

THE HUNTING OF THE STAG

By
EDITH WARD

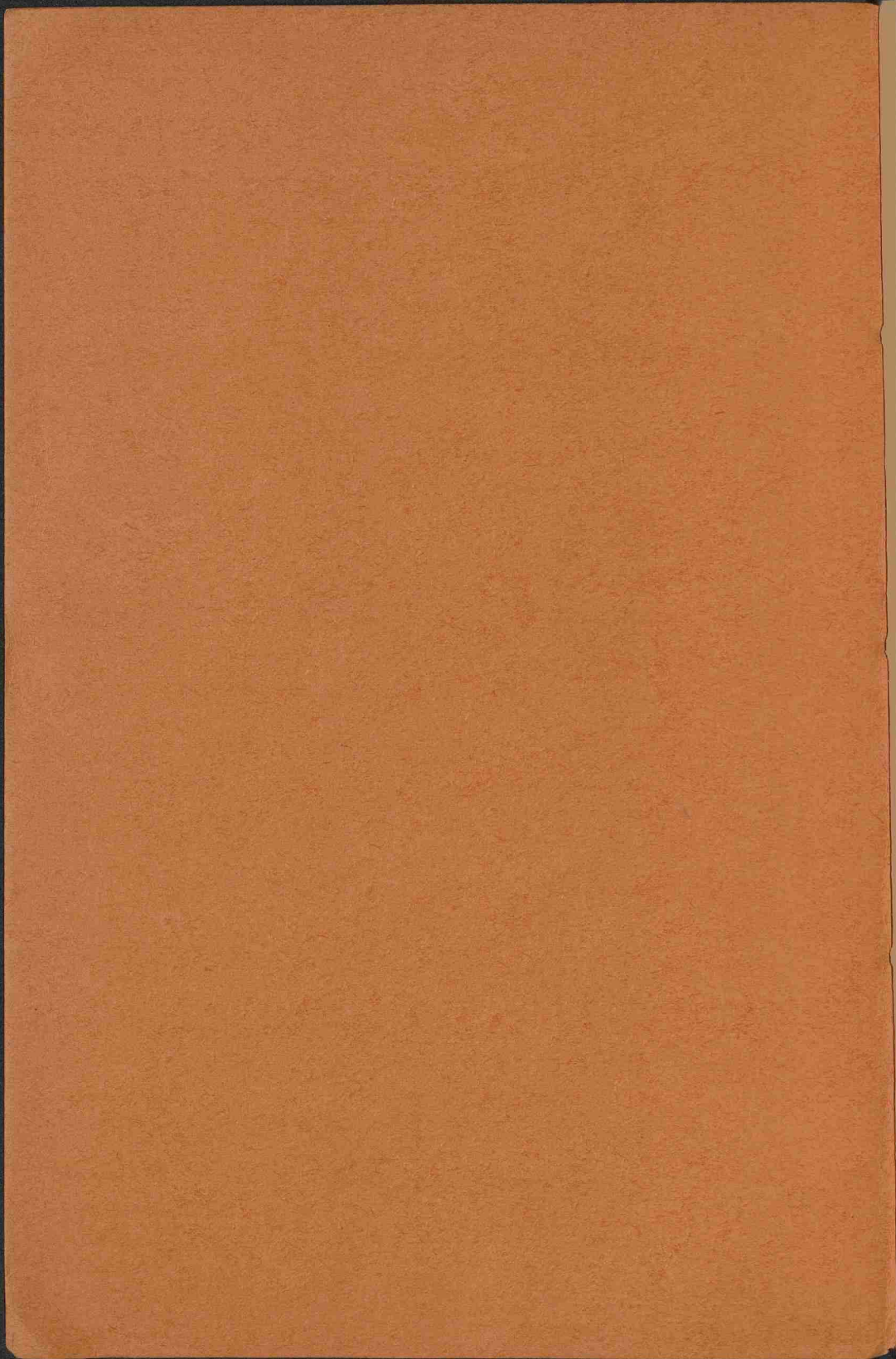
THE NATIONAL SOCIETY FOR THE ABOLITION
OF CRUEL SPORTS

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LECTURE NOTES

BY

ROBERT H. DICK

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THE HUNTING OF THE STAG

THREE species of deer are known in Britain—the Red Deer (*Cervus elaphus*), the largest and most handsome of our wild fauna, which is hunted in Devon and Somerset and stalked in Scotland; the Roe Deer (*Capreolus capræa*), once very common in all parts of the country and now rare; and the Fallow Deer (*Cervus dama*), which is doubtfully a native though well established for a long period. This last is the deer most often seen in private parks and wild in the New Forest. It is hunted to kill in Hampshire, but elsewhere chiefly as the “carted stag” of newspaper notoriety.

THE CARTED DEER.

A semi-domesticated animal, often deprived of its antlers and occasionally de-sexed, it is conveyed in a van to some appointed place and there released and given a certain amount of “law,” in the language of sport, otherwise—a start, before buckhounds are laid upon its trail and it is expected to show good form and afford a brisk run to the very miscellaneous field of followers before it takes refuge in a pond, or stream, or some outbuilding from whence it can be secured and returned to its van to run again another day.

This simple statement describes what is often claimed to be a very mild form of sport far removed from cruelty, and not infrequently held in contempt by fox-hunters, or hunters of the Red Deer. As a matter of fact cruelty of a serious kind is often associated with it. No animal can be expected to enjoy pursuit at speed over unknown ground in what is, generally, cultivated country, intersected by roads, canals, railways, and often almost suburban in character, wherein it may encounter motors, dogs, and people and have to surmount difficult obstacles, turning this way and that as it tries to avoid the terrifying objects it sees. Such tame deer have been hunted out to sea.¹

¹ A recent case formed the subject of a prosecution by the R.S.P.C.A., which failed on the ground that the animal, a hind in this case, was not domesticated although known by and knowing her name; and some few years earlier such a driven deer swimming out to sea was rescued by some French fishermen and ended its life peacefully after some time of further domestication.

They have been impaled on spiked railings, and in other ways so seriously injured that they have had to be destroyed. But even if no accident of this kind occurs there is distress and suffering from over driving. In the Home Counties one may chance to see a small animal, looking not unlike a calf, labouring along with scant breath and heaving flanks pursued at no great distance by hounds, a motley crowd of mounted men, women and children, others on bicycles, or on foot, not to mention motor-cars with occupants trying to see all they can of this "glorious" sport whenever the line of pursuit follows on or near a highway.

It has long been the view of thoughtful and humane people that such happenings are not true sport and are comparable only to the coursing of bagged rabbits and the shooting of trapped pigeons. For more than forty years it has been the policy of the R.S.P.C.A. to endeavour to procure such an alteration of the law as would make such sport illegal, and the "Spurious Sports Bill" has been introduced into Parliament after Parliament by members of all three political parties, but has not yet come within hailing distance of the Royal assent. This in spite of the fact that King Edward VII abolished the Royal Buckhounds soon after his accession, largely as a result of the activities of the Humanitarian League.

It was thought that the Protection of Animals Act of 1911 might be invoked under the "terrifying" clause to protect these semi-domesticated deer, but hitherto no successful prosecution has taken place; not even when the joint master of Lord Ribblesdale's Buckhounds was summoned for permitting a lame hind to be pursued and mauled with the object of "blooding" young hounds. So the position remains highly unsatisfactory.

THE NEW FOREST.

It has been mentioned that in the New Forest the Fallow Deer are hunted to kill and not to capture. It is claimed—indeed proclaimed with great vigour in some cases—that the New Forest deer are simply run down by hounds and brought to bay, and then instantly killed by the huntsman's knife. Nothing, it would appear, could be more gratifying than the behaviour of the hounds who never dream of touching their prey till the huntsman arrives with his knife to perform the authorised rite. One says "rite" advisedly, because there is a traditional way of doing these things, and tradition is as powerful in some hunting fraternities where the shedding of blood

is concerned as it is among orthodox Jews under their rules of Shechita. There is, however, a very pretty divergence of view, between certain protagonists of deer-hunting, on this point of "bay and mort" in the New Forest; a member of the House of Lords, having asserted in print that the New Forest buck is pulled down and killed by the hounds themselves, has been vigorously contradicted by an ardent defender of the New Forest Hunt. The unprejudiced outsider will draw the conclusion that things don't happen "just so," or according to rule, when a lot of lusty and excited hounds at last come up with the object of an hour's hot pursuit and the mounted men are disentangling themselves from brushwood and holly before they can reach the spot where . . . ! But here we draw the veil and the reader may draw his own inference. It is rather a curious commentary on this assertion about the self-control of the New Forest Buckhounds who hunt Fallow Deer, that a well-known hunting authority (Capt. King-King) has pointed out the undesirability of buckhounds exceeding twenty-two inches in height in the case of carted deer "because at that height they could not, bar accidents, kill their quarry." Big hounds, such as those used in hunting the Red Deer, can knock the Fallow Deer off his legs, but both sizes will be able to kill him if he gets down in a ditch. It is expecting too much of hound nature to assume that no New Forest deer are ever pulled down and killed by hounds, as Lord Latymer affirmed that they were.

WEST COUNTRY STAGGING.

We now turn to the West Country which for the last few years has occupied the centre of the stage of controversy about the "to be or not to be" of deer-hunting with hounds. Here, in the wilds of Exmoor and the Doone Country of romance, is the last English stronghold of the Red Deer. Here, it was claimed by the late Lord Fortescue, by Sir E. Chichester and others, the oldest Sport of Kings is carried out according to rite and rule, as it has been done through nine centuries of English history since the days of Norman William.

We will not refer to this claim as a terminological inexactitude, but it certainly must be called a picturesque exaggeration. While it is quite true that the hunting of deer was always reserved for kings, nobles and their retainers, accompanied by dogs, under a system of Forest Laws whose savagery can only now be related with horror, the method of pursuit has varied, and if one or two old Norman-French terms are still used it

seems to be entirely forgotten that both hunters and huntresses brought down bucks and does with that lethal weapon which wrought such deadly havoc at Agincourt; and though the modern sportsmen of the West protest that it is impossible to shoot deer with a rifle, their ancestors could, and did, do effective execution with the English long-bow and the less known cross-bow and quarrel.²

It is strange that those poaching rascals, Robin Hood and his merry men, could do with primitive weapons, among the then dense thickets of Sherwood, what cannot be done with weapons of precision in the more open stretches of Exmoor. Likewise it seems to be forgotten that another method of dealing with deer was by the drive, often carried out on quite the regal scale which Indian potentates still maintain. We may read the description of Henry the Eighth's entertainment of his foreign guests, by a deer drive on a big scale, in the biography of Frederick, Palsgrave of the Rhine, written by Halbertus Thomas, his secretary; but the modern hunting man pooh-poohs any suggestion that deer could be humanely shot by experts, having first been driven into one of the many combs where marksmen await their arrival carefully concealed in butts.

On the continent the Red Deer through centuries have been driven up to guns, bows, and spears on the grand scale, and it must be within the recollection of all of us that William Hohenzollern the Second of Germany delighted in this traditional method of slaughter in the days before the late war. It has been graphically described in the 17th century: "The Princes Hunts Redd Deare and Harts seldome, and only at sett tymes of the yeare, and then they rather murther than hunt them. For the clownes drive whole heardes of them into the Toyles, Compassing a great Circuite of grounde, wherein they shoote at them with gones and crossbowes, and when they are fallen, kill them with shorte swordes by hundreths at a tyme."³

SHOOTING OF DEER.

Now it is not to be supposed that those who see in the hunting of deer by the West Country packs a great and grievous cruelty would have it replaced by "murther" on a wholesale scale such as just described; this account has been quoted merely to

² It surely cannot be forgotten that King William Rufus was engaged in this pursuit when he met his death from the arrow of Sir W. Tyrrel, one of his followers.

³ Quoted from *Gentlemen Errant*, by Mrs. Henry Cust.

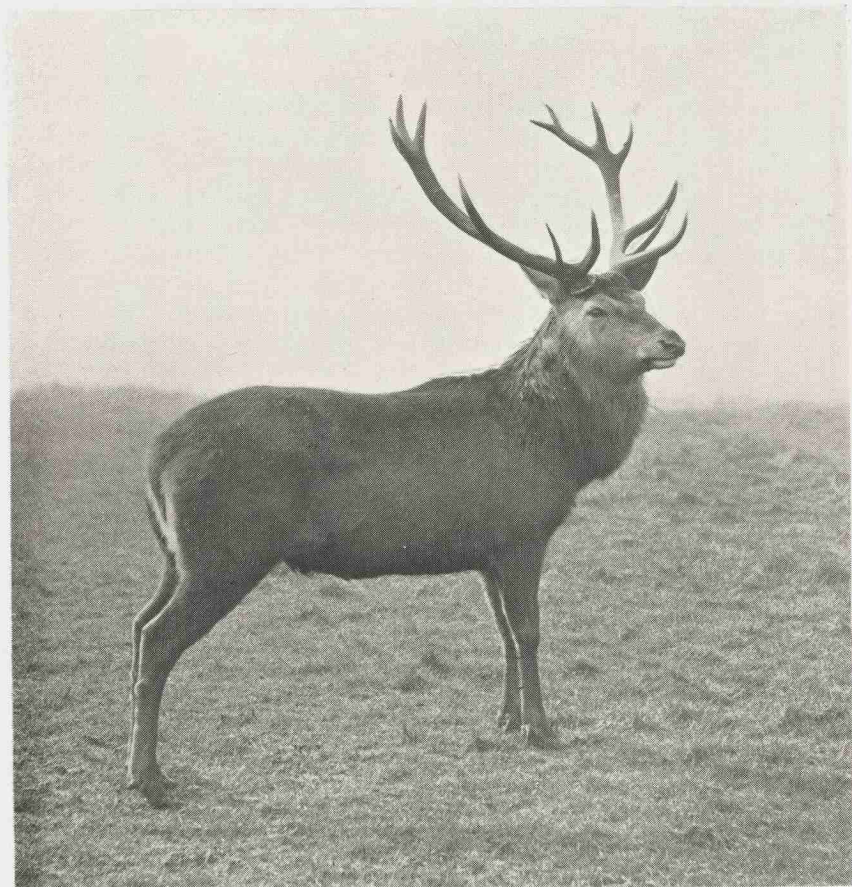
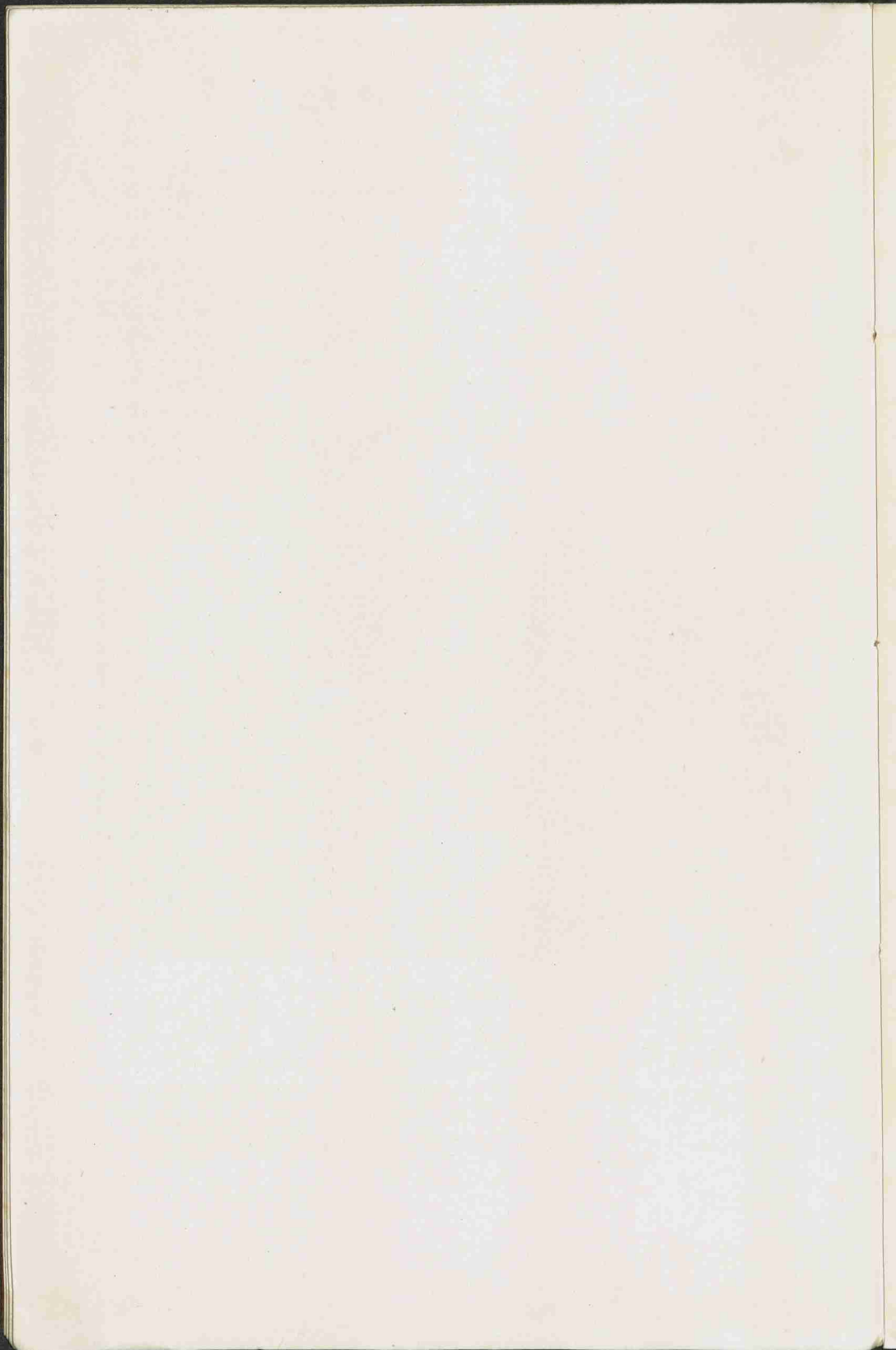


Photo by C. Reid.

RED DEER.



show that deer have been, and can be, driven up to guns, and that selective driving could be accomplished for the purpose of occasional thinning of stock with no greater difficulty than harbouring is done to-day. Done, of course, under carefully organised and supervised conditions by properly qualified persons. It is claimed by the hunts that some two hundred deer are killed each year by the packs engaged; presumably this is the amount of "thinning" which the conditions of the case require. The hunting goes on from August to April, first the stags till October, then hinds till February at earliest, then a few more stags to finish the sporting calendar. This means many days and months of pursuit with all the concomitant suffering, whereas, with planned and carefully organised drives, the same number of animals could be quickly and humanely dispatched in a few days of driving and shooting.

Since the above paragraph was first written it has been reported in the press that the Devon and Somerset Hunt arranged a drive and shoot which seems to have been carried out on the lines that humanitarians have long advocated, for which they have been—more or less politely—told that they were ignorant townfolk and knew nothing about it and that such a thing could not be done on Exmoor. We now know that the bottom has been knocked out of the British Field Sports Society's arguments. The Hunt has actually performed the task which they, and their defenders in the press, have hitherto declared to be impossible.

OTHER METHODS.

Some readers may be unaware of this exploit, or the activities of the well-known Harbourer—Fred Gosse—who, by some fashion of his own, that has remained an impenetrable mystery, succeeded, during the Great War when no hunting was possible, in reducing the numbers of the deer. For this he was publicly thanked and praised by Lord Fortescue on his retirement. Why Mr. Gosse's method should remain a secret must be left to conjecture, but since the defenders of hunting have protested so much that any method *except* hunting would be cruel, or impossible, we must at least assume that Gosse's success was not achieved by those nets, or snares, or traps, or poisons which the hunting folk accuse the vengeful farmer of employing. To anyone who has followed the ding-dong of debate carried on for so many years in *The Spectator*, *Manchester Guardian*, and

some sporting and West Country papers, the above facts carry a forecast of ultimate success when re-introduction of the Bill ⁴ for suppression of all deer-hunting with hounds becomes possible. The great majority of people, outside the Devon and Somerset area, are horrified by the descriptions that, from time to time, find their way into the public press, of the final scenes of a successful hunt; they call for suppression, but, knowing little or nothing from personal experience, they have in many cases been misled into accepting the re-iterated assertions, above referred to, of those who are determined to maintain the status quo (assertions which are usually combined with plentiful reference to the supposed ignorance of humanitarians); and thus they have come to regard the question with too apathetic resignation to the will of the "gods of things as they are." This attitude has for a long tale of years been familiar to those who have fought the parliamentary battle for humane slaughter. In face of the fuller information now available, will not those kindly, but too easily satisfied, citizens come over and join the ranks of those who work for the "gods of things as they may be" and demand the abolition of all deer hunting with hounds?

It is not proposed to extend the scope of this essay by recital of the numerous instances of deer being dashed to pieces in leaping from cliffs, due, it is suggested by a medical witness, to the blindness of extreme exhaustion, or being driven out to sea and pursued and dragged back by boat for slaughter on the beach, or of the horrors of the "bay" and the "mort" by which the waters of Devon streams are so often stained with blood, and picturesque village streets disfigured with entrails and degraded into an amateur shambles. But many such accounts have been published on incontrovertible testimony; such "accidents" or "incidents" like the gross over-riding of horses and injury to horses and hounds are inseparable from the chase of the wild deer. Examples will be found in the Appendix and further instances are given in some of the works listed in the Bibliography.

There are many straws drifting about in the general press which indicate that the days of the Stag-hunt are numbered. Formerly but few voices were heard in protest; it was almost dangerous to hold a protest meeting in Minehead; the ducking which befell a press correspondent at the hands of some hunt followers had far reaching repercussions. To-day we are told

⁴ Introduced by J. Lovat-Fraser, this Bill passed its first reading in March 1930.

by Mr. James Douglas in the *Daily Express* "many visitors have been driven away by the sport" "Public opinion compels sportsmen to avoid killing stags near Lynton and Minehead." "I was told by the wife of a well-known peer that the sport is far too expensive for the residents" "It is kept up for a small number of hunting men and women, 300 subscribers at most, and it is probable the natives lose as much as they gain by the pastime." More recently at a Minehead Publicity Association Meeting it was stated by the Chairman that "hunting people had left Minehead with the glorious legacy of the freedom of the hills [*sic*] which he urged should now be utilised to attract other types of visitors to the district" "In former days the town had been the hunting people's annual resort but now the only relic of those days was the many empty horse stables."

SOME SOPHISTRIES.

Speaking at the Annual Meeting of the British Field Sports Society, Lord Bayford, the Chairman, after devoting time to describing what were referred to as "Anti-Sport Activities," concluded by saying: "It is of vital importance that members and non-members alike should not underestimate the strength of their opponents, and that strength lies unseen among the vast population of the town." This "vast population" according to the noble Lord, is readily "gulled by anti-sport cranks," but is not, we may remark, so gullible as to be taken in by the sophistries put forward by the defenders of sport, some of which have been referred to in this essay and many of which came to light in the extensive press debates that have taken place of late years.

Possibly one of the most extraordinary excuses for chasing the Red Deer has been that put forward by Lord Bayford himself, namely, the bad moral character of the runnable stag! That the deer will eat and destroy the farmer's crops if they get the chance we all know (and that is a very good reason for restraining their increase and arranging for a proper "reserve") but that he is a selfish polygamist with greedy proclivities and quarrelsome habits and has no consideration for younger rivals when anxious to escape pursuit are, indeed, strange reasons for—not exterminating at once, but—preserving him for punishment by the special barbarities of the chase.

The exact words used by Lord Bayford were: "It is always

the custom to describe a stag as 'the noble animal!' As a great admirer, I regret to say that his nobility is confined to appearance, and does not extend to character. If the truth be told, he is a selfish old fellow, much addicted to the pleasures of the table and the harem. He is a dreadful bully to the hinds and young deer; and though well armed by nature, is a poor fighter save at the season when the lust of the flesh is upon him." With these views the members of the Devon and Somerset Hunt Committee appear wholeheartedly to associate themselves, since they circulate them "With their Compliments" as a leaflet designed to enlighten the public in view of the ignorance displayed in press correspondence on Stag-hunting. Curiously enough, the British Field Sports Society, of which Lord Bayford is chairman, also circulates a "Case for Stag-Hunting," which contains this assertion: "The general public do not and cannot know anything of wild creatures. Few of them see any but domesticated animals, and it is only natural, therefore, that they should endow the whole animal creation with sentiments, if not human, at least to some extent educated." Apparently then Lord Bayford may, when it suits his purpose, perpetrate the same unscientific error as the ignorant populace in endowing the wild animal with human sentiments, for it has seemed to us that we have heard of the unamiable characteristics of the stag in connection with a much higher race! Promiscuity in sex relations, the maintenance of a "second establishment," if not a harem, greediness and selfish disregard of weaker brethren in the pursuit of safety, or even of gain, are not visited with organised pursuit and violent death upon the sinners who should certainly know better than male deer.

It should certainly not escape the notice of the public to whom Lord Bayford's argument was addressed, that hinds, which have a most enviable reputation as careful and devoted mothers, are, equally with the naughty stag, the object of pursuit and slaughter. But having no antlers, with which to endanger hounds or huntsman, their end is more speedy on land, though when they take to the rivers it is often their fate to have their heads held down in the water till they drown.

There is surely need for some study of animal psychology and comparative ethics in the education of stag-hunters, especially if they are going to present themselves before the keen-witted frequenters of town debating societies as the British Field Sports Society is now doing.

Another curious argument is advanced in an article from the

National Review, namely, that all wild animals [the deer in this case] regarding man as an enemy are only anxious to avoid his presence, but they do require that he should not deprive them of their birthright—a sudden death “What we should call a violent death is part of nature’s routine and it is a *positive cruelty to eliminate it!*” [italics mine]. On this one can only express the opinion that if being pursued to the point of exhaustion and possibly standing at “bay” for a long time waiting to be “stuck” in a fashion that may, and sometimes does, involve four minutes before unconsciousness supervenes, is to be subjected to “sudden death” then the stag may well pray to be saved from his friends and prefer the lesser cruelty of elimination of his “birthright”!

From the same source other samples of huntsmen’s defence logic may be extracted, *e.g.*, “the killing of a large animal is necessarily an unpleasant sight, but it is one which can be witnessed in the purlieus of any butcher’s shop. The fact that the Exmoor stag is killed in the open air and before the eyes of a crowd of people, does not mean that its death is any less humane than that of a bullock or a sheep.” But the bullock, and most sheep and pigs are now killed instantaneously and were never hunted from ten to twenty-five miles and worried by hounds beforehand. The writer admits that the killing of a stag is “a distasteful process” and “always a source of some anxiety to the hunt staff,” and, while asserting that the killing “is effected as speedily and humanely as is possible under the circumstances,” he also allows that “the system is *not infallible*” and that “on *one* occasion a deer became entangled in some wire and was knocked over and eventually drowned” [italics mine].

THE END IN VIEW.

In view of the cases on record in the writer’s possession, drawn from sportsmen’s own publications, not to mention those that have become notorious in the press, it will be agreed that the above is, to say the least, an understatement which cannot be accepted as adding to the reputability of the sportsman’s case for defence. Better to own up and take what is coming—the total prohibition of deer hunting with hounds—for the British public, tolerant as it is and stolid as it may be, cannot be much longer fobbed off with excuses which hardly deserve the name of argument.

L'ENVOI.

SOB STUFF!

[Lines in earnest and admiring extension of the following sentiments, extracted from a defence of stag hunting published in the Catalogue of a West Country Agricultural Show: "The abolition of hunting *would mean* the end of light-horse breeding, the end of horse shows, and practically the end of agricultural shows It would mean the end of point-to-point meetings and puppy shows; in fact all the pleasant social gatherings that lead to so many lasting friendships among the rural community. It is well to face facts before it is too late . . ."]

Come, brothers, let us face the facts
Before our ignorance re-acts
On morals, faith and social pacts.

Beware, then—cease to hunt the stag,
And many civic virtues flag;
The social system hits a snag.

Among good things that go below,
First comes a truly rural woe—
Bang goes the agricultural show.

Aye, none will show the Large Black Pig,
The marrow vast, the beetroot big,
The Mangold-wurzel, peach, or fig.

Why should men trot these trophies out
When none may chase, with valiant shout,
The fierce, malignant stag about?

Then other functions droop and drop;
The point-to-point, of course must stop,
And all the puppy shows go flop.

What then remains of rural worth,
The country joys of mother earth,
"Provençal song and sunburnt mirth"?

Why, friendship withers like a weed;
The kindly word, the friendly deed
Are poisoned from their very seed;

And o'er our land, once meek and mild,
But now grown savage and defiled,
Great, huge, rejoicing stags run wild . . .

Shall such things be in this fair clime?
Nay, let's avert this reign of crime
By hunting till the end of time!

LUCIO . . .

These amusing and appropriate verses are reproduced by
kind permission of "Lucio" from *The Manchester Guardian*.

APPENDIX.

Sportsmen's Evidence.

The following extracts are taken from C. P. Collyns's hunting classic, *Notes on the Chase of the Wild Red Deer*. This was first published in 1862; but the Editor of the 1907 edition remarks: "The system of hunting observed in the field is practically the same As to the nature of the statements made, it can scarcely be asserted that in the interval of forty years any serious flaws, physiological or technical, have been brought to light."

p. 190-191. "It is more than probable that, at times, when the deer have sprung from cliffs, they have done so under delusion as to the depths of the fall, caused by partial blindness, the effect of severe exertion. In most cases, however, the animal has, no doubt, taken the fatal leap while under the influence of uncontrollable fear. On one occasion a stag met his end by leaping from a height on to the rocks, under circumstances which almost justify the belief that he deliberately committed suicide. . . . On reaching the shore beneath the cliff the stag was found, a disfigured object, mashed to a jelly, the horns broken to finders and scattered on the rocks."

p. 196. After long pursuit a hind running with the pack close at her haunches made a stupendous leap "not more than ten minutes before she sank before them. *What makes it more extraordinary is, that on being paunched, a calf was taken from her, almost able to stand.* The fence was a stone wall, with a rail on the top of it not to be broken . . . and it was up a steep bank that she approached it." (Italics ours.)

p. 229. "We found a very large stag in Horner; he was so fat that he could not run; we killed him in half an hour."

p. 261. "This deer ran himself blind."

p. 266. "A stag fell over the cliffs and killed himself . . . Last year at this very spot two leading hounds went over this rock after a deer and were killed."

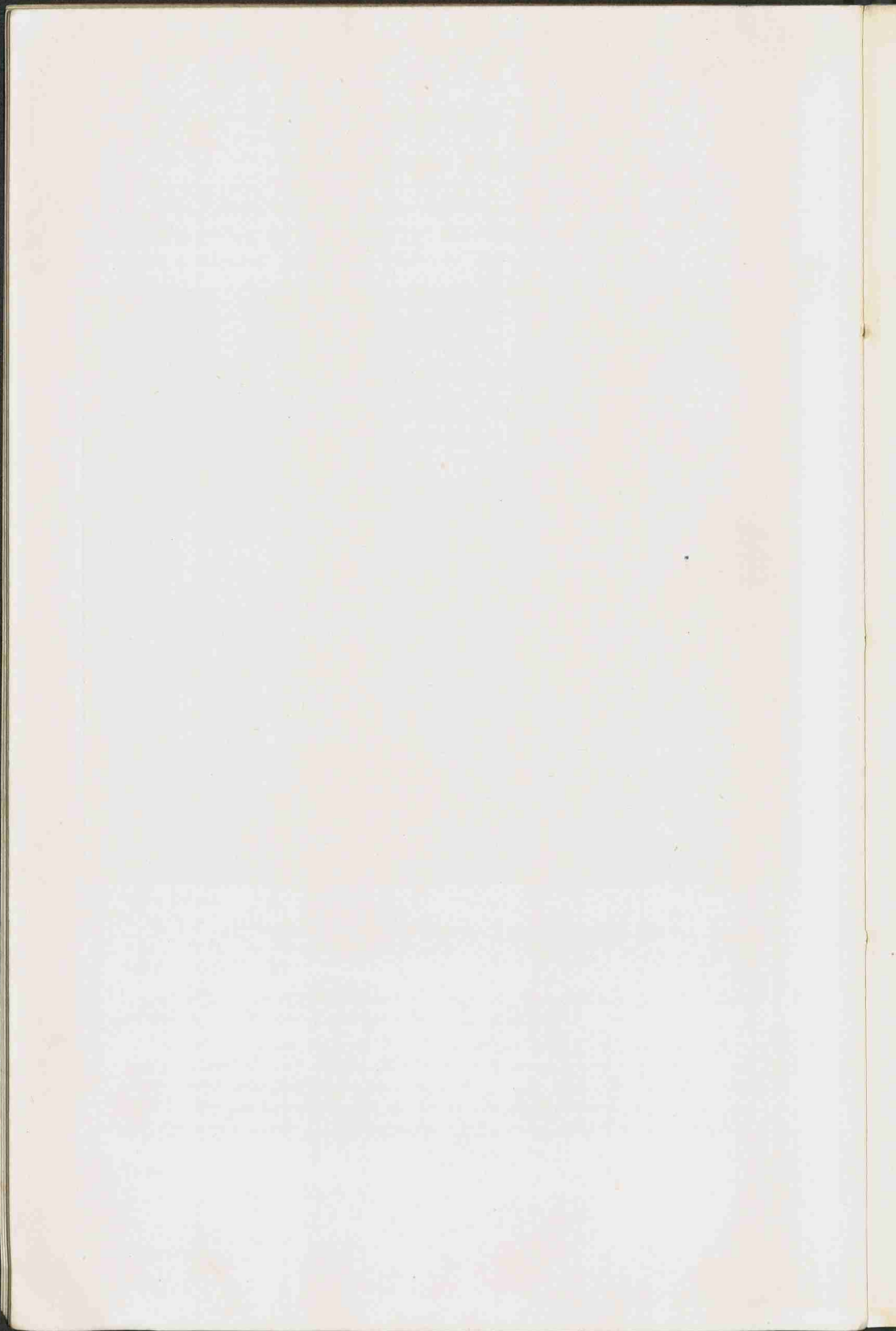
p. 275. A stag having swum down to the mouth of the river Parret, was secured "by throwing a rope over his horns, and was thus towed" for a mile and a half.

p. 279. "where she was killed, *much to the gratification of the field as well as the Master of the hounds.*" (Italics ours.)

p. 285. "Here the pack bayed him as he stood on a rock for safety, but in a few minutes obliged him to seek other quarters. He now leapt down about four feet on to the ledge of another rock, where it was impossible for the hounds to get at him; no doubt thinking himself safe, he lay down exhausted . . . Eventually, by throwing stones at him, he was



RELEASING THE CARTED DEER FOR HUNTING.



driven off, and made a bound for the beach, a distance of 60 feet; he so injured himself that he could not go to sea, and was easily captured. The chase lasted 3¼ hours, the hounds got blood as they deserved."

p. 293. "On opening the deer, his inside was filled with blood, denoting that a blood vessel had been ruptured. Just before his capture he was seen to try and leap a high flood gate and fall back. Little doubt can remain but that at this time the rupture took place."

p. 295. "... but refuge even here was denied; the pack fresh found her, and after a turn through the covert, she leapt from the cliff and killed herself; one of the hounds, 'Warrior,' was so close on her that he went over with her and shared her fate; the distance down to the beach is over 360 feet. This was the best and fastest run of the season, and was accomplished in two hours and twenty-nine minutes with scarcely a check . . . such was the pace, that four horses never returned to their stables, and at least a dozen more were rendered useless for the remainder of the season."

Extracts from *Staghunting with the Devon and Somerset* (1902) by P. Evered :

p. 292. "Stag venison carries more fat than that of hind or male deer, but is not so delicate, and yet at its prime in September forms the best roast of all three, *especially when well hunted* and brought to the board within three or four nights of its capture. After that the hunted flavour [*sic!*] goes off . . ."

p. 341. "The history of stag hunting contains many instances of individual landowners exhibiting animosity to the chase which brings health to some and affluence to other of their neighbours, but public opinion and the welfare of the many have sufficient influence and weight in modern England to ensure the ultimate victory of the will of the many over the prejudices of the few. The time for arbitrary exercise of even the most ordinary rights and privileges is passing fast into the limbo of other long-forgotten feudal habits, but old-world ways and customs linger still among the hills and fogs of Exmoor . . ."

Major Harding Cox on "Why Sport must be cruel" in *The Daily Graphic*, 24/9/1927 :

. . . "Hunting the wild stag on his native Exmoor. That is sport, indeed!—Wait!

"That same stag is 'pig-fat,' and carries the weight of his 'head honours.' He is hunted until the last effort of endeavour gives out. He takes to the stream or sea. In any case, he is incontinently hauled out and his throat is slit? What about it?"

The late Lord Willoughby de Broke, in *The Observer* :

"It has been argued that the killing of animals for the sake of sport is wrong . . . We will not take up too much space by examining this proposition; but it is as well to look into our own frame of mind with

regard to the humanitarians, and decide what is the truest answer we can give them and the truth is that all field sports involve a certain amount of animal suffering."

Lord Walsingham, in *The Somerset County Gazette*, 8/10/1927 :

"What I rather doubt in the case of deer is whether we are justified in putting them to all the misery of being hunted when they could be secured much more kindly by the rifle."

Lord Latymer, in *Blackwood's Magazine*, May, 1929 :

"... There is, to my mind, one reproach, and only one, which can fairly be brought against stag-hunting in the West. Would it not be possible to shorten the final stage?—perhaps I should write would it not be advisable? Because, of course, it is quite possible. It is part of the creed of stag-hunting that a stag at bay must be given the *coup-de-grâce* with a knife. It is easy to see how this belief has become crystallised—stag-hunting is so ancient a form of sport that it was old when fire-arms were as yet unknown. The good sportsman is nothing if not conservative, and the argument that such and such a thing has been done for a thousand years is a very potent one. Personally, I detest most kinds of change, particularly in matters of sport; but I will confess that I have been more than once rather distressed by the last scene of all.

"When the stag is at bay, and it is quite certain that he is doomed, I should like to see him killed quickly and mercifully. It sometimes takes a dreadfully long time before he can be thrown and knifed.

"... Whatever the remedy, I think something should be done. The horrid idea has sometimes haunted my reluctant mind that the old methods are preserved because a certain percentage of the field rather enjoy a prolongation of the last scene. For some natures it has, perhaps, a lurid glamour not unlike that evoked by a *Corrida de Toros*; a hateful fascination, which must be experienced before it can be realised or understood. . . .

"A New Forest fallow buck is pulled down and killed by the hounds themselves; but the tall red stag must die by the hand of the huntsman."

Other Evidence.

Wild Red Deer Hunted in Town.

"A stag which was chased through Minehead yesterday by the Quantock Hunt leapt into brickfields at Alcombe and was held by men until the hunt arrived and killed it.

The closing stages of the chase were seen by a large crowd, and there were shouts of 'Cruelty' at the final scene."

The News Chronicle, 27/10/32.

Stag-hunt in Streets. Caught in an Orchard.

Minehead.—"People watched a stag being chased through the streets here last night. The deer, which had been hunted by the Quantock Stag-

hounds from a meet at Slowley, a few miles away, was chased for a long time over the moors before it broke out of Callins Wood and ran through the streets. . . .

Crowds of people left their houses to watch the pursuit. The stag was eventually caught and killed in an orchard near Staunton Road."

The Manchester Guardian, 26/9/34.

The Stag's Chances of Escape.

"I have taken part recently in seven stag-hunts in Somerset. . . . The stag has every chance to escape. In only two of the seven hunts referred to did a kill take place."

From a letter by W. Wilhelm in *The Daily Telegraph*, 12/10/1934.

134 Deer Killed in 100 Days.

". . . Reporting on the hunting of deer during the past season Colonel W. Wiggin, who was reappointed Master of the Hunt, said that on the 100 days on which the hounds were taken out 134 deer had been killed. It had, he said, been the best hunting season he had known during the time he had been Master."

Devon and Somerset Stag-hounds Hunt
Master's report in *The Manchester Guardian*, 22/5/34.

Stag-hunt in a Town.

"The report . . . of a hunted deer in the streets of Norwich should arouse all lovers of animals to an indignant protest against this form of so-called sport.

I witnessed one day the hunting of a stag through a southern town; and when closely followed by the hounds, the frightened creature jumped over my garden wall, dashed through the window of the next house, and fell, panting and bleeding upon the floor. The hunters came in and dragged it away to be 'boxed' and doctored until fit to be hunted again. . . . Stags in this neighbourhood have been caught on the spikes of iron railings and lacerated; have been mangled by dogs in attempting to cross the river; have dashed from bridges to certain death below."

THE REV. E. J. T. BAGNALL (Reading) in *The Daily News*, 13/1/1920.

Death from Exhaustion.

"It was but the other day that a hunted deer ran all the way from Holmbury to Dorking, where it was seen by some humane man and was offered sanctuary in a stable. It was a 'splendid' run said those of the field who had succeeded in following to the old Surrey town, but while they were congratulating themselves the poor hunted creature died of exhaustion in the stable."

From "A Blot on British Sport" in *John Bull*, August, 1926.

Impaled on Railings at Reading.

"On April 18th a deer was chased by the Berks and Bucks staghounds from Wargrave; after a run of many miles, in the course of which the Thames was crossed, it attempted to leap the spiked iron fence of the recreation ground, and getting impaled upon it, hung in this position for

about half an hour, until one of the 'sportsmen' ordered an end to it with the knife." SIR GEORGE GREENWOOD, 7/8/1926.

Similar "accidents" have happened at the same place on other occasions.

Dash into a Cottage.

"A stag which was being pursued by the Berks and Bucks stag hounds near Princes Risborough, Bucks, entered the open door of a cottage, making for the living room. The hunt secretary had a difficulty in roping in so confined a space and furniture was scattered in the process."

The Times, January, 1932.

Comparison of Staghunting with Bearbaiting.

When in March, 1825, Richard Martin moved the second reading of his Bill to prohibit bear-baiting, he was opposed, among others, by Mr. Peel who said: "Compare bear-baiting with stag-hunting, and the former animal had a considerable advantage, because he was allowed the use of his natural powers, and was only attacked by one or two dogs—whereas the stag was deprived of his horns, which were his only defence, against twenty or thirty couple of dogs by which he was pursued . . . Why were they to interpose for the protection of a privileged class of animal?"

But they did eventually and the stag continues to suffer to this day!

Such extracts and admissions might be multiplied almost indefinitely; but, whatever slight alterations in ritual and procedure may have occurred during the last few years (*e.g.*, the substitution of pistol for knife at the slaughter in some cases), the above passages, selected at random, are sufficiently representative for the unbiased reader.

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