it must be confessed that his face is not a prepossessing one. I has the mean, crafty look of a miser, and one can well believe the tales told of both his avarice and his cruelty. There is one horrible story narrated of him, which, if it could be proved, would stamp him as one of the most hideous misanthropes of the age. It related that he had a famous horse, named Dragon, who had won his master a fortune in stakes and bets, and this noble animal, so runs the tale, met with a cruel and diabolical death. He had defeated a mare of extraordinary speed in a match for 10,000 guineas, and the owner of the mare, chagrined though he was at losing the race, nevertheless, immediately after it, backed her to run any gallop in the world for double the sum he had just lost. Frampton took the bet and said that he would on the morrow produce a gelding that should beat her. That very night Dragon was, with shocking inhumanity, qualified to run as a gelding, and the next day the race came off. Again Dragon was victorious; but, when he reached the winning-post, he fell down and died. It is only fair to Frampton to say that this ghastly act rests on very slender authority. Public attention was first directed to it by Dr. Hawkesworth, in the *Adventure*, a periodical of the *Spectator* type, and no

other evidence has ever been adduced in support of it. Veterinary surgeons, however, agree that it would be possible for a horse so mutilated to retain his full speed, and from what we know of Frampton's character, we can almost believe him capable of any crime that would not hurt his pocket. When the Turf first, in strict justice, a charge so feebly supported by evidence, should not be entertained, least of all against a man who associated with all the best sportsmen of the day. What sporting society was like, and what scenes Newmarket witnessed in Tregonwell Frampton's time, we shall proceed to describe. James II. does not appear to have patronized the sport; but his successor, at least occasionally, lent his countenance, though probably he took little interest in it. "On the 17th of October," writes Maanally, "William went to Newmarket—now a place of business rather than pleasure, but in the autumn of that age the gayest and most luxurious spot on the island. It was not unusual for the whole Court and Cabinet to go down to the meetings. Jewellers and milliners, players and fidlers, vendors of wine and ale, followed in crowds. The streets were made impassable by coaches-and-six. In the places of public resort peers flitted with maids of honor, and officers of the Guards, all phurges and gobs, costed professors in trencheraps and black gowns. For on such occasions the neighboring University of Cambridge always sent her highest functionaries with loyal addresses, most sedately her ablest theologians to preach before the sovereign and his splendid retinue." Such was the Newmarket of the middle of the reign of William III. What it was in the reign of Anne we can gather from the following description of the doings there, given by a gentleman who visited the place at that time. He writes: "Being there in October, I took the opportunity to see the horse-races, and a great concourse of people assembled from London as from all parts of the country, but they were all so intent, so eager upon the sharpening part of the sport, their wagers, their bets, that to me they seemed just so many idle spectators, as the idle spectators of the greatest of them, from their high dignity and quality, to the picking one another's pockets and biting one another as much as possible, and that with so much eagerness, as it might be said they acted without respect to faith, honor, or good manners. There was Mr. Frampton the oldest, and, as they say, the cunningest jockey in England. One day he lost 1,000 guineas, the next he won 2,000, and so alternately. He made as light of throwing away £500 or £1,000 at a time as other men do of their pocket-money, and was perfectly calm, cheerful, and unconcerned when he had lost £1,000 or more. He was the prize rider, and there was Sir F. Wragge, of Sussex, of whom fame says, he has the most in him and the least to show for it, relating to jockeyship, of any man there; yet he was not so much the prize rider, as they say, were all cheats, how honest so ever their master was, for he scarcely ever produced a horse but he looked like what he was not, and was what nobody could expect. He was so much in the light as he was sure and could fly like a meteor, and he was used to look as clumsy and as dirty as as much like a cart horse as all the cunning of his master and the grooms could make him; and just in this manner he hit some of the great gamesters in the field. I was so sick of the jockeying part that I left the crowd about the posts and pleased myself with observing the horses." Here I fancied myself in the Roman Maximilian, and seeing the ancient games, and under this deception, was more pleased than I possibly could have been among the crowds of gentlemen at the weighing and start-

ing posts, or at the meetings at the coffee houses and gaming tables after the races were over. Pray take it with you as you go, that you see no ladies at Newmarket, except a few of the neighboring gentlemen's families, who come in their carriages to see the races, and then go home again." On the whole, then, we may conclude that the Turf in its infancy was extraordinarily precocious in wickedness, and that even the gentlemen who now-a-days scratch their horses an hour before a race is run, had their counterparts nearly two centuries ago in persons of the Tregonwell Frampton stamp. Yet, clever as this reputed Father of the Turf was, he sometimes met with those who were more than a match for him, as the following anecdote will show. The celebrated horse, Merlin, was matched to run at Newmarket against a favorite animal of Frampton's, Merlin, being a northern country horse, was back by the Yorkshire sportsmen to a large amount, and was sent to Newmarket to be trained, under the care of one Heselstine, a jockey. Frampton's groom accidentally meeting Heselstine, proceeded to run the horse privately at the weights and distance stated in the match, so that, by accertaining which could win, they might have an opportunity of enriching themselves at their particular expense. Heselstine refused, but in a manner which gave the other hopes he might yet be induced to accede to the proposal. Heselstine then immediately communicated the affair to Sir William Strickland, a Yorkshire baronet, who was principally interested in Merlin's match. Sir William returned for answer that Heselstine might agree to the proposal, and directed him to carry 7lbs. more, but without touching Frampton's jockey of the course. Soon after the receipt of these instructions, Frampton's jockey met Heselstine and renewed the proposal, using the most persuasive arguments to induce Heselstine to accede to the purpose. Heselstine in the end consented, but with seeming reluctance. Now, Frampton had given similar orders to his groom to carry 7lbs. extra weight. The result was, however, precisely the same, and the distance for which they were matched, each jockey believing that he had defeated the other in the matter of weight. After a very close race Merlin won by about a length. The jockeys respectively communicated the result of the trial to their employers, who were both equally confident of winning. The result was that each backed his horse heavily. Sir William Strickland's friends, who were in the box, arguing that as Merlin had beaten his antagonist with an extra 7lbs. on his back, he must win easily at even weights, whilst Frampton calculated that as his horse had run the other so close, under such a disadvantage, he must win at an even level post. It was said that so much money had never before been known to depend upon a single match. At length the eventful hour arrived. The horses started—Merlin was a gallant and exciting race, and Merlin won, as in a secret trial, by exactly a length. Hundreds who put their faith in Frampton's astuteness and, following his lead, betted their all upon his horse, were ruined, and the result himself received a staggering loss from which he was some time in recovering. Not very long afterwards "that plant was blown upon," to use the slang of the modern race-course, and the greatest indignation was expressed against Frampton—though why he should have been considered more guilty than Sir William Strickland we are at a loss to understand. It was a case of diamond cut diamond, that was all, and the canny York merchant got the best of it. But the curious part of the affair was that, in consequence of the heavy losses incurred by the backers of Frampton's horse, "the Legislature in order to put a stop to such

ruinous proceedings, enacted a law to prevent the recovery of any sum exceeding ten pounds betted upon a horse-race. This was the forerunner of the Gaming Act, which prohibits the recovery by law of any wager. For that sound and wise reason, however, that we have to thank Tregonwell Frampton, who, against his will, thus became a public benefactor. As *we* do not know that sportsmen have any reason to be grateful to legislation that we have to thank Tregonwell Frampton, we have ever did anything to merit that venerable title. He was rather the progenitor of that objectionable set of men called by our principal writers "Legs," whom an old turf writer describes as "the most odious, unprincipled and abandoned set of thieves and hangers, who ever disgraced civilized society." At the same time, it is impossible to deny that Tregonwell Frampton typified in his own person the most conspicuous features of the turf in our day—the lowest and least reputable characteristics of a noble sport, and in as far as he did it he may be held to deserve the epithet which is generally assigned to him. He died in the year 1728, at the patriarchal age of 86, and lies buried at Newmarket, where the curious in such matters may still read of the noble and illustrious Merlin, the All Saints's epitaph, which, with its usual unblushing effrontery of monumental eulogium, elaborately sets forth his many virtues.

FAMILY FOUNDATIONS.

The Effect of Thoroughbred Blood on the Trotter.

There is a growing tendency among breeders of the country to experiment more and more with the blood of the thoroughbred in the breeding of trotting horses, and very few have any idea but that the introduction of such blood during and immediately after the war "Distance lends enchantment to the view," so time as it lapses would lead to think lightly of those earlier attempts. It is a matter of history that Alexander Pilot, Jr., was quite successful on running bred mares, and that his fastest son by the records was out of a strictly thoroughbred dam. Yet with all the advantages that lay in the stud, and the opportunities of his descendants at Farningham Farm, there is to-day no question what the mantle of Pilot's Jr.'s greatness falls—Bayard, out of Bay York, by Adam American; Bayard with the willow of the family, with one eye put out by the darky helpers at Woodburn, often in the earlier years of the seventies at the low price of \$175, was purchased in 1857 from the then manager at Woodburn by the late Mr. J. B. Gentry, of New Hampshire, where he was not permitted to remain, but by the advice of his manager, the late Mr. J. B. Gentry, was sent to Maine for public sale. This horse was retained by the premier of the small but choice collection of matrons at Langdon Stud Farm. During his sojourn in Maine, from Mrs. Mary Brown Barry, son of Thurston Blackhawk, Bayard sired the best of the sires Dixie, 2:22, and the best of the best against him, and he is sent to Springfield, O., where in the hands of an incapable, by reason of his financial shortness, he had no opportunity of showing his greatness against the best sought for and obtained the control of Bayard and a contingent of the best mares from Langdon Stud Farm, at the stand of Paper Mill Village, N.H. It is well known that the Fillet's pedigree is not and has been disputed; there are some to be little doubt that Mrs. Pope and Nancy Taylor were either saddle-gaited or pacers. Bay York by American and out of a mare claimed

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