REMINISCENCES OF WILLIAM DAY OF DANBURY

CHAPTER XI.

MR. PARKER (*continued*).

Joins his uncle in London—'The pace that kills'—Evenings at Owen Swift's—Buying a watch—Skill with the gloves—London 'life' as it was—A good stock—Excellent judgment of racing—An objection sustained—Jockeys and amateurs—Nearly 'done' by a welsher—An instance of enforced restitution—His belief in condition—Analogy from dog-training—Fights between 'Pincher' and 'Bullet'—Admiral Rous on *Cedric's* condition—Mr. Parker's belief in 'Farce,' and our parting—His life in retirement.

I NOW propose, as I promised, to relate something about Mr. Parker personally. He was, as I have said, the son of Mr. Parker, of Aldford, near Churton, Cheshire, a large dairy and stock farmer, under the then Marquis of Westminster. The son, Joseph, not caring for country life, came early to London, where he lived many years with his uncle, at No. 8, Lower John Street, Golden Square; and on the death of that relative succeeded to the business, which he carried on profitably. He worked at it indefatigably indeed, being seldom in bed after five o'clock in the morning, having to be at his wharf with his men at half-past.

The uncle himself was a character in his way. He was a man of great constitutional strength, and, as such men often are, a hard liver. He would not have his clothes off, except occasionally to change them, for a week at a time, seldom getting into bed at all during that period, except on Sunday. He used to dine out, and after partaking liberally of wine and spirits, would return home about three in the morning, and retire to his cellar, and there finish a bottle of gin palatably diluted with water. Then, after a refreshing wash, he would betake himself to business. This kind of life he carried on with little variation for several years; though he did not live very long, thus fully confirming the adage that 'it is the pace that kills.'

In the later part of his life the nephew often went with him, and thus no doubt acquired a taste for good living, fast life, and late hours, which he retained until he left business altogether. In his time, Owen Swift was in his heyday at the Horse Shoe, Tichborne Street, which, like other familiar places, has since been improved off the face of the earth. This was Mr. Parker's nightly resort, where he had his brandy and soda or other stimulant with his old chums. Here he would meet Tass Parker (one of the fancy, and no relative); Mr. Dale, a very good fellow; Dick Forester, in the police force; and about a score of the same sort. They would break-up about two o'clock in the morning; and it was a rare occurrence if they left without having a fight. And yet

from habit, Mr. Parker, as I have said, was seldom late at his business.

It was here that the following incident occurred: A nephew of Mr. Parker's, a Mr. Upton, used, like his uncle, to spend an hour or two most nights in the bar-parlour of the Horse Shoe. A gentlemanly stranger, well dressed in black, joined the group one evening, and seating himself by Mr. Upton's side, entered into conversation with him on some current topic. He continued to put in an appearance for a few nights, and then became more familiar, acquainting Mr. Upton with the melancholy and dire circumstances attending the death of his father; winding up by saying:

'The dear old man has left me his watch; but as I have one already, it is no use to me, and I should be glad to sell it, as the money will be more serviceable.'

He asked some ridiculously low price for it, considering the watch was really a good one, and Mr. Upton made him a bid for it, and got it; the seller disappearing, and not being seen again. The watch was the next morning sent to be cleaned and set going; but was detained by the watchmaker, who stated that it had been stolen, and that he was bound to give notice to the police that the watch had come into his hands. The day after, a policeman called on Mr. Upton, and said:

'Unless, sir, you can tell me of whom you bought the watch, I must take you into custody.'

He (Mr. Upton) related the circumstances connected with the purchase. But as he did not know the person's name, could not give it, and walked off with the policeman on his way to the station. But just before arriving there, he met the man and gave him into custody, and of course was at once liberated. The thief, I may add, was duly tried and convicted. Mr. Upton's experience in the matter must have taught him the need of caution in dealing with a stranger.

Mr. Parker's association in the afternoon as well as evening with a jovial little fellow like Owen Swift, gave him a taste for boxing; and he became, I believe, one of the best amateurs of his day in England. Though by no means bad-tempered naturally, at times when he had taken a little to drink he was inclined to be quarrelsome, and would then fight anyone, though he were big as a giant. But he was by no means averse to having 'a set-to' with anyone at any time for the love of the science, and seldom got the worst in the encounter. On one occasion he had a few words with a tailor, which ended in an undecided battle that lasted nearly all the afternoon.

I am reminded, when I call to mind Mr. Parker and his doings in those days, of the change that has come over our habits. If there be fast living in the present day, it is carried on in a different way. Then was, in fact, the era of fast living; and the turning of a large portion of the night into day. After dinner came the

theatre; then the Casino or Evans's, to hear the mighty chorus and sup; next the Cider Cellars, or the Coal Hole, where Chief Baron Nicholson tried all the *crim.-con.* cases over again, and displayed his *tableaux vivants.* After twelve or one a.m., Bennett might be seen with his lovely 'rose' in his retreat in Jermyn Street, where an unrivalled collection of female beauty was always on view, displaying their delicate charms in the most attractive way until daylight appeared. In Panton Street, and in other houses in the Haymarket, amusements could be found for all classes or any age, to suit their respective tastes and pockets. Thence the pleasure-seekers would repair to that pandemonium known as Regent Quadrant, where at night and early morning could be seen persons of all degrees—reputable and disreputable, old and young, of both sexes—in various stages of inebriety, whose pursuits it is scarcely healthful to describe. Such were some of the nightly amusements with which in those days it was thought no disgrace to be identified. Others would prefer an evening at Ben Caunt's, Johnny Broom's, or Owen Swift's, to whose places most men of fashion would repair just for the last glass. Cock-fighting, badger-baiting, and man-fighting, in all their hideousness, could be provided on the shortest notice. With the razing of the Quadrant to the ground, and the closing of the public-houses at 12.30, the night-houses were done away with, and the worst features of this 'life' swept away; and it can

scarcely be that any more sensible steps were ever taken by the guardians of the public peace and morals.

Mr. Parker's courage, as I have shown, was undoubted. In fact, as we say in racing parlance, he came of a good stock, and was well-bred for a pugilist. His father delighted in the science, and used to thrash his farm labourers if they offended him in anything. The old man broke his thigh after he was sixty years old, and amputation of the leg followed. But he recovered, and with the assistance of a wooden limb and a crutch he used to attend Chester market most weeks, and had several battles there. He would throw away his crutch, and plant his back against a wall (if one could be found), and hit his opponents with such terrific force that they soon gave in. Mr. Parker himself was in height about 5 feet 11 inches, and weighed twelve stone. He walked extremely upright in rather a swaggering style, and cared for no man. At the age of twenty his hair was quite grey —a peculiarity of the family—and soon after became white. He received a liberal education at a grammar school in the neighbourhood, at Farndon, and amongst other accomplishments wrote a splendid hand. In all business transactions he was precise, and paid his training and other accounts with punctuality to a penny.

Mr. Parker was a prudent man in every sense of the word, and remarkably free from prejudice. On

any matter on which he was not thoroughly informed of his own knowledge, he would listen with deference to the arguments of those whom he thought more likely to know than himself, and would act on the advice so received. When he had made up his mind, he would bet boldly. He preferred to run his horses mostly for the big handicaps; knowing well two things: First, that on no other description of races could so much money be won; and secondly, that horses that might be good enough to win such events, were not good enough to contend successfully with the best horses in weight-for-age races. In this he showed that he knew as well where to place his horses as when to back them. I should, however, say that he won one good weight-for-age race—the Ascot Cup. On one point he was most determined; and nothing would ever drive him from his settled conviction. He believed that what he saw in a trial was the correct form, no matter how completely an opinion so formed might be upset by the result of the race itself. And in this belief he was generally right; the race being more often wrong than the trial—a fact which was proved to demonstration by subsequent performances over and over again.

He was a man of strict honour and integrity; and enjoyed a reputation for talent, which was justly bestowed, as proved on many occasions. He seldom made an objection; but when he did, he generally sustained it. In the Spring Meeting of 1858 at Ilsley,

when *Avenger* ran second to Sir L. Newman's *Supple Jack*, he objected to the latter on the ground that he had gone the wrong side of a post, as he manifestly had done to all beholders. Yet, after the stewards heard the case, it was given in favour of 'the winner.' Mr. Parker gave notice to the clerk of the course to withhold the stakes, and the case was afterwards brought before the stewards of the Jockey Club at Bath, who decided as follows, viz. :

'Having heard the evidence in this case, we are of opinion that the owner of the horse that came in second' (Mr. Parker) 'is entitled to the Stewards' Plate.

(Signed) 'BEAUFORT,
'WILLIAM POWLETT,
'H. ROUS (for LORD ANGLESEY).'

It was Mr. Parker who protested against the injustice of the rule that prohibited jockeys from riding in races specially open to gentlemen-riders; and it was through his pertinacity, by the aid of Mr. C. C. Greville, that the restriction was revoked, and jockeys allowed to ride carrying 5 lb. extra. The complaint sprang out of an incident that occurred at Bibury, through the extraordinary running of one of his horses which he had backed, and thought would most likely win; but she was last, or nearly so. He entered her again the next day, and she ran with many of the same

horses, and at the same difference of weight over the same course, with a professional up, and won easily —which justified his conduct in the action he had taken.

I never remember his having but one dispute about a bet; and this was at Shrewsbury, under the following circumstances: Mr. Parker offered to take five ponies to one about a horse he was running, and some one said, 'Done, Mr. Parker!' and gave the name of 'Jones,' and made his exit from the ring as quickly as possible for fear of recognition. The horse was beat; and the next morning the money was claimed.

'Why,' said Parker, 'you are not Jones. I never laid the bet with you!'

'Oh yes, you did, Mr. Parker,' says the fellow; 'and here it is in my book,' pointing to the entry.

It then flashed across Mr. Parker's mind that he had been 'done,' a thing which of all things he objected to. Thus irate, he expressed himself in most emphatic terms, and catching poor little 'Jones' by the throat, said:

'I'll kick you all round the ring, you vagabond!' a threat which so terrified the fellow, that he cried out aloud for mercy, and promised he would tell him all, if only he would let him go.

'It was Quince that laid you the bet,' explained the culprit when allowed to speak; 'and he said if I could get it, he would give me £5, for he felt sure you would know him if he came for it himself.'

Now 'Quince' was the nickname of a stable-boy who had won a lot of money over a horse so called in the Goodwood Stakes. On this occasion Mr. Parker's action was effective, for neither 'Jones' nor 'Quince' was seen in the vicinity of the ring for the remainder of the week.

He had, as most people have, a strong aversion to being welshed; not, I think, that he ever was so nearly done as on the occasion named. But he hated the whole tribe, and showed this detestation in a marked manner when, at another time, one of these gentry had lost and forgotten to pay his nephew, Mr. Thomas Upton, £15 the week before, and when confronted by his creditor, repudiated all knowledge of the transaction. Mr. Parker was a man of few words, and went straight to the fellow in the ring at Goodwood, where he was betting in tens and fifties.

'This gentleman,' said Parker to him, and pointing to Mr. Upton, 'wants £15 of you for last week.'

'Me?'

'Yes, you.'

'Why, I don't know the man; never saw him before; and was ill in bed all last week. He must, therefore, have made a mistake, I assure you.'

'It's not worth discussing,' replied Parker, and immediately threw the fellow on his back and lugged him up the lawn in front of the stand, walking backwards, just as a dog would draw a badger, into the weighing-room (which in those days was in the

Grand Stand), his quarry howling pitifully all the way. The weighing-room gained, the man was allowed to regain an erect position.

'Now,' said Parker, 'pay, or I will throw you down again and take it from you.'

But, untaught by experience, the fellow, instead of complying with the request, began to argue the point, and, before he knew where he was, found himself again on his back, and a large roll of notes taken from his pocket. Mr. Parker counted out £15 from these, and, after handing the sum to Mr. Upton, returned the roll to the welsher, with a solemn warning that if he ever dared to do anything of the like again, he, Mr. Parker, would kick him all round the ring, and then out of it; adding that he felt very much inclined to do it there and then.

Of such fellows as these, Mr. Parker could beat 'a lane full;' and they knew it, without troubling him to put them through the fiery ordeal. In fact, his extensive knowledge of pedestrianism, and of the feats of endurance which pugilists have to submit to, gave him an insight of training, and what horses should do, and what they should be like when fit to run, that very few other men possessed. Therefore, however specious the reasoning, nothing would make him believe in a half-trained horse, or cause him to think that a trained one was overdone. In this opinion he was confirmed by his own experience in the training of dogs. Of the many amusing and instructive

stories I have heard him tell of his experiences in this way, I will relate one.

In his youthful days Mr. Parker matched his dog 'Pincher' to fight another called 'Bullet,' for £20 a side. After a long fight 'Pincher' won. He then bought 'Bullet,' and sold 'Pincher' to the late owner of 'Bullet;' or, in other words, exchanged dogs, and made the match over again, to fight three weeks later. He did this because he said 'Bullet' was not beat, but too big in condition; and that that, and nothing else, lost him the battle. For in the early part of it, whilst he had breath, he had much the best of the fighting. On the night they fought the pit was crowded with the fancy and others. After the delicate process of licking the dogs all over, to see that they had no cantharides, cayenne pepper, or other pungent thing on them, to make them loose their hold of one another whilst fighting, was gone through, and other preliminaries settled, they set to work. After a stubborn and plucky resistance, as evidenced by the result, the battle ended in the death of 'Pincher' in the pit. 'Bullet,' I may add, was never beat again after his first defeat. He was a white dog, with a liver-coloured spot over his eye, and a patch on his hip, his fighting-weight being 36 lb. Mr. Parker had a picture of him in his breakfast-room, in John Street, of which he appeared not a little proud.

The point in this case was that the dog was 6 lb.

lighter when he fought 'Pincher' the second time, than he was in the first fight; and Mr. Parker inferred from this circumstance that, in like manner, horses could not do their best unless they were thoroughly trained; and his common-sense view of the matter is worthy of our consideration. I remember that when *Cedric* won at Bath, as I have mentioned, Admiral Rous came up and complimented Mr. Parker on his success.

'Yes,' replied the latter, 'he is a bad horse, but can stay well; a thing which very few can do.'

'You will find plenty at Woodyates that can, Parker,' said the Admiral. This was true, and the Admiral himself had many that could; and the only difference between the two men was, that the one did know when he had one that could stay, and the other did not. We have positive proof of this in the fact of the Admiral disposing of *Weathergage* and *Weathercock*, as well as *Killigrew*, and, probably the best horse of his year, *Asteroid*, simply because he did not recognise their quality.

Mr. Parker trained with me for fifteen years, and we never had a serious disagreement that I remember. We parted for a very simple matter. I wanted him to take *Farce* out of training. And it was a farce, as truly as that that was her name, to keep her in training. But he was very fond of her, as she was out of his favourite mare *One Act*, that never bred one worth a guinea, throwing back to her brother

and sister, which were both good for nothing—a thing we often see in breeding. I left *Farce* at Newmarket, where he ran her, and was third. Then he sent her to a trainer near where he was himself living, which may have to some extent induced him to make the change. I have referred at some length to this matter in my former book ; and will only add here, that she never won a race afterwards, though heavily backed in bad company. Our parting, however, fortunately made no difference whatever in our friendship ; for we had no words over it, and I visited him at his new house, and was continually meeting and staying with him at race-meetings.

Mr. Parker was, as I have said, both successful and discreet. He was, moreover, frugal without covetousness, and manly without pride. Sick of a London life, he retired to his native village, and purchased Sibbersfield Hall, a gentlemanly residence in the neighbourhood, and with it some sixty acres of land. After rebuilding and adding to the house, he made paddocks, and amused himself with keeping half-a-dozen brood-mares, which was not a very profitable speculation. But, as he did not want for money, it amused him, and so they answered a useful end. He was married, but had no family. He died at his residence in his seventy-sixth year, and was buried at Farndon, leaving a comfortable fortune behind him. His estate was put up to auction by his executors, bought in, and ultimately sold to Mr. Hudson, of

soap-extract celebrity, for his son. I should mention that before his widow—a most ladylike person, well disposed to everyone—left Sibbersfield Hall, she was presented with her husband's portrait, and a testimonial, signed by most of the leading people in the neighbourhood, in recognition of her husband's and her own kindness to the poor and afflicted around them.

PAGE

General disapproval of his conduct—Attacks Sir R. Peel—Mr. Disraeli and 'the stable mind'—Hasty sale of his stud—Its real value, extent, and nomenclature—Mistaken judgment of *Gaper* and *Cotherstone*—Separation from Danebury—Erroneous reports of the real cause—Ill-feeling to my brother—*Crucifix* and her clothing—Delay in settling his accounts—Triumphs of the old stable, and effect upon him of continued disappointment—Result of *Mathematician's* defeat of *Crozier;* backs the wrong horse—Melancholy end - - 114-130

CHAPTER IX.

MEN OF PAST DAYS.

The Bentinck family—The old Duke—Proud but liked—Races with Mr. Greville—*Tiresias's* Derby—The Duke offended—Incident at Newmarket—A needful correction—Newmarket then and now—Lord Henry as a sportsman—An adventure on the moors—The late Duke as Lord Titchfield—Curious dress in summer—Monastic seclusion of Welbeck—Lord George and the fair sex.

Mr. Fulwar Craven; oddity in dress—*Deception;* in the Oaks and Derby—The jockey interviewed; a neat rejoinder—Addicted to low company—Mr. Ramsay—Curious story told of the two—Anecdote of his trainer, Mr. Dilly: 'the dead alive'—Sagacious dogs: a terror to tramps; a home-comer; the signal-dog at Porchester Station—Drawing a bear.

Lord Glasgow's oddities—*General Peel* before the Two Thousand—His indifferent stud—Delight in reckless matches—Handicaps himself—Offers £90,000 against *Gaper*—Temper and ill health—Bequeaths his stud.

Lord Exeter's personal peculiarities—His racing—Insistance on trying and running his horses—*Blue Rock* proves not unbroken—Sale of his Newmarket property—Sir Gilbert Heathcote; *Amato's* Derby; a racehorse as 'a heriot'—Baron J. de Teissier—Lord Jersey's successes—His view of breeding - - - - - - - 131-157

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*

PAGE

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 - - - - 158-177

CHAPTER XI.

MR. PARKER (*continued*).

Joins his uncle in London—'The pace that kills'—Evenings at Owen Swift's—Buying a watch—Skill with the gloves—London 'life' as it was—A good stock—Excellent judgment of racing—An objection sustained—Jockeys and amateurs—Nearly 'done' by a welsher—An instance of enforced restitution—His belief in condition—Analogy from dog-training—Fights between 'Pincher' and 'Bullet'—Admiral Rous on *Cedric's* condition—Mr. Parker's belief in *Farce*, and our parting—His life in retirement - - - - 178-192

CHAPTER XII.

MR. FARRANCE.

Slothfulness not the happy mean—Origin and marriage—Farrance's Hotel—Patronage of Sir Robert Peel—Custom of an afternoon—Attention to personal appearance—His early racing; my own start—Horses well sold—*Maley* at Shrewsbury Steeplechase; speed and heavy ground—Partnership with Mr. Parker; successes not his own—Suspicious conduct and separation—Mysterious loss of fortune—A wretched end—Anecdotes—'The Tally-Ho' without a coachman—How a feather-bed may be lost—Mr. Wagstaff's clock—Parting with a suit of clothes—Alderman Cubitt's watch - - 193-205

CHAPTER XIII.

MEN OF MY TIME, OR DANEBURY PATRICIANS.

Example needed on the turf—Danebury patricians—Mr. Harry Biggs; love of sport—His horses—*Little Red Rover*—A bit of advice—Esteem for his trainer—A night in a chalk-pit.

Lord Palmerston; his horses—*Iliona's* name: she wins the Cesarewitch—A welcome cheque—*Buckthorn's* performances;

NISCENCES
OF
HAM DAY
AMBURY

●THE painting is reproduced by kind permission of the Tate Gallery and the National Horseracing Museum

Picture: LAURIE MORTON

Day tally at Cecil's mercy

JOHN DAY junior holds the British record for the number of winners trained in a season, but Henry Cecil is set to pass his total of 146 in the next few days.

John Randall reviews the career of the astute 19th-century trainer on page 4.

Here, John Day (beige suit) is depicted with his family in a painting by Abraham Cooper.

Storm deal

CELESTIAL STORM is being syndicated to stand at stud in Newmarket next season.

The deal on Luca Cumani's Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe contender will be finalised at the end of the month.

●Full story: page 7

RACING POST Features

A Day to remember

Trainer no saint but top on skill

JOHN DAY'S British record of winners trained in a season, 146 in 1867, has been mentioned regularly as Henry Cecil moves relentlessly towards a new record.

But who was John Day? JOHN RANDALL reports, and reveals that Day combined abundant ability with an eye to the main chance.

●TWO GENERATIONS: John Day (above left) with his father John Barham Day

FEW records in racing last for 120 years, and John Day's feat of training 146 winners in 1867 is a tribute to a master of his profession.

Day's record is now at the mercy of Henry Cecil but it would be foolhardy to infer that Cecil's achievement is the greater.

Born in 1819, Day was a member of a famous racing family and, like his father John Barham Day, was noted for both his ability and his eye to the main chance.

If his own interests conflicted with those of his patrons, there was little doubt which would prevail.

He was once called "As fine a horseman, both for power, seat, and science, as ever held a bridle" but in 1845, a year after riding the 2,000 Guineas winner, he was warned off for giving false evidence at a Jockey Club inquiry.

Two years later Day took over his father's stable at Danebury, near Stockbridge in Hampshire, and embarked on a training career which brought him 12 Classic victories including the Derby with Cossack (1847) and Andover (1854).

In Day's record-breaking year his stable jockey was "The Demon" George Fordham, who had a weakness for the gin bottle but was the supreme practitioner of his craft in the kingdom.

Squandering

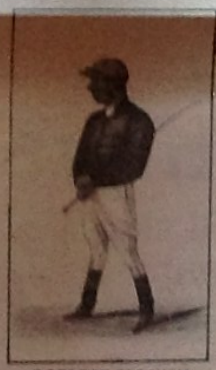
Most of the Danebury horses were owned by the Marquess of Hastings, an immensely rich young man with a self-destructive taste for gambling.

Although Harry Hastings enjoyed unprecedented success with his horses in 1867, that was also the year he almost completed the rapid process of squandering his fortune.

Day's other main patron was the Duke of Beaufort, owner of Vauban, who contributed nine wins towards the record total including the 2,000 Guineas, Prince of Wales's Stakes and Goodwood Cup.

The Sporting Times noted: "*Vauban, if his legs were concealed in trousers, would be voted a race horse all ever, but only take stock of his forelegs and of his joints generally, and the delusion is dispelled. His forelegs are mere props, very shilly looking.*"

●MARQUESS OF HASTINGS



●GEORGE FORDHAM

Vauban later broke a fetlock joint on the gallops and was destroyed.

Meanwhile he finished third in the Derby won by Hermit, against whom Lord Hastings had laid extravagant odds and lost an estimated £140,000.

Hastings got out of trouble temporarily by plunging on his two champions, Lecturer and Lady Elizabeth, at Royal Ascot.

Lecturer, although only pony-sized, more than made up for it in courage, and he won the Ascot Gold Cup from a field which included three Oaks winners.

The very next day he trotted up in the three-mile Alexandra Plate.

Half an hour after the Gold Cup the brilliant Lady Elizabeth spreadeagled her rivals in the New Stakes (now the Norfolk Stakes).

She was perhaps the greatest two-year-old filly in racing history, the Mumtaz Mahal of the 19th Century, but her feckless owner needed to exploit her in the betting-ring so Day was forced to run her more often than was prudent.

Lady Elizabeth scored her 11th win in 11 starts in the July Stakes and was then hot favourite for the Middle Park Plate, but a slow start and an injudicious ride from Fordham cost her an unbeaten record and her owner many thousands of pounds.

Spreadeagled

Two days later she bounced back to win a gruelling match against the top-class three-year-old Julius by a short head.

John Day's other big-race winners in 1867 included Imes (Yorkshire Oaks), Comera (Goodwood Stakes) and Miss Havelock (Ayr Gold Cup), while Challenge, John Davis and Lord Ronald contributed six wins each.

But the stable's main strength lay in its two-year-olds, headed by Lady Elizabeth (12 wins), Athena (ten wins including Hopeful Stakes), Europa (six wins including Ascot Triennial), See Saw (five wins) and The Earl (four wins including Gimcrack Stakes).

Ruin

At the end of the season Lord Hastings was champion owner, yet he was so pressed by creditors that in November all his horses came under the hammer at Tattersalls, though Lady Elizabeth, The Earl and Lecturer were bought in.

Hastings hoped Lady Elizabeth would provide his salvation in the 1868 Derby, but she failed to train on after her strenuous juvenile campaign.

John Day realised the filly had little chance at Epsom, and most people suspected that he laid her to lose a hefty sum and concealed her condition from Hastings.

Lady Elizabeth started favourite for the Derby, but she finished tailed off and Hastings's ruin was complete. He died a few months later, aged 26.

Ironically, Hastings might have won that year's Derby and St Leger with The Earl, who was probably the best three-year-old in training.

However, Hastings had already laid him to lose a substantial amount during the winter and could not afford to let him win, so the colt was scratched.

The Earl won the Grand Prix de Paris and three races at Ascot, including the Ascot Derby and St James's Palace Stakes, but too late to do his owner any good.

The loss of John Day's principal patron caused his stable's decline, and when he died in 1882 he had not figured among the leading trainers for many years.

His most lasting legacy to the Turf came through his daughter Kate, who married jockey Tom Cannon and became the great-grandmother of Henry Cecil's former jockey, Lester Piggott.

In 1867 Day had probably the biggest string in the country – at least 100 horses – and his 146 wins were gained at a time when races were, on average, much less competitive than they are now.

Walk-overs were common and Lady Elizabeth gained two such victories.

On the other hand Cecil, with 209 stable inmates listed in Horses In Training, has far more ammunition and many more races to choose from.

Day was based in the South and his horses often had to make arduous journeys, whereas Cecil benefits from the ease and speed of modern travel and communications.

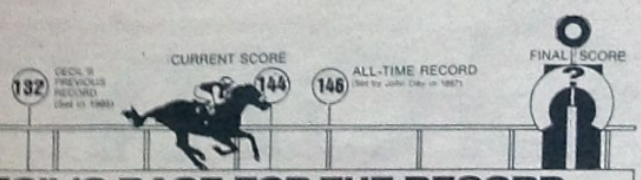
Day subscribed to the Victorian view that the function of a racehorse is to race, and he also worked his horses hard at home.

Trials

The trials on the Danebury gallops were as important as the races, since any mistake in assessing a horse's ability would prove costly in the betting-ring.

John Day had abundant talent, but his overmastering ambition as a jockey and his devilishness over Lady Elizabeth's chance in the Derby testified to his lack of scruples.

The seeds of his stable's decline were sown in the year of its greatest success, but his 146 wins will remain a remarkable achievement by the Master of Danebury.



HENRY CECIL'S RACE FOR THE RECORD