

THE SPORTING WORLD

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The sporting world by Harry Hieover

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HARRY HIEOVER

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BY

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HORSEMEN," "THE PROPER CONDITION OF HORSES,"
"SPORTING FACTS AND FANCIES," "THE
SPORTSMAN'S FRIEND IN A FROST,"
ETC.

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CHAPTER I.

LIBERALITY and reason must admit there are many persons in the world that we must neither censure or blame for thinking ill of the Sporting World, neither must we be surprised at their so doing. Persons of the lower class, all but universally do this. I allude to London people, to tradesmen, and their families, and others ranking in the same orders of society. They know literally nothing of sportsmen, their pursuits or habits; never having had the opportunity of seeing either, still less have they had a chance of

getting even a glimpse of their society. The most they can know of the Sporting World—and this amounts to knowing nothing—is from the description given by some apprentice, or peradventure by their own son occasionally breaking loose and visiting some place of low resort by Sporting Characters; of such, if he dare speak, he can only report scenes and persons by which his hearers judge, erroneously of course, of the pursuits and habits of the Sporting World; for it never enters their heads that a sportsman would no more habitually visit such places, than he would accept from themselves an invitation to dinner.

I think I may say, I never heard a woman of such class, or some ranking far higher, who, if a London bred one, could bear the name of a Sportsman; for both are alike ignorant of what he really is. The sole idea of a woman of the class alluded to, of what the pursuits of a man ought to be, is his attending all day to his

shop or other avocations, occasionally taking her to the play when they can get orders. Going to dine at Richmond or some such place on a Sunday with friends of the same class, and sometimes inviting or going to the houses of similar persons, all thinking precisely like themselves. Such persons seldom read, if they do they judge of the Sportsman by such books as "Peregrine Pickle," which probably they read in early life, they only see what many Sportsmen were in days long gone by, or are guided by opinions formed and handed down by their parents and religiously fostered by themselves. It will be found that their erroneous opinions are constantly kept alive by their female friends indulging in remarks not very far from the following.

"God defend me from a Sportsman for my
"Husband. I am truly thankful Mr.——
"has no taste that way, if he had, a pretty life
"I and the family should have of it, there would
"be getting up at God knows what hour, by

“ candle-light, to get him hot water to shave and
“ his breakfast. Then when he has disturbed the
“ whole family, off he goes to join his brother
“ sportsmen, as he calls them, who ride whoop-
“ ing and hallooing all over the country, breaking
“ down farmers’ fences, riding over their wheat
“ and destroying it; and then, if the poor man
“ dares to complain, they one and all set their
“ face against him for doing so, because it is
“ done forsooth in sporting. Then my gentleman
“ comes home and entertains his wife with an
“ account of the run, as he calls it, if he has
“ had good sport; if not he is cross, nothing
“ can be done to please him, and he walks off
“ to bed, or if not, he goes to sleep in his
“ chair, either of which cases are vastly agreeable
“ to his wife; in the latter instance, she and all the
“ family must set mum for fear of disturbing
“ him, unless, indeed, he brings some companion
“ home with him, then they are noisy enough
“ talking over the day’s sport, talking of how

“such a one rode, or speaking of some one who
“got a fall, at which any one with proper
“feeling would shudder to hear of, they laugh at
“it, and speak of it as a “purler,” or some
“such detestable low term; this they carry on
“all the evening, instead of making up a nice
“little rubber, which could easily be done, for
“if none of the family could make up a fourth,
“his wife could easily get in some friend, who
“would be but too happy to come in and spend
“a cheerful evening. Laugh, Sportsmen, God
“defend me from a Sportsman.”

This is very much like the representations made, and believed to be correct among the class of London women we have particularised. The young Miss of the same coterie indulges in similar ideas, which she has no incentive to correct, seeing that all the “nice young men” with whom she is acquainted, know nothing about Sporting, or Sportsmen; unless some one among them, thinking to “do it stylish,” talks, as they think,