

SECOND EDITION

FOXHUNTERS' PHILOSOPHY

A GARLAND FROM
FIVE CENTURIES

EDITED BY
BERTRAM LLOYD

THE NATIONAL SOCIETY FOR THE ABOLITION
OF CRUEL SPORTS

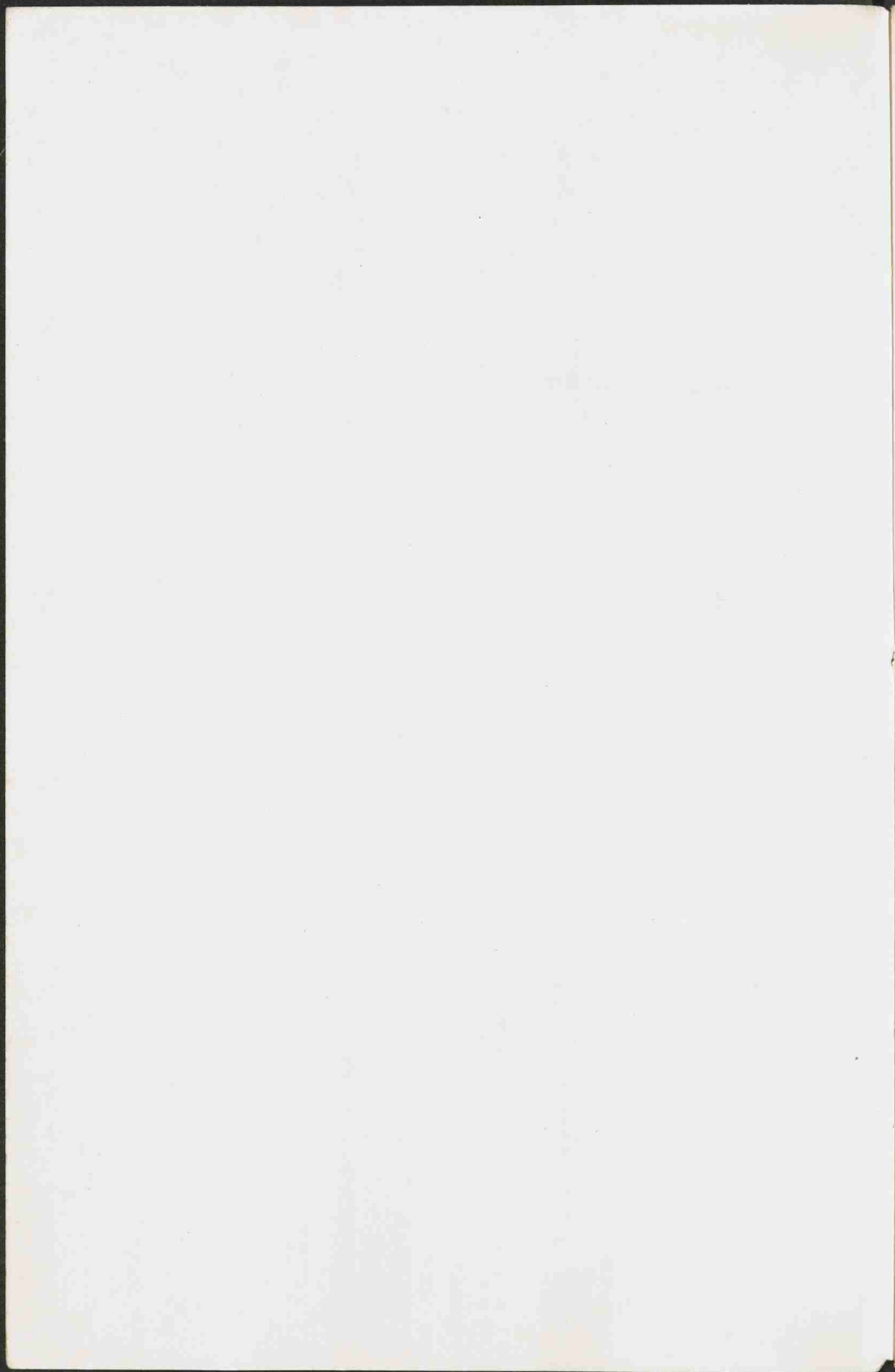
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MOTTOES

Without humanity, a virtue which comprehends all virtues, the name of philosopher is little deserved.

VOLTAIRE.

Fins, furs and feathers, they are and were
For our use and pleasure created,
We can shoot and hunt and angle and snare
Unquestioned, if not unsated.

ADAM LINDSAY GORDON : *Ye Wearie Wanderer* (1865).

PREFACE

HAVING been requested by the publishers to compile a small anthology of thoughts and aphorisms on this important British custom, I soon discovered, as would-be anthologists usually do, that the field was far too vast to allow of my doing anything like justice to the harvest of material at my disposal. It was, for instance, at once apparent that sporting fiction would have to be excluded, thus depriving the collection of extracts from such celebrated English novelists as R. S. Surtees and Whyte Melville.

Though there are many general anthologies of fox-hunting in verse and prose, the need for one in a cheap form for the use of writers, speakers and readers has long been obvious. That need the present all-too-short collection—a Garland, in the pleasant old phrase—attempts to meet; and though I am well aware that owing to the exigencies of time and space it is by no means comprehensive, I think that it may fairly claim to be representative of the many and various aspects of fox-hunting thought and philosophy. It is, in effect, intended for fox-hunting addicts—and others. Here the layman who knows nought of the sport will find reasons for its existence; here the experienced fox-hunter may find some memorable aphorisms, and even, perhaps, a new idea or two touching the pastime he loves; and lastly, the opponents of fox-hunting, that growing body who regard it as in no true sense a national diversion, but rather as an anachronistic national disgrace, will find, it is hoped, much useful matter in these pages.

The collection might easily have been extended to ten times its present size, without any noticeable difference in quality. A very similar anthology of each separate branch of "field sports" could be made without difficulty. Indeed, the publishers are actually contemplating the issue of further pamphlets dealing in like manner with stag-hunting and otter-hunting, if our anthology of the more fashionable sport meets with the success it deserves.

To some people modern fox-hunting seems the Samson's pillar of the whole Philistine edifice of sport. A main, if not a Philistine pillar, it certainly is in the view of Major H. S. Read (page 24), though he somewhat grudgingly admits that there are other forms of sport.

In making my selections I have confined myself strictly to the pronouncements of fox-hunters or authors extolling the

"noble science." The purely literary quality of the collection is thus naturally not a high one, the views of many "cranks" who have satirised fox-hunting—such as Fielding, Cowper, Thomas Hardy, Henry James, Cunninghame Graham and Bernard Shaw—finding no place here.

In case the reader should imagine that some of the passages in the text are mere inventions on my part, or have at least been tampered with, I must state that I have striven to give, wherever possible, the *ipsissima verba* of the philosophers and teachers from whom I have quoted.

The views of the philosophers cited are based on many systems—religious, mystical, social and even humanitarian—differing as markedly from one another as do the systems of most other philosophers. Some, for instance, put forward a theory based on the Fox's Enjoyment of the sport (see page 20). Others strongly oppose this, advocating a theory based on Their Own Enjoyment—of scenery, good fellowship, early morning air and so forth. Strangely enough, few, nowadays at any rate, proclaim a system based on their own enjoyment of *killing foxes*, though this was no doubt the one upheld in the good old days of the eighteenth century by the author of "the most important work on fox-hunting ever written," Peter Beckford. "In Beckford's day foxes were scarcer in most parts of the country than they are now," says Mr. Charles Richardson, one of his twentieth-century editors. The opposite is a very commonly held fallacy.

Beckford, despite his protestation that "fox-hunting is now become the amusement of *gentlemen*," was the brutalitarian who advised his readers ("on the supposition that young foxes cannot so well be spared") to practise their young hounds on a badger after first carefully *breaking his teeth*. Though he possessed a greater veneer of culture than many of his fellow fox-hunters, he was none the less in the true line of descent from those jolly Squires so often satirised some three-quarters of a century earlier by the English poets and dramatists, Samuel Butler, Sir John Vanbrugh and Fielding among them.

The Country Gentleman in Vanbrugh's *Aesop*, who thus pithily describes his chief distinction: "Sir, I am by profession a gentleman of three thousand pounds a year, sir. I keep a good pack of hounds and a good stable of horses," might well have been his ancestor; and so, too, might the Squire in Fielding's *Joseph Andrews*, who set his pack of harriers on Parson Adams for fun. As Captain Ayloffe wrote in his "Letter to a Friend in the Country" in 1696:

“ Does not a Masque give a more Christian-like chase, and conclude in more satisfaction than the Animal you wot of? I saw your Letters to some of our *Club*, and laugh'd not a little at the strangeness of your Style. . . . The chief Topicks of Discourse (for Conversation you have none) are Hawks, Horses, and Hounds; every one of 'em as much God's Image as he that keeps them. . . . This you call a seasonable retreat from the *Lewdness of London*, to enjoy a Calm and Quiet Life.”*

The learned Dean of Gloucester, again, writing in 1697, though admitting that “ Hunting has now an idea of Quality joined to it, and is become the most important business in the life of a Gentleman,” yet agrees that “ this extravagant passion is a strong proof of our Gothick extraction, and shews an affinity of humour with the savage Americans.”

Some of the passages in the text may appear to be too richly decorated with emotion for the taste of the ordinary reader, but it must be remembered that sentimentality—a vastly different thing from sensibility, to which, though it is often confused with sentimentality, fox-hunters can of course lay no claim—is a quality inherent in the British conception of this sport, and one which, however carefully disguised, is bound at times to peep forth. Interesting modern examples of this, from the writings of Mr. Basil de Selincourt and Mr. W. S. Dixon, will be found on pages 17 and 21 respectively of our anthology.

However this may be, virtually all the extracts are taken from writers who are at least masters of their subject, some being in addition Masters of Fox-hounds. A passage from Heywood, that stout seventeenth-century defender of hunting, is an interesting exception to the rule.

Poetry is unfortunately very poorly represented, for despite the quantity of verse about fox-hunting, it rarely, if ever, breaks into poetry. In this connection it is interesting to note that the sporting verses of Adam Lindsay Gordon, the thirteenth-rate poet, extracts from whose *Jew's-harp threnody* conclude this collection, was deemed worthy of a luxurious reprint as late as last year (1937). As I have said, there are many widely differing schools of thought among fox-hunters—and it is not pretended that they all find expression here. An anthology, if it is worth anything at all, must represent its

* A longer extract from this Letter is printed in that most delightful of all anthologies *The Minor Pleasures of Life*, edited by Rose Macaulay (London, 1934).

editor's personal taste. But we find, for instance, Major Harding Cox maintaining that cruelty is an essential element in field sports (page 24), while Lieut.-Col. Boles hunts the fox for humane reasons, and Lieut.-Col. L. Rolleston appears to have been on speaking terms with a fox who was "absolutely devoted to fox-hunting" (page 20).

Again, what could be more violently at variance than the fox-hunter's own views on the fox's quality? Anthony Trollope, for instance, in his justly celebrated defence of fox-hunting which appeared in *The Fortnightly Review* of December 1869, in answer to the strictures of Professor E. A. Freeman, wrote as follows: "Mr. Freeman . . . says truly enough that the fox becomes so precious that the word vulpicide has been created to denounce a most hated crime. . . . Then, though he is not absolutely nurtured as a house-lamb, he receives all the care that is essential to his well-being and education. The fox is almost worshipped, and becomes, as I have said, lord of the coppice and great freeholder of the covert."

Yet a recent writer in *The Staffordshire Sentinel* describes the fox as "a lustful, marauding murderer, a brutal, sly, pitiless animal," and denies him any redeeming feature (see p. 22); and Lord Latymer, though with fewer adjectives, concurs in this view (p. 12). Lord Latymer's idea of fairness to the fox is somewhat reminiscent in tone of the good medieval (and later) days when animals were often indicted and solemnly tried, condemned and executed for "crimes" against mankind.*

One of the finest, as it is certainly one of the most remarkable of our extracts, is that touching the intimate companionship between the fox-hunter and his quarry, elaborated by a Member of the British Field Sports Society in an essay published not long since (page 18). This is a deeply interesting statement, for it at once raises the question as to whether we may have overlooked this factor of "companionship" in our modern condemnations of the torture-chamber. No doubt the gentleman whose duty it was, but a few centuries ago, to apply the thumb-screw, or tighten up the rack, was in reality upheld by his sense of companionship with the victims to whom he dedicated such labours. This "Member of the British Field Sports Society"—and surely so brilliant a writer must be a well-known member—may perhaps be taken to represent the views of the majority of that large and popular body. "I am

* See, e.g., *The Criminal Prosecution and Capital Punishment of Animals*, by E. P. Evans, London, 1906.

at one with the [hunted] fox himself," says this philosopher. I at first thought that he must have written "at odds with the fox"; but since, unlike so many of his colleagues, this author is evidently a mystic, there is no need to assume any printer's error! Indeed his thought is curiously reminiscent of that in Andrew Lang's cricket-song parody:

I am the batsman and the bat,
I am the bowler and the ball,
The umpire, the pavilion cat,
The wicket, stumps, and pitch, and all.

A deeper philosophy, perhaps, than most of those here represented will be found in the extract from the Rev. J. Price's musings on vicarious suffering, which attempt to prove that because vicarious suffering pervades all history, it is right and good for us to derive enjoyment from the infliction of pain and terror on foxes (page 21). It is true that Mr. Price advances no *reasonable* reason for his remarkable teaching, but that is unnecessary, since it is apparently based on divine authority. This philosophy, though it seems markedly different, is in reality not very distantly connected with that of a well-known sportsman, Sir Alfred E. Pease, who in his monograph on the badger (1898) wrote: "Paradoxical as it may appear, my very love of animals increases my passion for hunting them. Besides the longing to come to grips with them, the desire to possess and handle them, there is the natural ambition to be even with them."

But perhaps after all these interesting personal statements, when stripped of their little flowers of speech and pietistic feeling, really amount to no more than the famous dictum of the observant foreigner: "The Englishman says 'It's a fine day, let's go out and kill something.'" In short, it seems clear that Proteus himself was a mere novice as a quick-change artist compared with the sportsmen when they are put to their shifts to defend hunting; and it is this remarkable elusiveness of the fox-hunter whenever the question of the ethics of his hobby arises, which makes argument with him so tedious a task. On the other hand, it is just this gay and reckless variety of argument and idea which renders the hunting man's philosophy so amusing a study, and (I hope) helps to save such a collection as the present *Foxhunters' Philosophy* from the all-too-prevalent dead-level dullness of many little books of "sporting" selections.

I have sought to keep the text as far as possible free from the intrusion of notes and comments ; but, having already drawn the reader's particular attention to the notable passage on Companionship with the Quarry by the anonymous mystical writer, I may now venture to confess my personal preference for Lord Clarendon's excursion into the psychology of nursing (page 16) and Anthony Trollope's striking piece of theological zoology touching the fox's scent (page 10). Unfortunately we have no knowledge as to whether Trollope would have advocated, on similar lines, skunk-hunting, or even, like one of his modern followers, Captain L. C. R. Cameron, stoat-hunting.*

It is interesting to speculate on what would be Lien Chi Altangi's criticism of these, his fellow philosophers, could he revisit this land, the customs of which so puzzled his sagacious mind more than a century and a half ago. It will be remembered that Goldsmith's Chinese Philosopher wrote in respect of the English : " The better sort pretend to the utmost compassion for animals of every kind " ; but he also noted that " Man was born to govern the brute creation, but is become their tyrant."

* * * *

For help in preparing *Foxhunters' Philosophy* I have to thank various friends, in particular Miss Edith Ward and Mr. Charles Oldham.

BERTRAM LLOYD.

* See his *Minor British Field Sports*, London (1921).

FOXHUNTERS' PHILOSOPHY

A garland from five centuries

Of Fox-hunters

So that men vaunt in vaine, which say they hunt the Foxe,
To kepe their neighbors poultry free, and to defende their flockes,...
No, no, the minds of men, which still be vainely bent,
Must have their change of Venerie, as first the Hare in Lent,
The Hart in sommers heate, and me, poore Foxe, in cold :
But whereto serve their sundry sports, these chases manyfold ?
Forsooth to feede their thoughts with dregs of vaine delight,
Whereon most men do muse by day, whereon they dream by night.

GEORGE TURBERVILLE :
The Noble Arte of Venerie or Hunting (1576).

Why Hunting is Noble

. . . It is a Noble sport
To recreate the mindes of Men in good and goodly sort ;
A sport for Noble peeres, a sport for gentle bloods ;
The paine I leave for servants such as beate the bushie woods
To make their masters sport. Then let the Lords rejoyce,
Let gentlemen behold the glee and take thereof the choyce.
For my part (being one) I must needes say my minde :
That Hunting was ordeyned first for Men of Noble kinde.

GEORGE GASCOIGNE : *Commendatory Verses in
Turberville's Booke of Hunting* (1576).

Hunting to God's Glory

Why doth the world yeeld choyce of honest pastimes, if not
decently to use them ? Was not the hare made to be hunted ? the
stagge to be chaced ? and so of all other beasts of game in their
severall kindes. Since God hath provided us of these pastimes, why
may we not use them to his glory ?

THOMAS HEYWOOD : *An Apology for Actors* (1612).

God's Gift to Man

. . . the soul
Of man alone, that particle divine,
Escapes the wreck of worlds when all things fail.
Hence the great distance 'twixt the beasts that perish
And God's bright image, man's immortal race.
The brute creation are his property,
Subservient to his will, and for him made . . .

The prudent huntsman therefore will supply
With annual large recruits his broken pack
And propagate their kind. . . .

W. SOMERVILLE in *The Chase* (1735),
an oft-reprinted hunting classic.

“ Artfulness ” Punished

If I wanted a further justification of hunting I might find it in the artfulness of the animals pursued—e.g. the wiles instinctively taught him by which the fox not infrequently eludes his pursuers.

W. YOUATT: *Humanity to Brutes* (1837).

Happy Herbivores hunting Carnivores !

There never was biped who entered so thoroughly heart and soul into the joys of the chase as does the horse ; and if he be not urged beyond his powers . . . his hunting days are his happiest.

IBID.

The Creator’s Gift of Scent to the Hound

For what object was given the scent of the hound and the exultation with which he abandons himself to the chase ? If he were not thus employed, for what valuable purpose could he be used ?

IBID.

Fox-hunting : the Creator’s kindly Gift to Man

The charge of cruelty, too, has been brought, in these days of sentimentalism and refinement, against the followers of field sports ; but against such malevolent attacks, and in support of the legality of fair sport, we have the highest authority from the very earliest ages of the world even up to modern times. And we have undoubtedly a full right to exercise a domination even unto death, so long as we do not inflict *wanton* torture, upon all those animals which the Almighty has destined for our use ; whether we consider those ordained for daily food, or those which he has created to assist man in his labour, and contribute to those amusements which were, without doubt, kindly given to him to lighten the burthen of his toils which he is doomed to undergo in this life.

ROBERT F. VYNER in *Notitia Venatica* :
A Treatise on Fox-hunting (1841). (Vol. I, 1910 edn.)

Anthony Trollope Expounds God’s Plan

We cannot doubt but that the fox’s scent was imposed upon him in order that he should fulfil his destiny of falling a prey to his pursuers. . . .

“ Act of God ” for the Fox

The animal creation in all its forms, is put under the requisition of man, not only for his needs, but to suit each whim, supply each luxury and gratify each taste. . . . We do not know that the Creator has given any animal a freedom from this bondage.

ANTHONY TROLLOPE in a defence of fox-hunting
in *The Fortnightly Review* (1869).*

The True Fox-hunter

Sport is but a secondary consideration with a true fox-hunter. The first is *the killing of the fox*: hence arises the eagerness of pursuit—chief pleasure of the chase. I confess, I esteem blood so necessary to a pack of fox-hounds, that, with regard to myself, I always return home better pleased with but an indifferent chase, with death at the end of it, than with the best chase possible, if it end with the loss of the fox.

PETER BECKFORD: *Thoughts on Hunting* (1781).

NOTE.—This classic treatise (“ with which every hunting man and woman is familiar ”) has passed through many English editions besides being translated into French and German. A full-dress biography of Beckford by a modern M.F.H. was published in 1937.

The False Fox-hunter ?

The exhilaration of riding over a country, hearing the joyful cry of hounds and seeing them work, is something quite different from blood-lust. If the result of a day's hunting is “ chopping ” several foxes in cover, it is a bad day. If a good fox gets away after a rousing gallop, it is a good day. Who worries about the fact that no blood has been shed ?

T. GIBBONS: A letter in *The Listener*, 6/10/1937.

* It is strange with what unanimity the votaries of hunting always expound and strive to follow the wishes of the Creator—at least as regards their own particular form of sport (Anthony Trollope, for instance, drew the line at bull-fighting). Thus as far back as 1576 we find in *The Booke of Hunting* (ascribed to G. Turbervile):

I should seem to argue against God's ordinances, since it seemeth that suche beastes [i.e. deer] have bene created to the use of man and for his recreation.

Another instance is seen in the quotation from Thomas Heywood, the dramatist, printed above. These are but samples selected at random. They are followed by many more in similar style, until in our own day we find a vicar of the Anglican Church, the Rev. J. Price, writing in *The Western Mail*, 15/5/1936: “ Mr. Bertram Lloyd asks me . . . whether I can seriously contend that man possesses divine authority for killing for sport. In reply I say that I can and I do.”—EDITOR.

Is thy Servant a Dog ?

The foolish cranks with no knowledge of the sport who rave about the cruelty of running a poor little fox to his death, do not realise that the men who follow are not pursuing the fox, but leave it entirely to the hounds, and it is out of sympathy with the pack that they rejoice at a kill.

J. OTHO PAGET : *Foxhunting* (Lonsdale Library, 1930).

NOTE.—It is interesting to compare with this the following passage from the same chapter by the same author: "...the other day I watched a fox with hounds not far behind come onto the road where I was standing. He did not see me, but on reaching the road he turned up it for half a mile. His ruse might have succeeded had not good visibility enabled me to mark where he left the road, and therefore impart the information to the huntsmen."

Giving him his Due!

No one has ever accused me of cruelty, but I do say, as one who thoroughly understands the animal, that no death could be too prolonged for a fox, as, to begin with, does he not live by killing, and we know the scripture sentence on those that take life.

W. W. S. in *The Sportsman*, 11/1/1911.

The Criminal Again

The fox is so fierce a killer himself that it is fair enough to kill him. . . . He is a self-confident villain, not even frightened when he is hunted.

LORD LATYMER : "A Defence of Hunting"
in *Blackwood's Magazine*, May, 1929.

An Appeal to Humanity

I would ask the cohorts of the supersensitive . . . if they are prepared to face the appalling holocaust of animal life which must inevitably follow if the wild deer and the fox are hunted no more.

IBID.

Naughty Nature!

Fox-hunting is accused of being cruel, which, of course, it is; but it is idle and ridiculous to place the blame on fox-hunters. It is Nature itself which is guilty. Nature has ordained that a fox will always be both the hunter and hunted.

VISCOUNT CASTLEROSSE in *The Daily Express*, 7/1/1935.

Canine Instinct—and Human Intelligence ?

Hunt officials and servants are keen on "blood," not because they like hurting animals, but because they believe that the efficiency of their hounds and their ability to show sport depends on the satisfaction of a deep-seated canine instinct. They may, too, have a sense of responsibility in the method of reducing the number of deer, foxes, or hares, so that they do not cause excessive damage to the property of farmers and others in the district.

THE MARQUIS OF TAVISTOCK : "Field Sports and the Humanitarian"
in *The Fortnightly Review*, December, 1929.

Foxhunting not Devoid of Cruelty

Hunting, like many other things which nevertheless flourish exceedingly, cannot be justified on the grounds of being wholly devoid of cruelty. But the mistake people make is in assuming that it is, therefore, a bad thing. On the contrary, it is for that very reason an excellent antidote to the demoralising and softening effect of the legislation of an over-parental Government which bids fair to kill the virility and individuality of its subjects. Anyone who will compare the characters of an old-time fox-hunter and a modern devotee of the "physical fitness" campaign will see the difference between character based on natural indulgence of an instinct and that based on morbid self-consciousness.

T. A. RICKARD: A letter in *The South Wales Argus*, 8/12/1937.

Is Cruelty Really Wrong?

I think he would be a very bold man indeed who set forth the argument that hunting was so cruel that it was absolutely wrong. . . .

DR. C. G. LANG in an address in 1913.

NOTE.—Dr. Lang, now Archbishop of Canterbury, gave an address at Moor Monkton Church, on 16/11/1913, at the dedication of a stained-glass window to the memory of an aged clergyman killed in the hunting field in the previous year. The window, as described by *The Yorkshire Post*, contained a representation of St. Francis of Assisi!

A Democratic Sport?

I venture to say that even the labourer, when he feels the stir of the meet, or sees the sudden bursts of the hounds and horses, gets just one of those fresh events, excitements and interests that he needs in what otherwise is often a very monotonous life.

IBID.

The School for Democracy

The hunting field is the greatest Democratic Institution in England. There the head of the Ducal House on his expensive hunter and the humblest peasant on foot meet on equal terms and with the same surpassing enthusiasm for the noble game.

ANON. in *The Daily Graphic*, 17/10/1922.

Limited Society!

. . . I have met but one man in my life who had the hardihood to avow that he disliked hunting, and we could hardly count him, as he was a banker, and considered the pursuit of wealth more absorbing than that of the fox.

THE EARL OF CLARENDON: "Field Sports and the National Character" in *The Transactions of the Hertfordshire Natural History Society* (1890).

“ Men are but children of a larger growth ”

Why is it that the baby-in-arms crows with delight as the pageant of the chase sweeps through our country villages? Why the death-bed request of the famous huntsman that he might once more hear the maddening “ view-holloa ” which proclaims a fox on foot? It is that the spirit of the chase is nascent in the one, and has never been lulled to rest in the other.

IBID.

Babyish ?

At a cubbing meet of the Quorn at Ashley Pastures, last week, an interesting little ceremony was held. Anthony Leslie Oswald, the ten-months-old son of Sir and Lady Hanson, and the youngest member of the Quorn Hunt Pony Club, was duly “ blooded ” to fox to the accompaniment of the orthodox “ twanging ” of the huntsman’s horn. Held aloft in his mother’s arms, the budding foxhunter took his “ blooding ” like a sportsman and accepted the brush with great dignity. “ The earlier you blood the young entry the better,” said a sporting old Leicestershire farmer who witnessed the ceremony, and so say all of us.

“ CLODHOPPER ” (the writer of weekly “ Hunting Notes ”)
in *The Shooting Times*, 12/10/1935.

“ Kind words are more than coronets ”

The non-hunting Farmer certainly has little advantage to set against the hoof-marks, the gaps and stock astray which he finds after hounds have run over his land. But he generally bears it all with the most enduring patience and reflects that, after all, his father hunted . . . And did not the Master only last week at the market, over a glass of port, ask after the young horse and deplore the price of lambs?

WILLIAM FAWCETT: “ Hunting and the Non-Hunting Farmer ” in *The Morning Post*, 3/11/1933.

“ Wise Spending ”

If everyone in England had spent their money in the same way as fox-hunters, England would not be in the plight it is now.

GEORGE EVANS in *Horse and Hound*, 13/11/1931.

Patriotic Women are doing their Bit

Whereas thirty years ago there was only one Lady Master of Foxhounds, there are to-day fifteen in England and Scotland alone . . . and nearly as many Masters of Harriers. . . .

Perhaps women are more prepared to make sacrifices in these hard times in order to enjoy the distinction of writing M.F.H. after their names; perhaps they are more patriotically alive to the vital necessities of the situation or keener on the social aspect. . . .

MRS. CAMERON DUNBAR in *The Morning Post*, 16/2/1932.

A Patriotic Necessity—Hunting helps Poultry-farming

Farmers and covert-owners preserve foxes for hunting on the clear understanding that the Hunt will do their best to kill them. . . . We *must* go on hunting, as we are under an honourable obligation to do so. . . . Hunts have just been appealed to by the Chairman of the Board of Agriculture to do their best to keep foxes down, that there be no undue damage to poultry. As that can only *legitimately* be done by hunting, our packs must go on with the work. . . . Its discontinuance would be in opposition to the practice of economy.

LT.-COL. DENNIS F. BOLES, Master of West Somerset Foxhounds,
in a letter to the Humanitarian League, January, 1916.

Hunting frightens few Foxes—It kills only one in ten!

As regards fox-hunting, at least everything is carried on in the light of day. Nine times out of ten a hunted fox escapes, and escapes without so much as a fright. . . .

J. W. FITZWILLIAM, Secretary of the British Field Sports Society, in a letter in *The Liverpool Post*, 26/1/1934.*

Arduous Duties of Tactful M.F.H.s

The wounds which matter are those secret stabs that are not noticed at all for some months and then appear as an indefinable weakness in the fox supply. In neither case should the Master make a pretext for a quarrel. For open murder there is no need to quarrel. For secret murder there is no evidence. The tactful Master works on the opposite principle. He stays in his own country during the summer, makes it his business to know what is going on there, meets as many people as possible and, with some emphasis, thanks those who preserve foxes.

The Times, 7/2/1936 (Article on "The Vulpicide"
by the Hunting Correspondent).

The Sport of the Poor

Foxhunting in these days derives more strength from the cottages of the poor than the mansions of the rich.

WILLIAM FAWCETT: "Hunting and the Non-hunting Farmer" in *The Morning Post*, 3/11/1933.

* Strangely at variance with this is the view expressed by another sportsman who, in a spirited defence of fox-hunting in a leading article in *The Dorset Chronicle*, 11/2/1936, states: "There is no doubt whatsoever that hunting is cruel. The foxes must die in great pain, and the experience of being hunted to death is one of the most terrible that the world can put in the way of man or beast. To argue that the cruelty is absent is merely futile."

How Choir-treats help Hunting

The people who live in the country all the year round and who devote their energies, not perhaps entirely to the cause of fox-hunting, but continuously to that interchange of neighbourly interest on which foxhunting is so largely dependent . . . Clubs, village cricket, hay, women's institute, puppy show, choir treat, harvest, flower show, cubhunting, British Legion—here and now a summer diary could be written for any one of them. But you will observe that it is all hopelessly mixed up. The hound puppies are just as much in evidence at the flower show as the cubs in the corn at harvest time.

The Times, 1/11/1934. (Hunting Correspondent.)

How Hunting helps Nursing

There are not wanting instances of the fairer sex apportioning their lives between field-sports and works of mercy and charity . . . and who shall say that their ministrations to the sick and needy are not the tenderer, their zest for the labour of love the greater, for occasional indulgence in the sport [i.e. fox-hunting], which is graced by their presence ?

THE EARL OF CLARENDON : "Field Sports and the National Character" in the *Transactions of the Hertfordshire Natural History Society* (1890).

How Hunting helps Religion

Hunting is the great bond which unites us all in the country, non-hunting farmers and labourers join with enthusiasm when the hounds are on the farm. The death of the fox is part of the day, but it is always with a certain regret that one sees him die, and it carries with it the general philosophy that death is death and it has got to come to all of us, then let us run straight. . . .

If I were a fox I should support fox-hunting and be sure of a run for my money. As a man I know it keeps me young, cheerful, and a better and broader Unitarian than I should otherwise be."

NORMAN D. BLAKE in *The Inquirer*, 10/2/1934.

How Religion helps Hunting

I have always been taught to observe Sunday and to ride straight—both of which I have tried hard to do. I am only an infant as far as hunting is concerned, having but seven seasons to my credit, but the only three rules I ever got from my father were : "Go to church, ride straight, and (either going to a meet or to church) arrive looking as tidy and well-dressed as possible. Never mind if you are muddy coming home.

A correspondent in *Horse and Hound*, 10/2/1935.

The Fox's Generous "Gifts" to Fox-hunters

He may have entered history as "vermin": he may to-day be labelled "varmint": but he owes all his life to those who hunt him, and, in return, they receive from him the gifts of healthy pleasure and exercise, the cementing of friendliness between all kinds and classes of people.

J. R. YOUNG: *Foxhunting* (1934).

How Hunting helps Temperance

. . . Another thing you anti-sport people forget, is the health of the nation. . . Skill in sport has done more than anything else to stop drinking. This and open-air life have made us live far longer than our fore-fathers.

LADY OXFORD in "Should Blood Sports be Abolished?"
in *The Listener*, 8/2/1933.

How Sparing the Fox helps Hunting

I never forget the keenest hunting-man I ever knew describing to me, years ago, how, walking round his farm one day, when the hunt was on and he, for a wonder, not out with it, he saw the fox, dead beat, lying full length in a furrow; their eyes met, and the fox said to him in a language he could not mistake, "Old fellow, I can count on you, I know," and, of course, my friend walked on and gave no sign. I am sure every true gentleman would do the same and that, if all who rode to hounds had the same spirit, the game would be good for another hundred years.

BASIL DE SELINCOURT: "With the Hounds and the Hare"
in *The Countryman*, October, 1935.

How Hunting helps us All

Representatives of the Peterborough Royal Foxhound Show Society, in appealing against Income Tax assessment, contended that the improvement of fox-hound breeding was a "charitable" object because:

1. Fox-hunting was good for the community at large.
2. It got money into the country districts.
3. It was good for the officers of the Army.
4. It made for the well-being of animals useful to man.

Mr. Justice Lawrence in giving judgment said, "*Though I am firmly convinced of the truth of these propositions*, I am unable to take the view that the Society is established for charitable purposes only." [Italics mine.—ED.]

From a report in *The Daily Telegraph*, 9/4/1936.

The Miseries of Spring

There is something to me always particularly melancholy in the spring. . . . Whether it is the consciousness of the departure of life, or feelings imbibed from the soft Favonian flavour of spring, I know not, which makes this period appear so depressing to the spirits, and so productive of a desire to moralise; but there is undoubtedly something in the atmosphere of this season which is not to be perceived during any other quarter of the year. . . . Every object upon which we allow the mind to dwell seems to remind us that May is not the month of the year for fox-hunting.

ROBERT F. VYNER in *Notitia Venatica*:
A Treatise on Fox-hunting (1841). (Vol. I, 1910 edn.).

At One with the Fox

Ahead, strung out like white clouds on the hillside, stream the hounds, their voices chiming faintly in the breeze. . . . Above all, before all, I am at one with the whole wide country-side, with the ploughman halting his team to watch as hounds sweep by, with the labourers, fox-hunters all, who, casting work aside, rush to the hill-top, with the hounds casting slowly and wisely over the cold-scenting fallow, with the jay that flies screaming from the tallest oak tree, with the baby rabbits that scurry to the hedgerow, with the fox himself as he steals down the furrow.

“A Member of the British Field Sports Society” in
St. Martin's Review, October, 1934.

The Poetry of Fox-hunting

Well-known is yon covert
And crag hanging o'er!
The little Red Rover
Shall reach it no more!
The foremost hounds near him,
His strength 'gins to droop;
In pieces they tear him,
Who-whoop! Who-who-whoop!

R. E. EGERTON WARBURTON: “The Little Red Rover” (1833).
A popular hunting song reprinted in *The Poetry of Sport* in
“The Badminton Library” (1896).

“For each man kills the thing he loves”

I hold that fox-hunting with the slight suffering involved is more than compensated for by the greater love I have for horses, hounds and animals generally, foxes included. We are all part of one another.

NORMAN D. BLAKE: *The Inquirer*, 24/2/1934.

A Parliament of Foxes favours Fox-hunting

Nor are we quite in the same position with regard to the fox as the bear-baiters to the bear, for we take from the fox what we have given and what we have the right to give or withhold from the lower animals, the permission to live. The fox receives certain privileges in order that he may be hunted, and though he cannot be a party to the arrangement, it is clearly for his good. . . . I am sure that if we could call a parliament of foxes and they could understand the question, then there would be an enormous majority in favour of fox-hunting. Each fox would think that it would be others who would be killed. He would know that he was alive . . . and intended, if speed, intelligence and endeavour availed, to remain so.

THOMAS F. DALE : *The Fox* (1906).

Humane Slaughter for Foxes

The hunt death is the natural and the kindest death, and therefore I support the continuance of hunting [i.e. during the war of 1914-1918] *inter alia* on the ground of humanity.

LT.-COL. D. F. BOLES :

A letter in *The Humanitarian*, February, 1916.

Forethought for Foxes

At the luncheon just over a year ago, I asked people to help in increasing the supply of foxes. People have been extraordinarily kind, and foxes have been found in parts of the country where there had been none for some time.

THE HON. ANNE LEWIS, M.F.H., in a speech at the Puppy Show of the South Pembrokeshire Hunt on 13/6/1931, as reported in *The Pembrokeshire Telegraph*.

Difficult to Imagine !

Can you imagine a mass meeting of foxes being asked whether they would rather be immediately exterminated or continue to be allowed to have the off-chance to escape ? . . . I fancy foxes would become rather degenerate if they were not hunted. What gives the fox the greatest pleasure in life ? Is it not being as efficient an animal as it can be ?

THE REV. J. ROSSIE BROWN, in a speech at a meeting of the Edinburgh Education Committee, 22/1/1934, as reported in *The Scotsman*.

The Happy Hunted

What your correspondent does not know is that death by hounds is instantaneous, and that nine out of ten foxes actually enjoy being hunted.

"Truth," in a letter in *The Sheffield Telegraph*, 4/11/1936.

How Foxes enjoy being Hunted

If foxes, like women, had a vote, I think they would vote unanimously for keeping up fox-hunting. They would prefer to enjoy the sport of being hunted than to be caught in traps or wounded with guns. I have known a fox that was absolutely devoted to fox-hunting.

There was a black fox in the late Mr. Albert Heymann's gorse at Lambley and we called him "Albert." We hunted him regularly, and he was so fond of being hunted that even when we had not been drawing the gorse I have known him jump out on the road and try to get up a hunt on his own account. After we had hunted him many seasons I regret to say we killed him in the ground at Oxton.

COL. SIR LAUNCELOT ROLLESTON, D.S.O., in a speech at the presentation of a solid silver fox to the retiring joint Masters of the South Notts Hunt.—*The Daily Telegraph*, 6/11/1934.

The Truth harms Hunting

At the annual meeting of the Hunt Secretaries' Association on June 2nd, members stated that in their opinion harm to hunting was caused by reports of unusual methods of killing foxes,* and it was hoped Masters would be able to induce those who wrote the accounts of runs from their country to omit all such reports and, if possible, to get them to say no more than that the fox was accounted for after being run to ground and dug out.

The Field, 14/6/1930.

Best for Them—and Best for Us

Civilised England has been obliged to exterminate the wolf and the bear, but it can accommodate the fox and the deer in their natural surroundings, asking of them nothing to which they have not been accustomed, except *that any hunting shall take place at a time when man can follow with enjoyment.* [Italics mine.—ED.]

M. F.: The Case for Stag-hunting,"
in *The National Review*, May, 1930.

Scarlet the only Wear

When the economy crusade was at its height two years ago, one Master of Hounds seriously suggested that he, his servants and his subscribers should wear black instead of red coats. Fearful thought! Can anyone imagine a farmer opening the gate onto his own wheat for a procession of funereal horsemen? Such a move would rob the chase of all its picturesqueness, all its prestige, and much of its excitement. Fox-hunters *must* wear scarlet.

The Country Life Monthly Calendar, October, 1933.

* I.e., burning them out of chimneys where they have taken refuge, and so forth.—ED.

—Even in Heaven

. . . Angelic choirs ? No, justice must provide
For one who rode straight, and in hunting died.
So if Heaven had no Hunt before he came,
Why, it must find one now :
If any shirk and doubt they know the game,
There's one to teach them how :
And the whole host of Seraphim complete
Must jog in scarlet to his opening Meet.

ROBERT GRAVES : "The Dead Fox-hunter"
in *The Westminster Gazette*, 20/9/1916.

A Three-fold Cord

How is one to sum up such a life ? He lived for God and for his King. . . . If I were asked how in his declining years he spent his time, I should say roughly speaking that a third of it was devoted to business, a third to matters connected with the hunting field, and the other third to prayer.

THE REV. FATHER L. WALKER, S. J., in his funeral sermon
on Lord North at Banbury, as reported in *The Banbury
Guardian*, 14/4/1932.

Are Fox-hunters Sentimental ?

A lady . . . had her son with her, a lad of about eleven years old. [The son had "a nasty fall," but remounted, urged on by his mother]. At the end of another twenty minutes hounds rolled their fox over and not many were there to see the finish. Amongst them were the lady and her son. . . . When we parted I said, "Good son ! Noble mother !" There was a catch in her voice and tears in her eyes, as she replied, "I want him to be a man." And her prayer was answered, for he distinguished himself in more than one great battle, and made one more instance of the truth of Napoleon's great saying.

W. S. DIXON : *Fox-hunting in the Twentieth Century* (1925).

Vicarious Suffering for Foxes !

The principle of vicarious suffering pervades history, some suffering and dying for the good of others. The mother for her sick child, the doctor in his laboratory, the missionary among the heathen, the soldier on the battlefield—these suffer and sometimes die that others may live and be happy and well. Is it not in accordance with this great principle that animals should play their part by sometimes suffering and dying to help in keeping Britons hardy, healthy and brave ? . . .

This law is continually seen in operation. The supreme example of it was shewn to the world (I write with reverence) on Calvary. Why should animals be exempted from the operation of this law or principle ?

THE REV. J. PRICE, Vicar of Talley, in letters to
The Western Mail, 11/5/1936 and 15/5/1936.

“ Vicarious Suffering ” Exemplified

So forty fair minutes they run and they race ;
'Tis a heaven to some—'tis a lifetime to all . . .
Till the gamest old varmint that ever drew breath,
All worried and stiffened, held high for a throw,
O'er the Squire's jolly visage is grinning in death,
Ere he dashes him down to be eaten below.
While the daws flutter out from a neighbouring spire
At the thrilling who-whoop of the Galloping Squire.
G. J. WHYTE-MELVILLE, “ The Galloping Squire ” (1868)—
reprinted in *The Poetry of Sport* in “ The Badminton Library ”
(1896).

How Discipline obviates Cruelty

Well-meaning cranks who talk about the wickedness and cruelty of fox-hunting should study the rules of the game in the book of experience. They would find, as the young hound finds, that the lash of authority is long, and that discipline is the very essence of the chase.

R. ARKELL: *Richard Jefferies* (London, 1933).

“ I'll learn you to be a fox ! ”

One correspondent said the fox is a beautiful animal. Well, I have never seen any beauty in him. He has a shaggy, coarse, dull and faded-looking brown and black coat. He is, in disposition, a lustful, marauding murderer, a brutal, sly, cunning, pitiless animal. . . . The fox has no redeeming feature.

E. HAUGHTON: A letter in
The Staffordshire Evening Sentinel, 2/9/1936.

Redeeming Features ?

No one loves animals more than I, and no one could more enjoy and delight in their pretty ways, and the sight of some fox cubs at play—little rogues as they are—than I, as I once saw them on a farm lawn with their vixen. . . .

The fox is a strong animal and difficult to find without dogs, which necessitates hunting.

LADY ERSKINE CRUM: A letter in *The Queen*, 4/11/1937.

The New King of Beasts

Hunting is really kindness to the fox. Instead of being the scum of the earth—as low in the opinion of man as a rat—he has become almost a king, respected by nearly everyone.

Major V. D. WILLIAMS, Chairman of the Institute of Horse and Pony Club, in a lecture to children reported in *The Daily Herald*, 2/1/1937.

The Definition of a Sportsman

For years past sport and sportsmen in this country have been the butt of ceaseless vilification from a small but fanatical band of people who suffer from that fatal megalomania which numbs the good sense of its subjects and turns them into creatures of insane single-mindedness. . . . Those who are about to defend sport have on their side all the most native and deeply rooted instincts of this nation, all the love of fair-play and the sincerity of purpose which have made the title of "Sportsman" most enviable.

J. WENTWORTH DAY in an article welcoming the formation of the British Field Sports (Defence) Society in *The Field*, 14/6/1930.

The Definition of the Opponents of Sport

First among the ranks of the foemen [of "Sport"] one may observe the cranks and faddists and anti-vivisectionists. . . . They are what they are, poor things; they exist in a murky world of their own imagining, beyond argument, beyond hope, and many leagues removed from charity. . . . Next we come to a class, a very large class, of folk—cultured and amiable, literary or musical or artistic as often as not—who consider that the infliction of pain in any degree is a much worse sin than adultery, to which indeed, some of them appear rather partial. . . . Then there is the third rank of the enemy . . . who profess to suffer in their pocket from the damage done by beasts of the chase and their pursuers. . . . Perhaps they are on the whole, a more serious menace than the pulpy-hearted.

LORD LATYMER in *Blackwood's Magazine*, May, 1929.

The Fox-hunter's Mental Superiority

We would even go so far as to suggest that the race of men which would arise in the country to exterminate foxes by [other] means, whether fair or foul, *would be far inferior mentally and physically* [italics mine—ED.] to those who to-day ride over their own and their neighbour's land in pursuit of healthy and innocent recreation.

Foxhunting: A few Facts—A pamphlet issued by the British Field Sports Society, 1932.

“ Mental Superiority ” Exemplified

In retaliation for the shooting of a fox by a North Yorkshire farmer the supporters of Lord Middleton and the Sinnington Hounds held a remarkable display at Slingsby, near Malton, yesterday. The fox had been shot and thrown into the premises of Will Grant, ex-huntsman of Lord Middleton's Hounds. The hunting men, wearing crêpe bands, first held a mock run with the hounds, after which, with due solemnity, they interred the carcass of the fox, whilst some of their number fired a volley over the grave, and the “ Last Post ” was sounded on the huntsman's horn. The incident gave rise to much excitement in the district.

The Standard, 19/11/1913.

The Only True Sportsman

Hunting, fishing and shooting come under the heading of “ Sport,” and, of the three, I hand the laurels to the huntsman.

A huntsman possesses the only true principles of a sportsman— an honour to which he is justly entitled. Give me the fox, hounds, horses, and the stout-hearted people in pink, for then I get both music and sport.

MAJOR H. STAPELEY READ :

A letter in *The Staffordshire Evening Sentinel*, 1/9/1936.

The Awful Penalty of Abolishing Hunting

. . . I am good to maintain that field sports and the cruelty undoubtedly involved are also necessary in order that the standard of virility in our people may be fully maintained, and that we may not become a C.3 nation of degenerate and spineless wastrels.

MAJOR HARDING COX in *The Daily Graphic*, 24/9/1927

An Utterly British Type—the Fox-hunter

If there are two types utterly British which make us, under the Providence of God, a nation of free and independent men, they are the British farmer and the British fox-hunter.

THE BISHOP OF RIPON (in 1938) reported in

The Meat Trades Journal, 16/6/1938.

The Glories of our Blood and Stud

We have no wish to exaggerate

The worth of the sports we prize.

Some toil for their church and some for their state

And some for their merchandize,

Some traffic and trade in the city's mart,

Some travel by land and sea,

Some follow science, some cleave to art . .

Yet if once we efface the joys of the chase

From the land, and outroot the stud,

GOODBYE TO THE ANGLO-SAXON RACE,

FAREWELL TO THE NORMAN BLOOD.

ADAM LINDSAY GORDON : *Ye Wearie Wanderer* (1865).

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