

RESCUENCES  
OF  
M. DAY  
TO  
MURRY





REMINISCENCES  
OF  
WILLIAM DAY  
OF  
DANEbury



## CHAPTER X.

### MR. PARKER.

Varied experiences—Commences racing—Purchase of *One Act*—Her trial and our expectations—How defeated—Forestalled and struck out. Running at Chester; remarkable dream—*Joe Miller* in the Metropolitan—Winnings on the Chester Cup—Mistake as to his condition—*Brigantine* another example—A perilous journey—How *Joe Miller* was ruined—*Noisy*, ill-luck in the Chester Cup—*Cedric*—*Sutherland's* luck and subsequent failure—*Tame Deer* in the Northampton Cup—Confidence of his new owner, but well beaten—*Bird on the Wing*—Her chance in the Oaks—Sam Rogers and Frank Butler—A revelation in fashionable jockeys.

THE gentleman of whose doings I shall attempt to give some account in this and the following chapter, was not one who deserves a prominent notice on account of high birth or the achievement of daring deeds by sea or land. Yet he was a character who, in the racing world, stood conspicuous for many virtues deserving of recognition.

‘Honour and shame from no condition rise ;  
Act well your part, there all the honour lies,’

is an axiom which was carried out in his career.

Mr. Joseph Parker was the son of a large farmer



near Chester, and a successful man in all his business undertakings. He lived a curious life, and did many things worthy of note outside of his career on the turf, with which I was intimately connected. As we may, I think, learn a good deal from his experiences in racing, I propose first to deal with the performances of some of his horses, and leave his personal characteristics and his doings in other directions for notice after I have said what I have to say on the former topic.

He commenced racing in partnership with Mr. Farrance, an old friend of his, in 1849. In the following year my father bought *Joe Miller*, at the Newmarket July meeting, for them and Mr. Padwick, giving £300 for him. The horse was then about as big as a good-sized foal, and remained a pony until the day of his death, like most of the *Venison* produce, who himself, whilst running, was little larger. Mr. Parker had few horses then. In fact, he never had a large stud, scarcely more than half a dozen at a time. The following are the names of some of his horses: *Teddy*, *Aldford*, *Grosvenor*, *Cardinal Wiseman*, *Cedric*, *Sutherland*, *Tame Deer*, *Noisy*, *One Act*, *Joe Miller*, and *Avenger*.

*One Act*, originally the *Extravaganza* filly, and thus neatly named, I bought at Mr. Johnstone's sale at Doncaster for 300 guineas, as the joint property of Messrs. Parker, Farrance, and myself. She was low and long, with plenty of substance, but stood



rather upright in her fore-legs, in which she gave way after winning the Chester Cup. *One Act* and *Joe Miller* were the two most successful horses Mr. Parker ever owned, either in part or wholly. And their victories in his native county, in the race of the meeting—the Chester Cup—where he was on both occasions surrounded by friends and neighbours, considerably heightened his delight at his success, independently of the fact of winning a large stake on each horse.

In *One Act* we soon knew we had a treasure; although, from circumstances now to be related, we had not the opportunity of winning all the races that we might have won, had we been more favoured with luck. She stayed well, and, as a two-year-old, was tried with the three-year-old *Sultan*, at 22 lb., a mile and a distance, and beat him. This would have made her, as a two-year-old, the winner of the Cambridgeshire at 5 st. 12 lb. So, when the handicaps for next year came out, with the mare in the Chester Cup at 4 st. 3 lb., which would be like putting *Sultan* in as a four-year-old at 6 st., it not only looked a good thing, but made the race our own on paper. She was entered in all five of the Spring Handicaps—the City and Suburban, Metropolitan, Great Northern, Flying Dutchman Stakes at York, and the Chester Cup. And assuredly she would, bar accidents, have won the whole of them, had she started for the two first; but this she was prevented doing in the following way.



In the spring I wrote to Mr. Parker and asked him to come and see the mare tried, which he did. On his arrival he said, in his good-natured way :

‘I hope you have got the money on well.’

‘Me !’ I answered, more earnestly than, perhaps, correctly, in my surprise. ‘What do you mean?’

‘Why,’ he rejoined, ‘the mare is the first favourite in both races’ (the City and Suburban and the Metropolitan), ‘and I thought you might have backed her for us and yourself too.’

‘No,’ I said in reply ; ‘I have never seen or heard her name mentioned till now.’

Nor had I, as I only took in the weekly papers.

‘It’s Teddy’ (referring to Mr. Farrance), he said ; ‘he has been in communication with the boy I told you of, and now I hope you will be satisfied, and believe what is so clear to everyone but yourself.’

Thus it appeared our chance, at the time, had been wrecked by the action of our own partner. The mare was, however, beat in her trial, and, without any assistance of ours, was driven out of the betting. But we thought the trial was wrong, and tried her again in a few days, and found that it was so ; for on a second attempt she beat *Tame Deer*, giving him 18 lb., the other two being tailed off a long way. But before Mr. Parker got my letter, and could act on it, he found she was made favourite again, and would not back her at the short price obtainable. In the end she did not run, though we took her to the meeting in



the hope that there might be a chance of placing a fair bet. But it was no good, and at the last minute she was struck out, whilst those who had forestalled us were led to believe that she would not be run until the latter end of the year. This had the desired effect, and to their utter discomfiture we were enabled to back her for all we wanted for the other three races named, all of which she won.

Mr. Parker was much blamed at the time for leaving her in to the last moment. But he would have run her if he could; and as he could in no other way protect himself, he adopted the only honourable course. With respect to the Chester Cup, the mare ran in the Palatine Stakes the first day, and was beat by *Theodora*, much to our surprise and disappointment. Yet, as it turned out, this was one of the most fortunate circumstances that could have happened for us; for it drove her from 5 to 1 to 20 to 1 in the betting for her race (the Cup) next day. After coolly thinking the matter out, I said to Mr. Parker that her defeat a mile and a quarter by a fast mare like *Theodora* did not amount to much after all; for that she (*One Act*) was much better at two miles and a quarter, a distance that many of her opponents would not like. So I recommended him to take £2,000 to £100 about her two or three times, as he was sure to have good hedging before the start, as well as a good race for his money. But he waited, and could only get 15 to 1 to £200, for which he backed her. She



never reached a better price than 12 to 1, so neither he nor I hedged a penny; which we both should have done had she come back to the old price, on the principle that 'no bet is a good one until it is hedged.'

The night before the race was run I had a remarkable dream, worth relating because of its accurate fulfilment. I dreamt *One Act* won, and William Goater was second after a good race, and that I told him after they had passed the winning-post that I thought I had won. To which he hastily replied: 'You know you have.' And walking up the course together, he said: 'You have done me out of the best stake I ever stood.' This dream I told to some ten or a dozen gentlemen during breakfast the next morning at the inn at which I was staying—Mr. Parker himself being amongst them. After saddling the mare, I stood close by the winning-post to see the race, and as soon as she passed it the third time, I thought my mare had won. I said to the judge:

'What has won, Mr. Johnstone?'

'White!' he replied; and then looking up, added: 'Oh, you, Mr. Day!'

Strange to say, William Goater was standing by my side all the time, quite unobserved by me, until, turning round to go and meet the mare, I found myself face to face with him.

And as we walked up together to meet our respective horses, he said:

'I stood more money on mine to day than I ever



stood before, and have lost a large stake;' thus absolutely fulfilling my dream to the very letter.

I have already in these pages had something to say of *Joe Miller*, but have much left to tell of his other performances. In the Metropolitan Stakes he was unlucky, losing the race by being interfered with by *Miss Ann* in coming round Tattenham Corner. It was not, however, a specially lucky thing for the jockey who interfered with him. For he, not knowing that Mr. Merry had backed *Joe Miller* for a lot of money, told that gentleman what he had done with some glee, and greatly to Mr. Merry's annoyance, as he told Mr. Parker afterwards. But they both had their revenge, and the stable also, in the Chester Cup. Mr. Parker entirely for himself, independent of the commission, took the following bets from Davis, the Leviathan; 25 monkeys to 1, or £12,500 to £500; and again, 12 monkeys to 1 against him for the Emperor's Cup at Ascot, both of which he literally won in a trot—though the last victory was more owing to his being well and the state of the ground than to any merit of his own. But, under any circumstances, it is a pleasant thing to win of one professional £18,500 in bets in the course of a couple of months on one horse, and get it paid (free of duty). In those days you did not see only three or four horses brought to the post to run for valuable cups, nor half a score contending for the Chester Cup or other big handicaps. For the Cup in *Joe Miller's* year there



were no fewer than forty-three runners, and thirty runners in *One Act's* year.

A good deal was said of *Joe Miller's* condition, or rather of his appearance before this race. Mr. Parker advised his friend Captain Brabazon to back him; and this the latter assuredly would have done, only happening to see the horse just before entering the saddling paddock, looking, as he said, so wretchedly bad, he altered his mind; and instead sought out Parker, and began abusing him for recommending him to back a creature that could scarcely walk round the ring, much less gallop the course. These hasty words would have led to blows, but for the timely interference of friends. After the race, the captain, as meek then as he had been furious before, had the good sense to offer an ample and acceptable apology. The truth is, as I afterwards heard others say, when the horse came into the enclosure his coat was staring or reversed, which made him look bad to a non-professional eye. Gentlemen can understand a horse setting up his coat 'like quills upon the fretful porcupine' in cold weather; but they do not know that the hottest sun has often just the same effect on the animal when in the best of health and fit to run.

The same thing exactly happened to *Brigantine* at Ascot, when she won the Cup. People said even to myself that 'they did not think she looked very well.' To which I replied:

'Mine seldom do in other people's eyes.'



Sir Frederick Johnstone himself, at the last moment, came to me and said :

‘ William, is the mare all right ?’

‘ Yes, Sir Frederick,’ I replied ; and he went straight again to the ring and backed her for more money. After the race he came to me, and, looking at the mare, said he could not think how so much fault could be found with her condition, as he thought he never saw her looking better. And so did everyone else then ; but, before the race, his friends and the busybodies had told him that she looked wretched, and was overdone. In fact, they discovered that she had had a tremendous gallop, two miles and a half, the day before, with *Cornet*, a horse that could never get over a mile in his life. It turned out all very well, as she won ; but what would they all have thought if she had been beat ? and what kind things would they not have said of me ?

Before concluding my account of *Joe Miller’s* performances, I may perhaps relate how he went to Chester, and what befell him on his return journey home. After taking his gallop at four a.m., he came back to the stable, was done and done up, and, at eleven o’clock, entered his van (a double one), and started for Cheltenham, where he arrived in the evening, and slept the night. He reached Chester in the afternoon on Tuesday, and cantered over the course after the races were over that day. He returned home by rail, and though the van had



passed under the gauge for testing the height, yet it came into contact with one of the arches with great violence ; and had not the roof given way, the van, or the truck it was standing on, must have been thrown off the rails, and most likely the boy, or the horse, or both of them, have been killed. As, however, it passed several stations and under innumerable bridges after the accident, the stationmaster at the next stoppage decided there could be no further danger, and let it proceed at the railway company's risk; and so the matter ended harmlessly.

*Joe Miller*, as a five-year-old, was again well in for the Chester Cup, and we thought would win it ; and, but for an accident, I think even now he probably would have done so. As an account of the accident may serve as a useful warning, I will briefly relate the particulars. It happened between seven and eight o'clock in the evening ; for at the latter hour the horse was found with his head in the manger, looking dispirited and thoroughly unwell. On examination we discovered a large bump on his poll, and the horse, in fact, insensible. The injury was caused, I do not doubt, from his having his head under the manger, and then raising it quickly, and coming into contact with the sharp edge of the under part of it. We had unfortunately backed him for some money, and were only able to save a portion of it. And worse, the horse, though he ran again, was never himself afterwards. Here was an accident no one



could have foreseen. We were wiser after the event, no doubt, which for the first time showed the advisability of having the manger boarded to the ground perpendicularly.

*Noisy*, another horse in which Mr. Parker was interested, was a good but unlucky animal. I bought him for 100 guineas, when General Anson, on leaving England, sold his horses at Tattersalls'. He was nearly seventeen hands high, with very powerful limbs, and action like a pony's. He ran in the Chester Cup when *Scythian* won it, in 1855, the year *Nancy* broke her leg and was shot. But he had no fair chance. No boy could ride him in a crowd of other horses, and particularly over a circular course like Chester, the cock-pit of courses. This was most clearly proved in two ways. When tried at home he beat *Nabob* at 18 lb., and, in the race, *Nabob* gave him 2 st. 12 lb. and beat him. Coming round the last turn but one he had won in a canter, being many lengths first, and all the rest beat. But the little boy on him could neither hold him nor turn him; and instead of going round the last bend he went straight into the corner and stopped short, and cantered up after the others had passed him. He did this from no vice, but simply because he did not know where to go, and the boy could not guide him. The next day he won the Dee Stakes easily, though only by half a length, beating such good horses as *Lord Alfred*, *Lady Tatton*, and *Correobus*; the latter last, although but a short



time before he had run second for the Metropolitan Stakes. This result proved that if *Noisy* had only run up to his form, as shown both in the race and in his trial, he would have won the Cup. A similar disappointment, and one due to the same cause, want of proper control, met him in the City and Suburban at Epsom. Here, in company with another horse, he got away and ran the whole of the course through and into the paddock before he could be stopped ; and even then was third in the race itself. If *Noisy* had not run in the Dee Stakes—and I was strongly opposed to his running, wishing to keep him for the Cesarewitch and Cambridgeshire—all the world would have said he was a bad horse, and that I had mistaken his form. Curiously, like *Dulcamara*, on his return from Chester he was a confirmed roarer, and neither could beat anything afterwards.

With *Cedric*, for which he gave £50, Mr. Parker was more fortunate. Though a bad horse, he won the Somersetshire Stakes at Bath, beating *Pole Star* and several others in a common canter, and was then sold to Lord William Powlett for 1,100 guineas, with his engagements ; none of which, nor any other, did he ever win for his new owner. *Sutherland*, again, may be classed with the lucky division ; for, though a bad one, not within two stone of a racehorse, yet in the Doncaster Stakes he ran second to *Cape Fly-away* at even weights, beating *St. Albans*, the winner of the St. Leger, at 10 lb., and *Wizard*, who ran



third, at 5 lb. How he could do this I never could make out; for *Dulcibella* could give him two stone before he ran for it, and did so on his return to Woodyates. Yet directly after the race all the world knew, except myself, that I had thrown away both the Cesarewitch and Cambridgeshire in consequence of my not having entered him for them.

The fact is, although I forgot to mention it to anyone else besides Mr. Parker, *Sutherland* had been sent to Doncaster for the sole purpose of finding out how good or how bad he might be, in order that I might have a line for *Dulcibella* from his running. And, notwithstanding his excellent performance there, we sold him to Mr. Campbell Wyndham, with the condition that he was not to leave my stable until after the Royal Stakes at Newmarket, half of which the vendor was to have if he won. He won the race and left me, but was never afterwards a winner. Here was another mystery. How was it that in this race he could beat horses that could run, such as Baron Rothschild's *King of Diamonds*, the winner of several races, and Mr. Merry's *Trovatore*, who won six races that year, and yet, being the soundest horse in England, his owner could find no race which he could win?

*Tame Deer* won several little races. He once beat the redoubtable *Fisherman* at 3 lb., at Lincoln, to which place he had been sent merely to get a line for *One Act* for the Spring Handicaps. He



was afterwards beaten at Northampton, in the Cup. But on this occasion he was pulled up before reaching the distance, the jockey saying he had gone the wrong side of a post. But as, on a minute examination by both Mr. Parker and myself of the spot indicated, no tracks whatever could be discovered on the wrong side of the post, he must have told an untruth. The matter ended ; but not without, as might well be expected, creating some unpleasantness between owner and jockey ; and more especially as we had particularly wished to have the horse ridden out, in order to know his form. However, we saw he ran sufficiently well till nearing the distance to know he stayed, and had sufficient speed to try anything a distance of ground. So, with two others in to correct them, he was tried with *One Act* at 18 lb., and she beat him two lengths, two and a quarter miles ; and I always looked upon them as equal at 21 lb. She once tried to give him 24 lb., and was defeated a length after a good race two miles and a quarter.

*Tame Deer* was afterwards sold to Mr. Mellish (an assumed name of Mr. Edward Smith, many years turf correspondent of *Bell's Life*), who bought him, I believe, on what he was told or saw of the race for the Northampton Cup, above referred to. When he became the property of his new owner, like most horses that fall into the hands of sanguine people possessed of not much racing knowledge, it was soon discovered that the horse had improved 21 lb., and



that there was no horse like him. So enthusiastic were his supporters that the world would have come to think there must be some truth in this wild report, if it had not been for the irony of facts. In 1857, at Wolverhampton, *Fisherman* gave him 20 lb. and a good beating. In 1860 *Petra* beat him for the Chester Cup and the Steward's Cup, for which latter he (*Tame Deer*) was favourite at 5 to 2. Besides, I beat him myself with *St. Giles*, for the Northamptonshire Stakes. But no one could then or can now get over the fact that, when I had him, he beat *Fisherman* at 3 lb. ; and afterwards, when said to be so much better, *Fisherman* gave him 20 lb., and beat him—a thing which *One Act* could always do, and *Fisherman*, no doubt, was 7 lb. or 10 lb. better than she was, which would make public running and private trials tally.

I may here refer to *Bird on the Wing*, because, though never Mr. Parker's property, she was run in his name. She belonged to a good-hearted and very nice fellow, a Mr. Dalton, steward of Arthur's Club. How he became possessed of her I don't know ; but, as she was his as a two-year-old, I should think most likely he bought her as a yearling of the breeder, Mr. R. Wright, of Richmond, Yorkshire. In her first race as a two-year-old *Bird on the Wing* was evidently thought much of, as she was favourite at 2 to 1, but was unplaced. This was in the Prince of Wales's Stakes, at York, won by Mr. Merry's Filly by *Ithurriel*, afterwards called *Sally*, who started at 6 to 1.



This led to Mr. Milner laying Mr. Merry the heavy wager of £5,000 that *Bird on the Wing* beat *Sally* in the next year's Oaks. Afterwards she appears to have run quite as badly in several races, but finished up by winning a little race at Northallerton Autumn Meeting, beating three others, with odds of 7 to 4 on her.

Early the next year she came to me through Mr. Parker ; and her doings whilst in my hands are of special interest, as exhibiting the eccentricities, to use a mild term, of your fashionable jockey. She was a nice clever mare, rather small ; and, if she had a fault in shape, stood rather upright on her pasterns. We tried her just before the Oaks, and she beat *Joe Miller* a mile and a half at even weights, and two others ; which made her look to have a good chance for that event. Sam Rogers rode her in it, and, as was evident to many, lost the race. As the prevalent belief was that he did this purposely, he was mobbed on his return to the weighing-stand, and with difficulty got safely into the enclosure. He told me he had lost the race by not making use enough of the mare. But, as my instructions to him were to make a good pace the whole of the way, he could give no satisfactory reason why he should not have made the best of her.

The story then pretty freely circulated, but with what truth I am unable to say, was to the effect that Frank Butler had, in the winter, taken a very large bet that he won both the Derby and Oaks that year.



He had won the first on *Daniel O'Rourke*, beating such good horses as *Stockwell*, *Kingston*, and *Hobbie Noble*, which in itself must be regarded as rather a curious performance—indeed quite unaccountable, considering that *Stockwell* had beaten him in the Two Thousand, and that he had previously been beaten by two or three others; and that, after winning the Derby, he (*Daniel O'Rourke*) was beaten at York by a horse like *Frantic*; again at Doncaster, in the St. Leger, by *Stockwell* and *Harbinger*; and in the Triennial Stakes at Newmarket by *Hobbie Noble* and *Adine*; and ran a worse horse in the following year. If this be public running, what is to be said in favour of it? Who will suppose that many of the good horses I have mentioned as running in the Derby showed their true form in it? I think no one. As for the Oaks, the betting was sufficient, in my opinion, to show how the land lay; and that *Bird on the Wing* was not very likely to win. On the morning of the race she was second favourite at 4 to 1; and although we kept backing her, she ominously receded to 15 and 20 to 1. And, as will be seen, her subsequent running, with stable-boys up, showed plainly enough that she was much the best mare in the race, and ought to have won it, and easy too.

After this race, I asked Mr. Dalton never to let a jockey ride her again, but to put one of our stable-boys up. She went the next week to Manchester, and won the Produce Stakes, to which there were fifty-six



subscribers, in a canter, beating six others, little Hiett riding her. She next ran at York. Here a telegram arrived for me just before going on the course from Mr. Dalton, asking me to get Frank Butler to ride her, which I did. At this Sam Rogers was furious, and wanted to know why he could not ride her. I simply said, 'Because Mr. Dalton has instructed me to get Frank Butler.' Notwithstanding this, he was extremely rude and abusive, saying he knew I had prevented him from riding her. So far he was right, but there was no good in my telling him so. I told Frank the mare was a little slow, and wanted a good pace; and if nothing else made it, he was to do so himself. To which he said, 'Very well.' The pace was bad, and he never went near his horses first or last, and pulling-up opposite the grand-stand, was a bad third. In this race probably the principle of reciprocity embodied in the axiom that 'one good turn deserves another' was worked out. If Sam served Frank at Epsom, Frank served Sam at York. And yet the combined skill of these two wonderful jockeys was insufficient to make the public believe in the honesty of either; and without such a result, what was their talent worth?—not a fig.

Naturally, after weighing, I had an interview with Frank Butler, and he gave as an excuse that the mare had lost her form, and had gone a roarer. I replied that if she had it was since the morning; to which he rejoined that she could beat nothing, in the



hope, I imagine, that I would not run her again—at that meeting at any rate. He stood some little time impressing this upon me, and rubbing, as was his wont, his full-grown mahogany-coloured nasal organ. I was, I need not say, much annoyed at the mare's running in this race—the Yorkshire Oaks. I was determined to test its accuracy and learn if there was any truth in Frank's statement, and so put her in the Queen's Plate on Friday. In this she met *Hesse Homburg*, who was first favourite at 5 to 2, having only recently won the Brighton Stakes, beating a large field, and Frank was on her. The result of the race is soon told—for *Bird on the Wing* made play directly after starting, was never headed, and won in the most lazy way imaginable by two lengths. The mare did not show any symptoms of roaring, nor Frank any sign of truthfulness when he said she roared and was out of form. Harry Goater rode her in the Park Hill at Doncaster, which she won as she did her other races—in a trot. In this, among others, she met *Sally* again, and could have positively walked by the post and won. Her performance, indeed, so frightened Mr. John Scott, that he came and offered me half the Doncaster Stakes, if *Long Bow* won it, not to run her; an offer which I readily accepted, and so got £410 for keeping her in the stable. This was a piece of sheer luck, as she had a bad leg and could not have run a second race that day if we had not compromised.



Mr. Dalton after this never kept another racehorse. But why he should have left the turf, I am at a loss to conceive. For, notwithstanding his many disappointments with *Bird on the Wing* as a two-year-old, and her defeat after she came into my hands, the next year, in two good races like the Oaks and the Yorkshire Oaks, his career was successful. But perhaps, like myself, he was disgusted with the performances of the fashionable jockey, as set forth in these revelations.