

there, and at the royal breeding establishments in the neighbourhood. I had not believed that even a Spanish mule could be such a beautiful creature as was one that I saw there. We were informed that the expense of keeping up these breeding stables is very great. There were a number of English horses, some that had only just arrived.

THE HAUNTS OF THE WILD DEER IN THE SOUTH.

THE march of civilisation, and the accompanying increase of the area of agriculture, have materially narrowed the range of wild animals, especially in southern Britain. In more rugged Scotland "the monarch of the glen" has still a wide range, and the huntsman and the deer-stalker may yet find scope for the real old-time chase;—very different from the artificial "sport" which is sought in letting a stag loose from a cart, and then running him down with trained dogs.

Although, however, the range of the wild deer is thus narrowed, it is not altogether obliterated. In one or more of the still uncultured and unenclosed tracts of the south, the herds of this noble animal still find a scant but sufficient pasturage, and their continued existence gives unwonted zest to the chase. In penning some descriptive details of one of these few remaining primitive districts of our railway-traversed land, we must not be understood as expressing an opinion for or against this kind of field sport. Our readers will form their own conclusions on the abstract question.

This wild deer land of the south lies on that shore of the Bristol Channel where Somerset and Devon meet, a bold and romantic line of coast in which the rugged and the soft alternate and mingle in rare succession and combination. The prospect of sea and land which may be gained from the summits of the noble headlands is truly magnificent, whilst the view of the interior hills from the coast is equally grand. Taking, for instance, his stand at Warren Point, which the reader will find on a good map, the spectator has in prospect a line of hill country some twenty miles in length—on the extreme left the towering Quantocks, and thence, stretching towards the right, the ranges of the Croydon and Grabhurst hills, which extend to the still bolder Dunkery, and the bleak heights of Exmoor. Such are the broad outlines of the landscape. The filling-in is rich with foliage and verdure; the well-timbered combes, the living green of the meadow land, the hanging woods of a deer park, and the brown gorse of the moorlands. Exmoor, at the extreme right of our *point de vue*, and indeed hidden from our supposed spectator at Warren Point by the North Hill, comprises upwards of 14,000 acres of forest and moorland, the surface undulating and rough in the extreme, the hill-sides producing little else than heather and ling. Few and far between are the habitations of man in this wild and barren tract, the aspect of which, when overhung with clouds, is dark and lonesome, suggesting the origin of a local name—the Blackdown Hills—a system which, according to Sir Henry De La Beche, forms "an elevated tableland cut into, more particularly on the west and south, by deep valleys, which thus divide it into several long lines chiefly running to the west, south-west, and south," and extending from near the northern to the southern coast of Devon—almost from the Bristol to the English Channel.*

* "Report on the Geology of Cornwall, Devon, and West Somerset," p. 3.

The deep gorges and glens of this country are locally called combes, the luxuriant timbering of which contrasts strikingly with the fern and gorse of the uplands. Especially is this so when, as is mostly the case, thecombe is the channel of a brooklet whose rapid waters, falling to the lower levels, seem to say:—

"Men may come and men may go,
But I go on for ever."

Among these choice spots is the hill-side of Cloutsham, one of the minor eminences of Dunkery, "rising," says a writer in the "Saturday Review," "from a waving sheet of woodland, a copse chiefly of oak and ash just swelling into a forest, and containing coverts which are the favourite haunts of the red deer." At the single farmhouse in this romantic spot Sir Thomas Dyke Acland, the hospitable lord of the manor, provides bread, cheese, and ale for the hunting parties at "the meet," often numbering 300, including not a few Dianas who share the general enthusiasm for the chase. Not, however, that all who come to "the meet" follow the hounds.

In immediate vicinity to Cloutsham is Horner Wood, a scene of the rarest sylvan beauty. Very many of the trees with ivy-covered trunks are exceedingly curious. Ferns and mosses are abundant. Along the bottom runs the "brawling stream" required to fill in the poetic picture:—

"In copsewood deep the glow-worm lights his spark,
The deer, half seen, are to the covert wending."

It was while wandering in the glades of Horner that we first encountered the hunt. The deep silence, varied only by the ripple of the waters, was suddenly broken in upon by a loud shout which caught up the eye to the brow of the overhanging hill. There we saw a single horseman, presently joined by another, whose red coat glowing in the sun bespoke him a huntsman. The two stood watching for some time; then the horn was vigorously blown, and anon thirty or forty more horsemen were on the spot, followed by the hounds, who streamed in eager procession down the precipitous sides, impracticable for horse or man. In another brief space a bevy of hunters, who had found a route to the bottom, poured into the wood in pursuit of the deer, which, for a moment, we saw, far in front of its pursuers, up the course of the stream. "Take the waters, take the waters!" was the shout which, from the huntsman at the top, rang loud through the valley, and speedily the dashing cavalcade vanished from sight, leaving us to our botanical researches in silence and seclusion.

The hunting season of 1867 was marked by several noteworthy incidents. Thus at a "meet" at Higher Combe, Dulverton, a fine stag was started which ran for many miles, right over the cultivated country, and at last found its way to Bickleigh, near Tiverton, where he ran into the river Exe, swimming majestically up the stream, but was, alas! captured. A farmer related to us the circumstances of a hunt in which the swift deer ran thirty-five miles in two hours twenty-seven minutes; 300 horsemen began the pursuit, but only thirteen were in at the close. The venerable pastor of one of these hill-side parishes told us that recently the hunted deer sought refuge in his vicarage meadow. The hounds and their masters ignored the right of sanctuary, and the stricken deer was caught where, if anywhere, peace and repose might reign. "Did you go out to see it?" was asked. "No," said the good man, "I could not bring my mind to witness the cruelty attaching to this sport." The excitement of the chase over the moors is enhanced by the perils of bog and precipice. "Mole's Chamber," for instance, is said to owe its name to the

swallowing up of a man in one of these bogs, and marvellous stories are told of hair-breadth escapes at precipices. Many of the local traditions relate to hunting. The instinct of the animal is said to be for making seaward, and only last year a fine stag ran to the very edge of a precipice overhanging the Bristol Channel, and falling over perished. Of olden times it is related that the deer has stood at bay near the head of Minehead Pier, scattering the few leading hounds with his antlers, and then, dashing out to sea, been captured by boatmen. Another tale depicts the inroad of a stag on a cottage standing with its back to the hill and face to the sea. The alarmed old woman of the house ran out at the front door, slamming it to, and so the deer was taken as in a snare. Such are the tales of the country side.

It is time, however, to pass from such anecdotes, and to resume our more immediate object, the description of the country. We wrote at the outset of that grand range of interior hills. This is not, like Scotland, "the land of the mountain and the flood," but it is "a land of brooks of water, of fountains, and depths that spring out of valleys and hills." The elevated ridge of which we speak is, in fact, the water-shed of two systems of rivers: those on the north—the Torridge, the Tor, and the Lyn—finding their way by short and rapid declivities to the Bristol Channel; while those on the south—the Exe, the Otter, and the Axe—pour their waters down a more gradual slope to the English Channel. Several of these principal rivers are swelled by tributaries which have also their source in these uplands.

During our visits we gained an insight into the little-explored phenomena of the river valleys. Starting, on one occasion, from Watersmeet, near Lynton, we walked for six hours along the course of the Lyn and the Brendon, the waters all the way tumbling, rushing, foaming over magnificent rocks:

"Here it comes sparkling,
And there it lies darkling;
Here smoking and frothing,
Its tumult and wrath in . . .
And so never ending, but always descending,
Sounds and motions for ever and ever are blending."

The entire fall of the waters must be several hundred feet. Ever and anon tributaries pour their treasures into the main rivers, and on and on they go, enriching the well-timbered banks, and fairly forbidding sleep to the artist or angler who may come that way. When, at the close of our six hours' walk, we were compelled to strike for the upland moors, we saw the silver line of the waters still stretching far beyond into the valley. Again, we walked for five-and-twenty miles down the valley of the Exe. Having crossed the hills at one of their loftiest points (Outcombe), we came upon the river at Eyeson Hill, from whose sides iron ore is taken, reminding one of that promised "land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills thou mayest dig brass." To our first sight the Exe was but a little rivulet; ere the close of that walk we saw it a fine broad river. All along its meandering course the water is beautifully clear, running a rapid career in a perpetual succession of cascades. Throughout this prolonged but circuitous glen, hollowed out of the table-land already described, the sides are gorgeously timbered. It being the autumn season, the varied tints were beautiful. Every now and then other glens or combes opened up right and left, presenting landscape groupings sometimes of great extent, at others more limited. Then again the rocks overgrown with mosses often crop out, and the whole

forms a succession of scenes which pen or pencil must alike fail to depict. The signs of population are few and far between. A writer, already quoted, observes that it is "not uncommon for a farm-house, in the region of the upper waters, to find its nearest neighbour at from three to five miles off. There is little arable cultivation in these wild uplands, and the flocks and herds which form the farmers' chief wealth have a wide range of pasture." There are hardly any villages or churches, and as to churches, there seems to have been a strange fancy for perching them on the hill-tops.

The first village of any size on our route was Bridgetown. We remarked to one of the villagers, "A beautiful place this." "Well, I dun know, yaas, a comfortable village!" was the man's unconcerned reply. So true is it, that the mind must be educated to see beauty even where it is thus divinely stamped on the very face of nature. At Chilly Bridge we made a *detour* of two miles to Dulverton, a little town nestled amidst an amphitheatre of wooded hills. Here we struck upon the Barle, twin stream with the Exe, which it joins at Exebridge. From the junction of the waters we pursued our way along the now united and augmented river as far as Tiverton, the boundary of a long day's excursion, and on the following Sabbath a "quiet resting place."

We have spoken of the glorious land scenery along these river banks. Let us observe, that the waters are also rich in their peculiar treasures. "The river Exe is," says Mr. Frank Buckland, "naturally a salmon river." Passing over his remarks on its lower course, we further read that, "From Tiverton upwards I hear no river keepers or anglers have ever seen an adult, but they do see smolts or gravellings descending in large numbers—not many in 1866, but in 1865 a large number. From Tiverton up as far as the junction of the Barle there are alternations of deep pools and magnificent spawning grounds, but no one has ever seen a salmon making its nest in this district. As the young are seen to descend, I have taken great pains to ascertain where they could have been born. They do not spawn in the small streams on Exmoor, but all the evidence goes to prove that this operation is carried on in the streams above Dulverton, where they are protected from their enemies at this dangerous period of their existence by brushwood, which forms pleasant covers, and which come down close upon the water's edge. The river Exe appears to be the largest and most promising river in the West of England."

Our return journey was up instead of down the Exe valley, and with a varied route which included a sight of the river-side ruins of Barlinch Abbey. According to Tanner, William De Lay, in the time of Henry II, founded here a priory of Black Canons. It had about the time of the dissolution eight canons, who were endowed with £98 18s. 4d. per annum. The house was granted by Henry VIII to Sir John Wallop. The extensive ruins are now occupied as farm premises. As to the landscape on our return route, description would be but a repetition of what is already written. Suffice it to say that, as the shades of evening closed in, we had again reached the summit of the lofty ridge of hills. Here all at once we sighted the sea:—

"When sudden, as I turned my way,
Burst in the ocean-waves;
And lo! a blue wild-dancing bay,
Fantastic rocks and caves!"

The twilight had become darkness ere our long but pleasant walk was ended. Does the reader ask how he may visit this land? Minehead, Dunster, or Porlock, within easy reach of the Williton station, may be adopted

as places of sojourn whence the desired excursions can be made. The most central spot is Porlock, celebrated by Southey, during his detention at the village inn:—

“Porlock, thy verdant vale, so fair to sight,
Thy lofty hills, which fern and furze embrown,
Thy waters, that roll musically down
Thy woody glens—the traveller with delight
Recalls to memory.”



JOSEPH GLASS,

THE CLIMBING-BOYS' ADVOCATE.



It is commonly supposed that the race of little chimney-climbers has happily disappeared from the face of the country. It takes something like a long memory to recollect those “innocent blacknesses,” as Charles Lamb called them. Swart servants of a dark age, they used to toddle about after their masters with soot-bag and shovel: nothing white or natural about them from head to foot but their shining eyes and glittering teeth. When the flue of *Materfamilias* smoked, or the parish engines had been in requisition for a fire in her chimney, a proprietor of these poor little slaves was sent for. He came like a ratcatcher with his ferret—had a look at the “chimbley,” as if it were a rabbit hole—spread his dirty sacks and clouts to catch the soot—and then he popped the wretched climbing-boy in. There was a scuffle and a struggling as the small thing worked its painful way up in the filthy reek; presently you heard a clattering of shovel and broom, and the soot came down in black avalanches; then the master of this grimy ferret used to go out to see that the lad went right up and put his hapless head or hand and brush out at the very top. When he did not roll

down neck and crop, the little wretch emerged choked and covered with the soot, all except the irrepressible child-eyes and hungry child-teeth. Sometimes he stuck fast and could not be got at, and sometimes he came down the wrong shaft over a fire and was asphyxiated; his miserable knees always used to get scratched and torn, and sooner or later he was pretty sure to have “sweep’s lungs,” or “sweep’s cancer.” It was a cruel and wicked practice, and most shocking is the reflection that it existed so long. But at last the law did sweep the little sweeps away; the “machine” was invented, which does the business perfectly; and this breed of tiny Africans won their emancipation.

But a horrible story, told this summer in the Maidstone Assize Court, revealed the fact that climbing-boys are still employed in some parts of the country. The report of that case elicited from a morning newspaper an indignant article, from which our opening paragraph is extracted. It is to be hoped that such cruelties now rarely occur; and that they are now exceptional is due to many benevolent persons, and especially to one, whose labours in this good cause deserve perpetual record.

In the year 1823, among the workmen then employed in building Finsbury Circus, London, was one whose industrious habits, quiet manners, and neat personal appearance, singled him out from amongst his fellows. He never kept Saint Monday. When the day’s work was done he went home, donned his working clothes for cleaner attire, and spent the evening with his wife. His home and his wife were a picture of comfort. There was only one room: the furniture was simple but all new and neat, and there was a handsome Kidderminster carpet, a luxury just beginning to be introduced into the houses of the poorer classes of the community. His domestic happiness is best described in his own words. “An arrangement was entered into between my wife and myself that each should do the best we could to please each other. By this means everything passed on most delightfully. On going home to my meals I found everything in the nicest order. At breakfast-time the fire was bright, the toast was made and ready cut, and by the time I could sit down the coffee was poured out. At dinner-time I had not to wait a minute, all was ready; and at night, when my work was done, I leisurely enjoyed my tea. This done, we entered upon a retrospect of the past and expressed our anticipations of the future. Our position was to both of us the commencement of happy days: year after year passed away and there was no abatement in our domestic felicity.”

Joseph Glass, whom we thus present to the reader, spent the early part of his life at Manningtree, in Essex, and from his boyhood was remarkable for his intelligence and retiring habits. Another characteristic was that of self-control, evidenced by two circumstances which occurred before he was twenty years of age. At a village feast he had been induced to drink to excess, and was carried home helpless. Feeling the disgrace acutely, he formed a determination never to drink again. This was long before Temperance or Total Abstinence Societies were heard of. He kept his resolve throughout his life, and remained an earnest “teetotaler” to his dying day. At another time he gave way to violent passion. Upon after reflection he felt mortified and humbled by its unreasonableness and sinfulness, and made a vow never to give way to passion again. He wrote his vow upon a piece of paper, and kept it in his waistcoat-pocket. Whenever he found his passion