

**IN THE
VINE COUNTRY**

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In the vine country by E. Somerville & Martin Ross

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E. SOMERVILLE & MARTIN ROSS

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VINE COUNTRY**

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BY

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'THROUGH CONNEMARA IN A GOVERNNESS CART,' ETC.

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IN THE VINE COUNTRY.



CHAPTER I.

IT was our first day's cub-hunting, and things had been going against us from the outset.

To begin with, we had started rather late,—it is noticeable that the minutes between five and six A.M. are fewer and closer together than they are at any other period of the day,—and, when half way to the meet we found that Betty had given way to her sporting proclivities, and had surreptitiously followed us. When it is explained that Betty is a St. Bernard puppy of cart-horse dimensions, whose expression of smiling imbecility only cloaks a will of iron, it will be understood that there was trouble before us. The

trouble began at once. Directly she saw she was discovered she ran away, and the next time we saw her she was three fields ahead of us, lumbering cheerfully into covert at the heels of the hounds, pursued by several cows and the curses of the master.



BETTY.

By the time that she had been caught and immured in the bedroom of the nearest cottage, we were covered with confusion and blazing with heat, and while we were precariously scrambling on to our horses' backs by the help of the pigstye door, we were

told by an excited old man that the hounds had found, and were 'firing away like the divil' out of the far side of the wood. This happened to be one of those statements that are founded not so much on fact as on a desire to keep things stirring and pleasant, but none the less did it send us at inconvenient speed to the other side of the covert, there to find that the hounds had never left it, and were hunting slowly back towards the side from which we had just come.

Not long after this my second cousin lost her temper, and said she hated cubbing, and wished she was back in Connemara, or anywhere out of the county Cork. This expression of opinion occurred when she was picking herself up out of a potato furrow, into which she and her horse had ingloriously rolled, and it was a good deal embittered by the fact that she had hurt her knee, torn her habit, and broken her hunting crop.

The day ended with this incident, so far, at least, as we were concerned. Betty was released from the

captivity that she had not ceased to bewail in quivering, infantine shrieks, and we turned our faces toward home. There is something very humbling in coming in at ten o'clock to a late edition of the family breakfast, with nothing to justify the routing up of the household at five A.M. except a torn habit and a bruised knee; and we said to each other, as we went unostentatiously up the back stairs, that cubbing was not worth the candle by which one had to get up to be in time for it.

We did not know that a few days afterwards we should be hanging out of the window of the train as, at a painfully early hour, it passed a covert in the vicinity, straining jaundiced eyes of jealousy at the distant specks that represented the field and the hounds—specks who were to remain in the county Cork and go out cubbing, instead of faring forth, as we were doing, to take our pleasure in foreign lands.

The letter that we found on the dining-room table, when we came down-stairs on that day that had



MY SECOND COUSIN LOST HER TEMPER.