

TURF CELEBRITIES.

MR. JOHN ELWES.

"For the sake of collecting what he will never use," says Bishop Horne, "and of adding to his beloved heap, the miser will forego the comforts, the conveniences and almost the necessities of existence, and voluntarily submit all his days to the penances and austerities of a mendicant." Few men have ever lived to whom the above words were more applicable than to the miser Elwes, and yet there were ingredients in his character which go to prove that had it not been for his ineradicable love of hoarding he was actuated by sentiments of such honor and delicacy, and had such engaging and distinguished manners, that he might have lived respected, and gone to his grave followed by the sincere lamentations of all who knew him.

John Meggot, the son of a wealthy brewer in Southwark, was born in the parish of St. James, Westminster, about the year 1712. His father died when the subject of this memoir was but four years old, and it may be presumed that his extraordinary penuriousness was inherited from the mother, to whom her husband bequeathed £100,000—equal, in those days, to about thrice the amount at present—despite which she literally starved herself to death rather than spend a few pence per diem to keep life in her. At the age of nine John Meggot was sent to Westminster school, where he remained for ten years and became what was then called a good classical scholar. That he had any natural love for learning of any kind can hardly be pretended, inasmuch as he was never known to touch a book after he left Geneva, where, after leaving Westminster school, he took up his quarters "to complete his education."

When John Meggot came back from Geneva to England, in or about 1735, he had a wealthy old uncle, Sir Harvey Elwes by name, whose home at Stoke, in Suffolk, was "the most perfect picture of penury that ever existed." The old gentleman had never married. "How," he naively asked a male friend who proposed matrimony to him, "could I support a family?" and when he succeeded to the paternal estate at Stoke he found that with a nominal income of several thousands a year he had not as many hundreds to spend. He instantly vowed that he would clear Stoke of debt before he died, and this he lived to accomplish, realizing also more than £100,000, which he left behind him. Sir Harvey Elwes had in him all the elements for making a consummate miser. In his youth he had been gravely threatened with atrophy, so that he had no constitution and no passions. He was shy and timid, of a thin spare habit of body, and without a friend in the world. Having no acquaintances, no books and no capacity for study of any kind, Sir Harvey gave himself up entirely to hoarding and counting his money. He and his nephew might have sat to Quentin Matsys for his almost incomparable picture of "The Two Misers."

not long got back to England when he was summoned to Stoke. Mr. Meggot was rich long before his uncle died, and his passion for play, backed up by singularly refined manners, and by a temper which nothing could ruff, and no imprudence could evaporate, soon procured him admission as a member to Arthur's, then one of the most fashionable clubs in London. In 1759 Horace Walpole relates that a waiter at Arthur's was convicted of an attempt to rob one of his comrades and sent to jail. "What a horrid idea," exclaimed George Selwyn, "will he give of us to the people of Newgate!" Admitted to the best society of the West End, Mr. Meggot found it necessary to wear fashionable clothes, but when his uncle bade him come down to Stoke, the wily youth knew that gay attire would not suit the old man's tastes. When, therefore, he got down to Chelmsford he changed his dress so as to suit the fashions of the singular country house to which he was about to pay a visit. He made his appearance at Stoke in a pair of unblackedened shoes with rusty iron buckles, with darned worsted stockings, in a tattered waistcoat and worn-out coat. Sir Harvey surveyed his contemplated heir with undisguised delight. They sat down before the fire with nothing but its light to illumine them, with a cold partridge and some rye bread on the table, and a single glass of thin wine, which they sipped alternately from the same glass. Occasionally the nephew, whose appetite was always keen, found that his pangs of hunger were unendurable. He had recourse, therefore, to the device adopted by Sir Walter Scott when, on a visit to Wadsworth at Rydal Mount, he could not get enough to eat, and repaired to a neighboring pothouse, or sometimes to the house of a neighbor who lived hard by, in order to lay in a stock of what Dugald Dalgetty would have called "provent."

When Mr. John Meggot had turned his fortieth year Sir Harvey Elwes died at a great age, and left his nephew an estate worth six or seven thousand a year, and more than £100,000 in ready money. The fortunate legatee had already some £250,000 of his own, and upon assuming the name of Elwes he became more than ever a mark for the high-bred Greeks and sharpers of the West end to aim at, since his passion for play was well known. Stories were rife that he had played for two days and a night without stopping and that, when once he began to lose, his avarice would keep him at the whist or hazard table so long as he could find antagonists to stake their money and cut the cards. In one respect, however, Mr. Elwes showed a delicacy which is exceptionally rare with professional gamblers, his theory being that it was impossible to ask a gentleman for money if he owed it to you. The forbearance which he displayed to others, and which they grossly abused, was not extended to himself, nor, indeed, was he ever likely to solicit it. His invariable practice was to discharge his liabilities which were often very large, by a draft at sight upon Messrs. Hoare, while many debts due to himself were never paid. After playing all night for thousands, in the company of the most fashionable and profligate men about town, Mr. Elwes would walk along the Essex road, at the dawn of the morning, to meet his cattle as they were driven up to Smithfield market from Theydon Hall, a large farm with a dilapidated house upon it, which he owned upon the edge of Epping forest. Then might be seen the remarkable spectacle of a man who, two or three hours before had been setting the caster or calling a main for immense sums, and who now thought nothing of standing in the rain or sleet and of wrangling with a carcass-butcher for a shilling. Sometimes he would walk in the mud to meet the beasts if they had not arrived, and he was frequently known to go the whole way to his farm—seventeen miles—on foot after sitting up the previous night.

Before the death of Sir Harvey Elwes, his nephew's favorite home was at Marcham, in Berkshire—a country seat at which Oxford undergraduates have long been in the habit of dining with members of the Duffield family, its present possessors. Racing men of the last generation will remember the late Mr. Elwes Duffield, who was for a short time conspicuous upon the turf as a gentleman rider, and in whom his misanthropic love of money survived, without the prudence. But when John Elwes succeeded to his uncle's manor-house at Stoke it became impossible to say whether the home he left behind him in Berkshire, or that which had acquired in Suffolk, was in the more ruinous condition. Col. Timms, the son of Mr. Elwes' sister, used to relate that he once visited his uncle at Marcham, and went to bed in a room of which the roof was not water-tight. Before he had been long in bed, he awoke to the consciousness that the rain had almost wetted his bedclothes through. He rose and moved his bed, but found shortly that he was as much exposed as before. At length, after making the tour of the room, he retired into a corner where the ceiling was better secured, and there he slept till morning. At breakfast he told his uncle what had happened. "Aye, aye," said the old man, "I don't mind it myself, but to those who do, that's a nice corner in the rain."

Upon removing to Suffolk, Mr. Elwes, who was a fearless and accomplished horseman, took to keeping hounds, and his stable of hunters, by selling which he made no inconsiderable sum of money, was reckoned the best in the kingdom. At this time he was a regular frequenter of Newmarket, and it was upon the occasion of his visits to the Heath that an incident occurred, some memory of which still lingers among the unwritten traditions of the turf metropolitans. Marcham park, the home of Mr. Elwes, and Witham park, the seat of the Earl of Abingdon, lie in close juxtaposition to each other in the county of Berkshire, and some slight acquaintance subsisted between the two owners of the two properties. Lord Abingdon was a comparatively poor man, and had the reputation of being very unsuccessful in his turf ventures. He had made a match for 1,000 guineas a side over the Betch course with Lord Grosvenor, who was a notoriously good match-maker. Lord Abingdon had engaged his chestnut colt, Cardinal York, by Mirabeau, to run against Lord Grosvenor's brown filly by Dux, out of Curiosity. In addition to the sum of 1,000 guineas, for which the match was originally made, Lord Grosvenor had betted his antagonist 5,000 to 3,000 upon the Dux filly against Cardinal York many months before the 5th day of April, 1779, when the event was to be decided. As the day approached the running of the two animals had changed the odds from 2 to 1 on the Dux filly to 7 to 2, freshly offered upon Cardinal York; but Lord Abingdon was known to be short of money, and his eminently successful opponent insisted upon having the stakes made good upon both sides declaring that otherwise he should regard the match as off. At this juncture Mr. Elwes heard of Lord Abingdon's embarrassment, and, unsolicited, ran up to him on the Heath, and thrust a check for 4,000 guineas into his hand. The match came off, and Cardinal York came in an easy winner. To witress it Mr. Elwes rode from Newmarket to Stoke, accompanied by a sporting person who was staying in the house. They started before breakfast, and arrived at the famous little town about eleven. Mr. Elwes was occupied in asking questions, and in conversing with his friends until soon came, when they all rode up to the Heath and the match was decided in Lord Abingdon's favor. The keen air had so sharpened the clergyman's apper-

ception that when 4 o'clock came he rode up to his elderly companion and told him that he could hold out no longer without something to eat. "Why cannot you do as I do?" rejoined the miser, as he pulled a crushed and flattened bit of pancake out of his greatcoat pocket, which he added that he had brought from his house at Marcham two months before, but that it was as good as new. The famished parson munched a few mouthfuls of the unsavory relic to keep off his hunger, which he had no chance of satisfying till he got back to Stoke, about nine in the evening, when he was too tired to eat anything. The story, however, is characteristic of miser Elwes' peculiarities in riding 4,000 guineas in the morning and in comforting himself at night by reflecting that he had saved four shillings in the course of the day.

Newmarket still contains a few old inhabitants who can point out the spot where John Elwes avoided the ditch at night on horseback in order to avoid paying the toll exacted at the turn pike which stood formerly on the road at the end of the Bunbury Mile, where the July and Chest-nut stakes are run. A good horseman, accustomed to follow hounds across country with a dog, if he cares to make the experiment that it is not an easy feat even in daylight. The only instance in which miser Elwes was ever known to sacrifice money to pleasure was during the fourteen years he kept the Suffolk hounds, but even then he made money by selling horses at advanced prices, and managed his kennel and the whole establishment with wonderful frugality. His huntman rose at 4 in the morning, and, after milking the cows, prepared breakfast for his master, and for any friends he chanced to have with him. Then, slipping on a green coat he hurried into the stable, saddled the horses, got the hounds out of the kennel, and away the whole party went into the field. When the day's hunting was over this much-enduring man rubbed the horses down, made their girth, and then ran into the house, where he laid the cloth and waited at dinner. The evening wound up by his feeding the horses, milking the cows, giving the hounds their broth and littering eight horses down for the night. In the summer the hounds went into quarters at the houses of different tenants upon the miser's farms, and in this way the whole fox-hunting establishment of Mr. Elwes did not cost more than £300 a year. Laugh at his petty economies and sneer at his avarice as we may, it cannot be denied that the owner of Stoke, Marcham and Theydon Hall was an unusually clever man. In one instance he proved himself ahead of the best surgeons and physicians, when his eldest son told him that, having hurt his side, he had just been blooded—the invariable practice of the Dr. Sangrado of that day. "Pshaw!" said the practical father, "then you are a bloodhead; never part with your blood, if you can help it upon any consideration."

It, however, the country habits of Mr. Elwes were abnormally singular, what is to be said about his life in town? Among the property bequeathed to him by his father were included several houses in the Haymarket, and thus his attention was drawn to the profits arising from building speculations. Perceiving now rapidly the town was spreading, Mr. Elwes bought many fields lying to the north of Oxford street and upon them he built what is now Portman square, and many of the adjacent streets. The Marylebone property of Mr. Elwes passed, after his death into possession of the Portman family, by which it is now held, and but for the fatal American war, which brought England down upon her knees in the mud, the brick and mortar speculations of the shrewd veterinarian would have been much more widely extended. Nothing would ever induce him to pay shilling for insurance against fire, and once, when a public house belonging to him was burnt down, he consoled himself by remembering that the tenant rarely paid any rent, and that perhaps it would have been difficult to get rid of him any other way. It was the custom of miser Elwes, whenever he came to town, to occupy any of his many houses which he chanced to find vacant. A couple of beds, the same number of chairs, a table, and an old chairwoman, comprised all his furniture, and he moved them about at a moment's warning. Sometimes the singular pair were installed in a small house in the Haymarket, and sometimes in a vast and gloomy mansion in Portland place. The genius of Moliere or of Walter Scott would have been puzzled to do justice to the closing scenes of this strange and self-torturing life. Mr. Elwes had come to town, and as usual, had taken up his abode in an empty house. His nephew, Col. Timms, wished to see him, and pursued him, without success, into his accustomed haunts. After many days he learnt by accident that Mr. Elwes had been seen to enter an uninhabited house in Great Marlborough street, and the colonel immediately made for the spot.

After many fruitless inquiries a potboy told him he had seen a shabby old man enter a stable and lock the door after him. The colonel knocked in vain, and at last had the door forced open. The lower part of the house was silent and deserted, but as the searchers ascended the staircase he heard the moans of distress. He entered a chamber, and there was Mr. Elwes stretched upon a pallet bed and apparently in the agonies of death. Restoratives were administered and upon regaining his speech the old man said that for some reason or other, his servant, an old woman, had not been near him, and that she herself had been ill. Further search was made, and the poor old maid-of-all-work was found lifeless upon a rug in one of the garrets. She had been dead for two days, and but for the opportune arrival of his nephew miser Elwes would soon have followed her to the grave. At that moment this inscrutable being was in possession of nearly £1,000,000 in ready money, and of landed estates, messuages and tenements which brought him in thousands per annum. The summer of 1788 he passed in one of his houses in Welbeck street, with two maid servants as his sole companions. His daily practice was to rise at 4 in the morning, in order to be on hand when his laborers came to work upon some house which he was repairing in Marylebone. In the winter of 1788 he his strength visibly decayed, and the final scene came at Marcham, where the younger of his two natural sons—between whom he divided a million sterling at his death—resided with his wife. They did their best to make the old man comfortable, but the ruling passion which had made his life a long misery darkened his death bed. Like so many other misers he fancied himself penniless, and passed the day in picking up chips and the night in groping out, like Moliere's *Avare*, "They have robbed me of my money." At last, upon November 18, 1789, he expired without a sigh, the possessor of such opulence as few men have ever attained, and the preacher of the sad moral that all the money in the world would not be worth having at the cost of such personal anguish and degradation as miser Elwes voluntarily imposed upon himself. —Sporting Times.

"I have used Coli's Colic Cure on one of my horses that was attacked with violent colic, and it only powerfully effected a cure. Every horse owner should keep it on hand." "This above is an extract from a letter sent to the Ontario Veterinary Medicine Company by J. M. McFarlane, one of the best known practitioners in the city of Toronto." —Sporting Times.

KEEPING TROTTERS' FEET LEVEL.

A TALK WITH THE MAN WHO OVERSEES THE SHOEING OF MR. VANDERBILT'S FAST MANES.

"Pathological and Expert Horse-shoer" were the words on the card of Mr. George S. Chapman, under whose supervision Mr. Vanderbilt's wonderful horses are regularly shod. Mr. Chapman is sometimes called "Professor" or "Doctor," but although known as a specialist, he disclaimed the title and said he was only a mechanic. "A pathological mechanic appears to be an oddity: how do you account for that?" inquired the reporter. "Simply because pathology relates to causes of disease. Some of these causes are traceable in horses' legs and to mechanical derangement of the feet. Frequently, when one part of the leg has been unnaturally strained or taxed, it may be relieved by judicious shoeing, so that the centre of the strain on the leg may be shifted from one part to another. This dealing with causes, without medicine, requires a mechanic rather than a professor."

"Is this a new school of horse-doctoring?" "You may call it so for want of a better name. It has already become divided into two methods of practice, revealing the wide difference between mere palliatives and scientific cures. One deals with effects, the other with causes. In the latter plan you merely respect nature's laws, and become an attorney before her court." "What has been your practice with Mr. Vanderbilt's horses?" "Simply keeping them as near level as possible, so that all the parts of their legs and feet could do their proportionate work." "Which is to be preferred, a low heel or a high one?" "Neither extremes loses the advantage of balance. Try an experiment with a chair. First make it high behind, then very low; the balance it between these two extremes, and you will see how the change of base affects the resultant strain on the parts above. Lower one side of the chair more than another and the effect is quite apparent. The centering of a strain produces congestion; the diffusion of a strain produces equilibrium." "Are you in favor of what is known as frog pressure?" "Not with normal conditions. I use it temporarily sometimes." "How about the condition of Mr. Vanderbilt's feet?" "I can say nothing except in a general way. Having kept their feet continually at proper level, the mares have acquired a better handling of their feet and legs, and consequently can go faster and with less weight of shoe."

THE MAD STONE.

As the virtues of the mad stone are very generally believed to, it will prove of interest to read the following extract from the Auguste Constitution. The examination of the stone in question were thorough and complete. The writer of the extract is a most accomplished scientist he says. "I most respectfully differ from a great many persons as to the so-called action of this stone, in extracting the poison from persons having been bitten either by snakes or dogs said to be affected by hydrophobia. These stones called mad stones are nothing more or less than a concretions found in the stomachs of deer which has been carefully analyzed by scientific men or the highest attainments. The said stones or concretions are composed of phosphate and carbonate of lime and iron and silica, having no direct nor indirect affinity for extracting poison. A few years ago Prof. Holmes, of South Carolina, a noted scientist, in the presence of interested parties, carefully and absolutely demonstrated the truth and virtue of this so-called mad stone to be mythical, better known as bezoar, being a Persian name derived from the word *pa-sahar*, which signifies against poison, and no work of ancient or modern on this subject differs. They all agree that the mad stone is nothing but the concretion found in the deer, having no medicinal virtues." The dissection of the stone alluded to was described at the time as follows: "The specimen exhibited on this occasion is about the size of a large egg of the domestic fowl, of a mottled yellow color, with a tint of brown, having its surface highly polished. The polisher is natural, caused by the action of the muscles of the stomach of the animal upon each layer of mineral matter deposited. With a very fine and highly tempered saw it was carefully cut longitudinally through the middle. Upon opening the bezoar, the nucleus proved to be a large and perfect acorn; which several gentlemen present immediately recognized as that of the white oak (*Quercus alba*, L.). It was covered by four layers of laminas of a mineral substance, composed generally of phosphate, and carbonate of lime and iron, and some silica. The mould of the acorn is very perfect, having all the external markings of the fruit. There are two impressions, apparently made by the teeth of the animal before swallowing the acorn. Acorns are favorite food of Carolina deer. During the autumnal months their tracks are almost always to be found under the oaks of the forest which have borne acorns. This is the third specimen of the bezoar that has been cut and examined by Prof. Holmes, and we believe the only ones ever dissected in America. The nucleus found in the first bezoar was a flattened ball or buckshot with a fragment of the skin and a few hairs; the animal had undoubtedly been wounded about six years before it was killed, as there were six layers of laminas of mineral matter surrounding the buckshot. The second bezoar cut contained a pebble of quartz."