



THE GRAND STAND.

DONCASTER AND THE ST. LEGER.

By "VIGILANT" of *The Sportsman*.

With Illustrations by F. G. KITTON.



DEGENERATE son of Yorkshire must be the man born in that county who feels no interest, even if it be slight, as to the result of the St. Leger. Inhabitants of the "Ridings," or at any rate a large majority of them, take a certain amount of pride in the great race of northern England, and folks whose calling renders them inimical to the Turf are often amongst the band anxious to know the result of the mighty battle on the Town Moor. Within the recollection of most who read these lines the St. Leger fell to a filly owned by a clergyman. Many years before a corresponding case occurred, an assumed name hiding in each instance from some of the general public that which was after all an open secret. Natives of the great county swarm to Doncaster on the St. Leger day in numbers inconceivable to those unacquainted with statistics as to the departures thither by train from the great manufacturing towns, and the "specials" from other parts of England pour forth such floods of passengers that by noon it is no easy matter to make footway along the main street and the famous road leading thence to the course. Hard by the turn whence folks emerge from the direction of the Horse Fair after attending the yearling sales, a serious block sometimes occurs. The police, however, discharge their duty well at Doncaster. The body most troublesome to them, probably, are the drivers of the enormous number of vehicles which ply for hire. Most of these wild charioteers are naturally anxious to discharge their load of passengers at the main entrance to the Moor and return to the town for another cargo. Grass, therefore, does not grow under their horses' feet.

In no country, undoubtedly, is the Turf so thoroughly enjoyed as in Yorkshire. The months in which it is seen there to greatest advantage are August and September. The annual campaign used to begin on the quaint little racecourse at Catterick Bridge, frequently in weather so bitterly cold and inclement that those who faced it proved themselves indeed true sportsmen. The charming period in the north of England for those who delight in the thoroughbred is that which commences on the course at Ripon. Richmond, whose meeting is unfortunately sorely threatened, is a delightful resort when rivals are racing on the low moor, and south country folks who, at about the opening of the grouse shooting season, visit Redcar for the first time are generally in ecstasies with its magnificent sands, its interesting sight of the renowned Cleveland iron-stone hills, and the rocky cliffs that arise a few miles away and stretch away for far. A cheery, jovial gathering, indeed, with immense hospitality shown to visitors,

and capital racing, a remark that applies equally to Stockton-on-Tees, whose course possesses but dingy approaches, yet when attained is singularly picturesque, affording a good view of the peak of Roseberry Topping, the great landmark of its district.

Next comes the ever-wished-for arrival at York, praises of whose races were written far back in the last century. Few meetings are at the present day more thoroughly popular. The outside crowd on Knavesmire is a singularly enthusiastic one, in a different fashion to that which assembles at Doncaster, and men who attend from distant parts, especially from the south of England, seem never to tire of exploring the nooks, corners, and curiosities of the ancient city. Before breakfast they haunt Lendal Bridge, watching the patient anglers at their pastime; in the moonlight they gaze on the Minster with something approaching to awe, and in the forenoon, ere undertaking the pleasant stroll to the Grand Stand by way of Scarcroft, may be encountered, sauntering and musing, in queer obscure courts and out-of-the-way spots of the charming old city.

Now reminiscences of the North Riding must be abandoned for memories and traditions in connection with that one to which belongs Doncaster, celebrated for its church, its races, its river, and its "butterscotch." A very large number of owners, trainers, jockeys, and pressmen, reach the town on Monday, some early in the afternoon. This affords opportunity for a call at the many boxes containing yearlings, and inspection in the spacious paddock of those youthful beauties, whose presence in the town is the cause of constantly agreeable forenoons during the St. Leger week. Messrs. Tattersall preside over two rings, and from one to the other comes whisper of glad tidings when a colt or filly changes hands for an unusually large sum. In the Sale Paddock, too, away from the rings, can be encountered some of the pleasantest people in the



RICHARD TATTERSALL.

After an engraving by W. Giller of a portrait painted by C. Hancock.

world, brimful of knowledge of racehorses, ancient and modern, and so clearly bent on enjoying themselves that the example is contagious. Little chats with such cheery folks in the Sale Paddock often lead to those charming, hasty, picknick luncheons in the town, at which people partake quickly of capitally cooked if rather homely fare, and faintly flushed by champagne, sherry, or the pleasant ale of the West Riding win or lose on the first race of the afternoon more than at such a time they usually pocket or disburse. The vicinity of the senior Mr. Tattersall's rostrum was some five and twenty years ago a more amusing resort than is even now the case. Strange, old-fashioned men used to assemble there, and send the company into roars of laughter by their odd sayings and doings. Mr. Harry Hill, owner of Pitsford and Trumpeter, used to receive with dry humour the "chaff" of the auctioneer, and another well-known and very excitable person was wont to send the company into ecstasies of mirth by droll sayings when bidding for his beloved yearlings happened to hang fire. A few "comic countrymen" were seldom wanting. Probably, they had not attended a temperance meeting ere entering the Sale Paddock. On a certain occasion a rather shabby-looking man from one of the small north of England towns took his stand by the rails near Mr. Tattersall. The visitor was evidently under the influence of copious potations, although the forenoon was yet young. Presently the humorous freak occurred to him of bidding for a yearling which he had neither desire nor means of possessing. A pause followed his offer, and it soon became evident that the bid would not be exceeded. Then the horror of the situation suddenly seemed to strike the man. He turned crimson, wiped the perspiration from his face, and taking to his heels, ran at his best speed towards the paddock wall, amidst yells and jeers from the onlookers. No one laughed more heartily

than Mr. Tattersall. One of the nuisances of the Sale Paddock used to be the intrusion of screeching vendors of race-cards and newspapers. That evil has been stopped, but as the time for departure to the course draws nigh, how trying is the uproar made by the brake and fly-drivers bawling invitations of "Ride to the course."

To do justice to the history of Yorkshire's most famous stake would necessitate the writing of several volumes. The subject is one that grows under the hand of those who undertake it lovingly, and have made the inquiries and researches which are no trouble, but a delight. Very pleasant, important, and interesting chapters have been written upon the St. Leger; but the big book on the subject has yet to appear. Temptation to undertake it is not great. Even the man to whom the time and expense requisite for the work are no object, must do it with the knowledge that



ST. GEORGE'S CHURCH, DONCASTER.
Sir George Gilbert Scott, Architect.

those who will appreciate the result of his labours are not many. During the last twenty years there has been decided decline in the likelihood of a book devoted to horse-racing achieving marked success. To the present school of those who affect love for the Turf, but really regard it merely as a medium for speculation, reference to the fascinating subject of the Stud Farm, or to famous horses, owners, trainers, and jockeys is absolutely irritating.

A bad sign of the day is it that so many who talk glibly about St. Leger, Derby, Cesarewitch, or any other great stake close at hand, know little or nothing of the writings of a few authors who did much to give a wholesome, breezy tone to Turf literature. They worked zealously for materials. Thanks to their industry and research a vast amount of amusing anecdote has been preserved that would have been lost. Never was "The Druid's" pretty style shown to greater advantage than when Doncaster was taken for a theme. He was at his happiest when relating personal experiences of the Town Moor—whether he wrote of John Osborne the elder superintending the unboxing of The Miner, about to renew antagonism with Blair Athol, or gossiped of his first visit to the St. Leger, when Colonel Anson's valet was one of the

party on the coach and had under his charge Herring's portrait of that year's Derby winner, Attila. Mr. Dixon has, to the best of my belief, not left on record the story known to a few respecting the horse just mentioned, and the "Sellinger" of 1842. Poor Attila started favourite, and shared the fate of another famous St. Leger crack, Plenipotentiary. Why the last-named did not win is known to persons still living, but the true particulars have never appeared in print.

Other races run at Doncaster possess long and stirring histories. No contest for two-year-olds decided on north of England ground excites more stirring recollections amongst veterans than that for the "Champagne," won so long ago as 1823 by a Whisker colt, Swiss, the property of Colonel Cradock of Hartforth. Between that time and this it has repeatedly fallen to youngsters destined for high fame. In very early days it was won by Memnon and The Colonel, destined for St. Leger laurels. Another victor was the gigantic Muley Moloch, who when a four-year-old defeated



THE ANGEL INN.

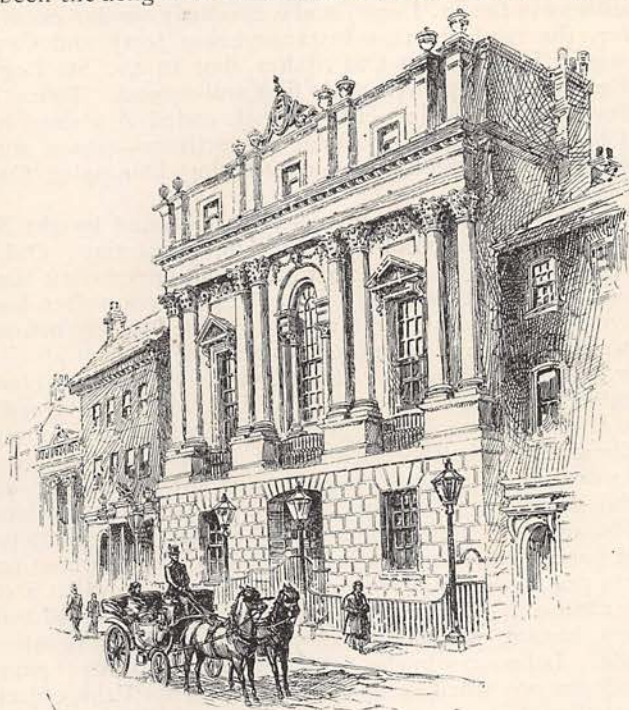
a field of rival giants for the Port Stakes at Newmarket. Muley Moloch, it is reported, was then about seventeen hands high, whilst Mussulman, Revenge, and The Whale were not under sixteen hands. Others of note whose owners tasted the sweets of "Champagne" ere it had been in existence for twenty years, were the eccentric Mr. Orde of Nunn-kirk, and Lord Chesterfield. The triumph of the first named was due to Beeswing, who afterwards became the idol of the north of England sporting people, whilst Lord Chesterfield won with Don John, declared by John Scott on a certain occasion to have been one of the best horses, if not quite the best, that he ever trained. A famous Champagne Stakes triumph was that gained by The Cure; a speedy but ungenerous horse, who when started for his biggest

venture made a memorable swerve, which at the time caused as much comment as that of Bismarck, when contesting a few years ago the Stewards' Cup at Goodwood. Lord Eglinton, of "tournament" fame, carried off the Champagne twice in three years, his champions being two horses of exceedingly high class, Van Tromp and The Flying Dutchman. A great stroke of fortune, indeed, for the once famous "tartan and yellow," the most popular colours of the day when the horses just mentioned were in training. Worthy followers in their footsteps have, at considerable intervals, been Achievement, Cremorne, and Minting. One of the most important chapters in the great work on British Turf History which will probably never be written would be that devoted to the Doncaster Cup. To bring together the necessary details must involve hard work, and a vast amount of research. The first contest for it occurred in 1766, the race being in four mile heats. Orville's failure and Remembrancer's success, and the triumphs of such pets of the northern public as Tramp, Catton, Filho da Puta, and Fulford would require many words. That remark applies to the two desperate struggles in which Lottery was engaged, succumbing in the first of them to the Duke of Leeds's Mercutio. Delight in Doncaster Cup battles sprang up amongst a few veterans, who still remain to prattle concerning them, about the period when The Saddler atoned in some measure for a St. Leger defeat, and Rockingham added to the laurels gained in that race. Then came the brave days of Beeswing (who was well beaten, let it be recorded, when she met the three-year-olds, Don John and Charles XII.), and the era in which Alice Hawthorn flourished. A heavy blow

to followers of the Spigot Lodge stable was the failure of Van Tromp in 1848, when that strong favourite finished last of three, Chanticleer winning, whilst Ellerdale, afterwards most valuable as a brood mare, ran second. The disaster then sustained by Lord Eglinton's banner was as nothing, however, when compared with the overwhelming blow of The Flying Dutchman's defeat by Voltigeur. When news of their pet's victory arrived, the Richmond people of all degrees at once thronged the streets—I well remember the scene—and proportionate no doubt was the gloom that fell upon their Middleham neighbours.

To the legends, the curious facts and mysterious matters in connection with the St. Leger, known, sometimes for a very sufficient reason, to but few, it is impossible to do justice in a few pages. Yet what a tempting theme is offered by the grand old fight, which for over a century has been the delight of Yorkshiremen, and after no long lapse

of years became a stake of moment in the estimation of owners whose training stables lay south of the Trent. Surely some readers of these lines have had sufficient enthusiasm to walk the St. Leger course in the twilight of a September evening, recalling stirring words told by old folks of horses and men of mark that long ago raised that which Sir Francis Hastings Doyle made immortal as "the Yorkshire roar." Such pondering strollers know the origin of the catch bet that "Ninety-three" once ran for the St. Leger. They have listened to tales of Captain Mellish, and his Sancho and Staveley; and know the names of the filly and colt that are stated to have had the grand prize of the north awarded to them by half a head only. They have read, at any rate, how just before Middlethorpe ran second to Ashton,



THE MANSION HOUSE.

his bit broke, and the horse was held by a handkerchief thrown round his neck, until another bridle was obtained. Concerning that St. Leger which fell to the Duke of Hamilton owing to the prowess of William, this is left on record by a painstaking, if not elegant writer, "It was supposed that more roguery was practised by transactions relative to this race, previous to the time of running, than was ever known." William had made himself the subject of talk earlier in the year. When running for the Dee Stakes at Chester, a man got in his way, was killed, and by the collision the colt came to the ground. Familiar to all students of Turf literature are the circumstances attending the "Sellinger" triumphs of Ebor, Antonio, Theodore, Barefoot, and Birmingham. Few more bitter wars have raged in the racing world than that which arose from the St. Leger of 1831. The second favourite, Marcus, was more than suspected of having been poisoned, and the partisans of The Saddler, placed second to Chorister, grumbled most bitterly over the decision which deprived them of money they had regarded as won. The Saddler's jockey was by no means a Fordham, and an old friend of mine speaking disparagingly of him just before the start, some of the rider's allies at once picked a quarrel with him. My informant was in company with Mr. Richard Tattersall and Charles Mathews, the elder, the actor. Mr. Tattersall urged that the dispute should be carried further, in order that "Charles may get a sketch of character!"

Temptation for a Yorkshire brawl when the start for the St. Leger was imminent had, however, to be resisted. My old friend, who stood close by the winning post, always insisted that The Saddler won, and was in possession, too, of most curious evidence as to the correctness of his belief. In the rooms at night he met Skipsey, owner of The Saddler, with tears in his eyes, and alluding to the jockey, said "What made you put that fool up?" "There was a greater fool," came the answer, "and I am the man." Not to dwell too long upon the subject of long past St. Legers, let this portion of the subject be concluded by the following "odds and ends." One of the runners for the St. Leger of 1814—afterwards named Waterloo—was a twin. The first three for the big northern stake in 1812 all ran that summer at Newcastle-on-Tyne. St. Patrick and Copeland finished first and second for the Old Stakes at Catterick Bridge in 1820. They occupied the same positions in the St. Leger, and a curiously similar occurrence was recorded four years later, the rivals in that instance being Jerry and Canteen. Canteen was followed home by Jerry for the Old Stakes, but in the St. Leger, the last named turned the tables. Still they were again first and second. Twice has the renowned race which forms the main subject of this article ended in a dead heat. In each case the winner—Charles XII. and Voltigeur respectively—was a son of Voltaire, and each followed up the great triumph by taking Doncaster Cup honours also in the same week.

The "simmer of excitement" occasioned by the St. Leger daily grows louder after the termination of the York August meeting. Old stagers secured their quarters in the town weeks ago—to live in lodgings during the races is the correct thing at Doncaster—and those who defer the precaution often find difficulty in procuring at the eleventh hour suitable apartments. The Monday before the race arrives, and the old town is in spic and span order to receive the host of visitors, that in the course of a few hours will invade her streets. Yearlings destined for sale are already on the spot, racehorses intended to run at the meeting are unvanned in numbers that increase as the afternoon wears on. Mysterious strangers, men not unaccustomed to gaze (from a distance) on the thoroughbred at exercise, or so benevolent as to afford priceless information for a few postage stamps, are to be seen on the thresholds of inns and public-houses. That Yorkshire liquors are not unattractive to some of them is in evidence. Still the streets are as yet quiet, and chiefly trodden by inhabitants making last purchases before the invading army appears, and for more than four days keeps them pretty closely blockaded within doors. What a changed aspect will the place wear but a few hours hence! Even now well-filled trains are hurrying from many parts, bearing passengers whose presence in Doncaster must materially increase its trade. Labourers in the fields adjoining railways pause in their toil as the loaded carriages are whisked by, and knowing well the object of the travellers, their talk turns directly to the St. Leger. They are thirsty, too, under the hot September sun, and when one bets another a "quart" that one of the favourites beats another of them, a comrade puts in a petition that a share of the wager may fall to him, and all three wish that settling day had come.

Although, as just mentioned, a very large majority of those who attend the races occupy apartments hired for the week, in many cases at a large price, it must not be supposed that hotels and inns lack patronage. That is far from being the case. A not unamusing chapter might be written on an old racing man's experiences of such resorts, of the people and adventures he there encountered between the before breakfast period when all the bed-room bells appear to be rung simultaneously, and a savoury smell of broiling ham takes possession of the house, until the last of the late sitters seeks his couch, awakening all the occupants of a corridor by stumbling over their dirty boots. Curious old-fashioned hostelries linger still in many towns near which are held race meetings, and Doncaster possesses its share. A noted establishment is the Angel, where Two Idle Apprentices had rooms during the September races of 1857, when on their Lazy Tour. One of the idle gentlemen—they were Mr. Charles Dickens and Mr. Wilkie Collins—said that the talk at stations and in railway carriages, was "all of horses and John Scott," going so far, indeed, as to assert that the multitudinous porters requested that they might not be bothered about luggage, and conversed without ceasing about the horses and John Scott. From the windows of the Angel the friends gazed upon the rooms of the pastrycook, the wax-chandler, the gunsmith, and the serious bookseller, all tenanted for the time by persons whom

one of the Apprentices, no lover of those who affect the Turf, described as Lunatics and Keepers. His wrath against folks concerned in the business of horse-racing was so bitter as to become amusing. He would have liked to see nine-tenths of the professionals (and the Gong-donkey) at the Mansion House, and even went the length of declaring that the plants in pots were placed about the entrance to the Subscription Rooms, to give the place "an innocent appearance!" Detesting the professional company, one of the Apprentices was still pleased with the races and the course, "with its agreeable prospect, its quaint Red House (the old structure, be it mentioned here) oddly changing and turning as he turned, its green grass, and fresh heath." Moreover he bought a card, and although completely ignorant of horse-racing, picked the winners of the three chief stakes, which he calls a wonderful, paralysing coincidence. See John Forster's *Life of Charles Dickens*. The successful horses on that eventful day in the most important stakes were Impérieuse (St. Leger), Blanche of Middlebie (Municipal Stakes), Skirmisher (Her Majesty's Plate), and Meta (Porland Plate). Referring to other Doncaster inns that have received mention, let it be written that in 1790 a prize-fight was held in the yard of the Volunteer, in Frenchgate, between Mendoza and Humphries, the former being the winner. Another renowned house, where many a St. Leger victor's health has been toasted by men who had no superiors in the art of getting a horse into thorough "fettle" for that race is the Salutation, with the date 1766 on the signboard. On the other side of the road stands the Rockingham, the sign when I last saw it much in need of repainting. Rockingham carried off the St. Leger of 1833 for Mr. Watt, of Bishop Burton,



THE ROCKINGHAM ARMS INN.

bearing the harlequin jacket to the front with ease, although his comrade Belshazzar, started at shorter odds. Morning, noon, and night, do visitors flock into the Reindeer, where waiters and the attendants behind the bars know small rest, and in the smoking-room of an unpretending hostelry hard by swing, and gong, and steam-whistle land, people are sometimes to be found late in the evening during the St. Leger week, whose knowledge of horse-



THE SALUTATION.

racing is large indeed. Another inn, "The Ram," reminds a few veterans of those old coaching days whose sunny side lingers in their recollection, whilst time has blotted out memory of many discomforts. The famous Herring, many of whose portraits of St. Leger winners adorn the walls of the Victoria Club in London, was at the outset of his career the painter of some inn signs. That of the Stag, now almost obliterated by exposure to weather, is one of them. Ere quitting the subject of Doncaster hotels, let it be mentioned that the Queen stayed at the Angel for a night on her way to Balmoral in the Great Exhibition year, 1851, to the vast rejoicing of the townspeople. As Princess Victoria Her Majesty, in company

with the Duchess of Kent, attended the races in 1835, when the St. Leger fell to the renowned Queen of Trumps.

Without being able to compare with Chester or York, in the matter of quaint, old-world houses, Doncaster is not devoid of them. In the High Street itself, a pause will now and again be made by a visitor whose taste inclines to buildings suggestive of long past days. As a rule the Doncaster shops are small, but good and clean. A characteristic is it of such places in Yorkshire that the contents of those where eatables are sold, look tempting. Genuine home cookery of confectionery and pastry has something to do with this, but the same words of praise are usually due to the establishments of fishmongers, butchers, and fruiterers. Every one pauses during the Leger week, to gaze at the grouse, partridges, and big cod-fish in the chief High Street shop. Thither too when racing is over, resort many customers mindful that the dinner hour is not distant, and desirous of renovating appetite with half-a-dozen oysters. Rustics who rarely tread the streets of towns, gaze with awe upon such places when they have their annual holiday to witness the racing on the Town Moor.



THE RAM INN.

The draper's window, gorgeous with neck scarves ticketed with the names of the race-horse owners whose colours they bear; the sporting prints and photographs exposed for sale hard by; the smart stationer's, and especially the open and profusely filled slabs of the chief fishmonger, offer irresistible attraction. Some years ago I paused there one morning to inspect a magnificent buck hanging by the door, shot by Lord Stamford, and sent by him as a present to the Race Committee probably. Presently by my side stood two uncouth-looking bumpkins, staring with wonder at

the strange animal before them. Both spoke in broad Riding dialect. Said rustic number one to his fellow, indicating with outstretched finger, the creature destined to furnish toothsome haunch and hash, "Wat's that?" Rustic number two knitted his brow, rubbed his cheek, and deliberated. At last came light, and in slow drawling tone he replied, "Aw think it's a buffalo!" During the September meeting, the chemist's counter is not the one least frequented. Mr. Dickens has told how he was followed to that well-patronized resort early in the forenoon, by a man whose address to the proprietor was as follows: "Give us soom salvolatile or damned thing o' that soort, in wather—my head's bad!" The requirements of men have not changed much since the "Sellinger" fell to Impérieuse. Pick-me-ups and soda water are in request at Doncaster, not long after the first street cry of *Yorkshire Post!* West-Riding bakers may well pride themselves on their loaves and fancy-breads. Many years ago Wakefield was celebrated for its muffins, of size and quality not to be excelled. Doncaster breakfast tables usually supply them equally good, together with pikelets, unknown to most south country people, whilst even the smallest eating houses—there are many open during the St. Leger week—offer comfortable, well-cooked joints, cut hams of tempting pinkness and sufficiently fat, honest-looking pies, huge puddings, and cheesecakes whose appearance creates none of the apprehension aroused by sight of their bile-creating relatives which excite the longing of street arabs in dingy London

thoroughfares. The provision made at these small Doncaster dining-rooms will not be wasted, those in charge of them having experience of the keen appetites brought by occupants of the cheap trains which reach the town during the forenoon of the Wednesday, and the country folk who arrive on foot, or in humble vehicles. Such visitors are famous trenchermen, and some of them would not have been beaten far by that voracious nobleman who consumed, according to the author of *The Art of Dining*, such a prodigious quantity of solid meat at the famous Old Bailey boiled beef shop.

If Yorkshire country people do not possess honest, hearty appetites, in what part of England would it avail to seek for folks with wholesome hunger? Many persons residing in the Doncaster district drive to the Town Moor at an early hour on the morning of the St. Leger, so as to secure a place favourable for viewing the sport and

fun, draw up their vehicle at some convenient place, and having brought with them materials for a plentiful breakfast, proceed to prepare that meal on the spot, serenely indifferent to the stares of those unaccustomed to see the first meal of the day served in the open air. Before dismissing from mention the Doncaster shops, allusion must be made to that one from which on the Friday of the race week, emerge so many customers bearing packets of various sizes. Need the word "butterscotch," be written in this connection? It is one painfully familiar to those who visit old Danum. Almost from dawn to dusk do vendors of that sweetmeat raise their wearisome cry. People who reach or leave the race-ground on foot (especially if they have backed a horse for the St. Leger that has gone amiss, or smart after a "bad day") feel mightily disposed to kick the urchins who harass their path south-country folks seem to regard as



A BIT OF OLD DONCASTER.

with solicitations to encourage that which with the staple trade of the town.

When coaches, post-chaises, and private vehicles conveyed to Doncaster for the St. Leger meeting those who did not trudge thither on foot—some enthusiasts tramped the whole way from far-off parts of the kingdom—the attendance on the big day used to be regarded as immensely large. Of course railway communication with special, ordinary, and cheap trains, has increased it to a prodigious extent, and the spectacle presented by the Town Moor about three o'clock on the Wednesday afternoon is indeed wonderful. It should be seen, once at any rate, even by those who take not the least interest in the Turf. Contributions to the prodigious crowd gathered together, when the hour for the great race is at hand, have poured in ceaselessly for many hours. All sorts of conveyances are called into requisition, some of them brought from considerable distances, that their drivers may ply for hire during the week, and primitive are many of the "traps," which bring to the scene of action rustic visitors, who look forward to the St. Leger as affording a rare and most delightful holiday. The strangest of these old-fashioned carriages was exceeded in oddity by that made of wicker-work by its proprietor, the eccentric "Jemmy Hirst," of Rawcliffe, who was conveyed in it to Doncaster and Pontefract races, drawn by four mules. Occasionally his trained bull, Jupiter, was in the shafts, and Jemmy, be it added, also rode that sagacious animal to hounds! Violent is the scramble at the railway stations for cabs and flies when trains disgorge a host of passengers eager for the latest news about the St. Leger candidates, and for luncheon. Men whose business compels them to face the powerful stream of new arrivals about noon, have no easy task set when they endeavour to make way against it; but rough as the West-Riding folk appear to those accustomed to the drawing-room company at Kempton and Sandown, at Ascot and Goodwood,

they are good-humoured enough on a St. Leger day, made genial by the thought that a long-expected treat is near at hand. Doncaster town has its detractors. Some of these take the same exception to it as Coleridge did to Cologne, when he invoked the "nymphs that reign o'er sewers and sinks." Complaints on that point are, however, no longer so well deserved as was once the case, and sufficient is it to regard the place, in this article, as seen under its brightest aspect, in sunny September weather, swarming with men, women, and children in the best of spirits, thronging with incessant clack of tongue, laughter, and jokes unintelligible to southerners, towards one of the most famous race-grounds in the world.

What an amazing sight is presented when the avenue of trees, which is one of the glories of the town, left behind, and a place attained high up on one of the stands, the fine course, its noted landmarks, and the prodigious host attracted to the spot by its renowned race are viewed for the first time. What a change has occurred in the whole character of the meeting since it was first known to a few of the veterans who will witness the next contest for the St. Leger. One of them has hardly been absent on a single occasion since Mameluke, after a display of sulky temper that caused seven false starts, was at last driven from the starting post by aid of a cart whip, and then lost so much ground at the outset that he finally succumbed to Matilda.



INTAKE FARM, DONCASTER.

A notable advantage possessed (as a sight), by the St. Leger over the Derby, is that the starting point is only a short distance to the right of the Grand Stand, so that the competitors are well in view of occupants of the various roofs and balconies, from the time they leave the spacious saddling paddock for the admirably cleared course, until they are sent on their momentous gallop. To the new comer will be pointed out by some friend familiar with the ground, such world-renowned points as the Hill, the Rifle Butts, the Red House (the old one was taken down and the new building erected in 1875), and the Intake Farm. All these are known, by repute at any rate, to those who have read descriptions of the contests for the St. Leger. The story of the Doncaster Town Moor, apart from that portion of it told by the *Racing Calendar*, is one of frequent alteration and improvement, both in the programme, and the course with its surroundings. Of late years especially, those concerned in the management of the meeting have effected wonderful changes for the better, and the thanks of all folks taking pleasure in the Turf have been richly earned by zealous individuals, who, in attending closely to the interests of the races were at the same time advancing those of the town. Amongst others Alderman Stockil has worked with characteristic energy and clear sight, on behalf of one of the best and most enjoyable of our race meetings. That worthy, ever genial and cheery, is almost as well known to south country sportsmen as to those in the north, and, whatever office he may undertake at Doncaster, is emphatically the right man in the right place.

Small space remains for further gossip respecting town and moor. Temptation strong exists to dwell on the St. Leger triumphs achieved by owners who stood staunchly by the Turf, and the skill by which their trainers and jockeys helped them to victory. As the "Idle Apprentices" found, no one for a long period could speak of the St. Leger without reference to John Scott. The score of his brother William, the jockey, was a remarkable one, beginning with Jack Spigot, and ending with Sir Tatton Sykes. Still "Bill" had an unlucky day every now and then. On one of

those afternoons when fortune frowned, the favourite, Epirus, was forced up a bank near the hill, and falling thence into the ditch, threw his rider into the course, Scott's collar-bone being broken owing to a horse galloping over him. Before the contest ended, John Day on Henriade also came to grief. This was brought about by a greyhound dashing into the track, and bringing the colt to the ground. James Robinson's successful rides on Matilda and Margrave, and a victory almost snatched on Russborough; the stupor of the Turf world on the occasions of Saucebox and Caller Ou hitting the mark; and the uproarious delight of Yorkshire, when after a morning studded with exciting incidents, John Osborne, the pet horseman of the county, won on Apology—all these are occurrences which remain fixed in the memory of those who regard race-riding as a beautiful art, and know that now, as in the days of Billy Peirse, Jackson, Shepherd, and Ben Smith, one of the highest honours that a jockey can obtain is the mount on the winner of the St. Leger.



A QUAIN CORNER.