

**SPORTS AND
RECREATIONS IN
TOWN AND COUNTRY**

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Sports and recreations in town and country by Frederick Gale

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FREDERICK GALE

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IN

TOWN AND COUNTRY.

BY

FREDERICK GALE

(THE OLD BUFFER).



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P R E F A C E .

SOME twelve years ago the late Mr. Baily, the publisher and originator of *Baily's Magazine of Sports and Pastimes*—which is familiarly known now as “The Old Green Cover”—asked me if I could contribute an article on cricket in the days of the grand old Kent and Sussex elevens, as one of the greatest sportsmen in England, who took an interest in the magazine (and who died in 1884), was anxious that a record of past cricket heroes should be preserved in its pages. Happening to have known Fuller Pilch for the last twenty-five years of his life, I put in writing all that I could remember which had fallen from his lips—during many a long evening spent with him—under the name of “Fuller Pilch's Back Parlour,” which appeared in a book of mine, published in the summer of 1887 by Messrs. Swan Sonnenschein & Co., under the title of “The Game of Cricket.” After the publication of that article in 1875, the old sportsman who was the instigator of its production, and who was a leading member of the Pugilistic Club, when the Ring was supported by noblemen and gentlemen, asked if I could do something in the same style about the Prize Ring, and, curiously enough, I had the materials at hand, as during

Preface.

some years of my pupilage in London, after leaving school, I lunched every day at the Castle Tavern in Holborn (now the Napier Restaurant), which was kept by "Tom Spring," the ex-champion of England, who was one of Nature's gentlemen. It was a very respectable place, and answered to what is now called a "Luncheon Bar." So I set my memory to work, and reproduced all that I could remember of numberless conversations with Tom Spring, under the name of "Tom Spring's Back Parlour"—which appears in these pages, and which has not been hitherto reproduced. Mr. Baily, for whose memory I have a great respect, and myself, so to say, "put our horses together," and he gave me a *carte blanche* to write what I pleased connected with English sports and sketches of country and town life, and I availed myself largely of his offer, so much so that a considerable portion of this volume consists of a selection from my articles which appeared in Baily's magazine. In fact, the exceptions are four papers only, namely, "Boxing and Athletics" and "My First Salmon," which come from a now extinct weekly paper styled *Ashore or Afloat*; "The Racing Stable," from *Vanity Fair*; and "Betting and Gambling," from *Sporting and Dramatic*. I take this opportunity of tendering my sincere thanks to Mr. Baily, who reigns in his late father's stead, for allowing me to reproduce my former writings. I thought it better to leave the sketches just as they were written, as, for what they are worth, they are mostly reminiscences of happy memories, and are all drawn from the life. People who call those of my school *laudatores temporis acti*, will find, when the time comes that they cannot shut their eyes to the fact that the shades of early evening are closing over them, that the greatest pleasure

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in life is to bring back recollections of scenes and faces which have passed away.

I have always looked on my fellow travellers of all classes, through life, as brother puppets, who have been, or are, on the wires at the same time as myself, all dancing to different tunes; and I have taken every opportunity of mixing with as many of them as I could, and I have yet to learn that any puppet—however gaudy his dress and spangles may be—has a right to classify any body of his brother puppets, whom the costumier has clothed in more humble attire, as “the lower orders,” without being self-convicted of “judging his neighbour.” I adhere to my *nom de plume*, “The Old Buffer,” as the American Cricketers, when in England on a visit, told me that whenever they see any letter or article with that signature they look out for something about old-fashioned England of the past.

THE OLD BUFFER.

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