

**THE BEST SEASON ON
RECORD: SELECTED AND
REPUBLISHED FROM "THE
FIELD"**

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The best season on record: selected and republished from "The field" by Pennell Elmhirst

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PENNELL ELMHIRST

**THE BEST SEASON ON
RECORD: SELECTED AND
REPUBLISHED FROM "THE
FIELD"**

THE
BEST SEASON ON RECORD

(SELECTED AND REPUBLISHED FROM "THE FIELD")

BY
CAPTAIN PENNELL-ELMHIRST
(*"BROOKSBY"*)
AUTHOR OF "*THE IDEAL OF LEE ESTERSHIRE*"



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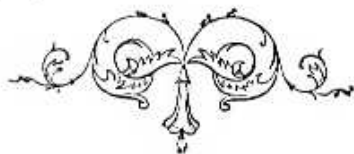
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THE
BEST SEASON ON RECORD.

CHAPTER I.

A PREFACE AT HOME AND ABROAD.



FRIDAY, October 12th, was our first eleven o'clock meet, and the first muster in becoming force. The Quern were at Gaddesby Hall; and a pleasant little field, still wearing the garb of sober autumn, accompanied the pack to Mr. Cheney's Spinnies. Business was meant from the very first—the young hounds were to have blood, and

such tiny coverts must of necessity throw most of the work outside their boundaries. And all the country round Gaddlesby is very charming when hounds cross it—even before the leaves have fallen or the herbage has lost its summer luxuriance. The inclosures are all grass, the fences perhaps a little strong for nerves that are yet scarcely tuned to play. But the gates are ample and handy; and there were men enough to-day to ride through a rail or to point a ready alternative at any moment. Between Gaddlesby and Queniboro' especially, gates provide a happy release from difficulties otherwise insuperable; for the thorn fences grow to a height above ambition or daring, in even their rarest and extremest forms. Now, besides being big and forbidding, they constituted so many leafy screens which constantly hid hounds from sight when only a field away; and our galloping in search was often very vague and haphazard. A straight fox and a strong scent would have lost us all more than once. But foxes do not always run straight in October (the happy succession of gallops two years ago forming the proving exception); and so, though we rode and jumped, loitered and shirked, for upwards of two hours on Friday afternoon, it was almost entirely within the little triangle of Gaddlesby, Barkby Holt and Queniboro' (each point at about two miles apart from the others). The day was as hot and sultry as any of the indifferent harvest weather of the year; many horses still carried their summer coats, while many riders had gone so far in deference to the occasion as to swathe themselves at least in hunting waistcoats and winter flannel.