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Defoe Abbot Melville Montaigne Cooper Emerson Hugo
Stoker Wilde Christie Maupassant Haggard Chesterton Molière Eliot Grimm
Garnett Engels Schiller Byron Maupassant Schiller
Goethe Hawthorne Smith Kafka
Cotton Dostoyevsky Kipling Doyle Willis
Baum Henry Nietzsche Dumas Flaubert Turgenev Balzac
Leslie Stockton Vatsyayana Crane
Burroughs Verne
Curtis Tocqueville Gogol Busch
Homer Tolstoy Whitman Twain
Darwin Zola Lawrence Dickens Plato
Potter Freud Jowett Stevenson Andersen Harte
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Bred in the Bone

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BRED IN THE BONE; OR, LIKE FATHER, LIKE SON

A Novel.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"A BEGGAR ON HORSEBACK," "GWENDOLINE'S HARVEST,"
"CARLYON'S YEAR," "ONE OF THE FAMILY," "WON—NOT
WOED,"

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS.

NEW YORK: 1872.

CHAPTER I.

CAREW OF CROMPTON.

Had you lived in Breakneckshire twenty years ago, or even any where in the Midlands, it would be superfluous to tell you of Carew of Crompton. Every body thereabout was acquainted with him either personally or by hearsay. You must almost certainly have known somebody who had had an adventure with that eccentric personage—one who had been ridden down by him, for that mighty hunter never turned to the right hand nor to the left for any man, nor paid attention to any rule of road; or one who, more fortunate, had been "cleared" by him on his famous black horse *Trebizond*, an animal only second to his master in the popular esteem. There are as many highly colored pictures of his performance of this flying feat in existence as there are of "Dick Turpin clearing the Turnpikegate." Sometimes it is a small tradesman cowering down in his cart among the calves, while the gallant Squire hurtles over him with a "Stoop your head, butcher." Sometimes it is a wagoner, reminding one of Commodore Trunnion's involuntary deed of "der-ring-do," who, between two high banks, perceives with marked astonishment this portent flying over himself and convoy. But, at all events, the thing was done; perhaps on more than one occasion, and was allowed on all hands not only as a fact, but as characteristic of their sporting idol. It was "Carew all over," or "Just like Carew."

This phrase was also applied to many other heroic actions. The idea of "keel-hauling," for instance, adapted from the nautical code, was said to be practically enforced in the case of duns, attorneys,

and other objectionable persons, in the lake at Crompton; while the administration of pommelings to poachers and agriculturists generally, by the athletic Squire, was the theme of every tongue. These punishments, though severe, were much sought after by a certain class, the same to which the purchased free and independent voter belongs, for the clenched fist invariably became an open hand after it had done its work—a golden ointment, that is, was always applied after these inflictions, such as healed all wounds.

Carew of Crompton might at one time have been member for the county, if he had pleased; but he desired no seat except in the saddle, or on the driving-box. He showed such skill in riding, and with "the ribbons," that some persons supposed that his talents must be very considerable in other matters, and affected to regret their misuse; there were reports that he knew Latin better than his own chaplain; and was, or had been, so diligent a student of Holy Writ, that he could give you chapter and verse for every thing. But it must be allowed that others were not wanting to whisper that these traits of scholarship were greatly exaggerated, and that all the wonder lay in the fact that the Squire knew any thing of such matters at all; nay, a few even ventured to express their opinion that, but for his recklessness and his money, there was nothing more remarkable in Carew than in other spendthrifts; but this idea was never mooted within twenty miles of Crompton. The real truth is, that the time was unsuitable to the display of the Squire's particular traits. He would have been an eminent personage had he been a Norman, and lived in the reign of King John. Even now, if he could have removed his establishment to Poland, and assumed the character of a Russian proprietor, he would doubtless have been a great prince. There was a savage magnificence about him, and also certain degrading traits, which suggested the Hetman Platoff. Unfortunately, he was a Squire in the Midlands. The contrast, however, of his splendid vagaries with the quiet time and industrious locality in which he lived, while it diminished his influence, did, on the other hand, no doubt enhance his reputation. He was looked upon (as Waterford and Mytton used to be) as a *lusus naturae*, an eccentric, an altogether exceptional personage, to whom license was permitted; and the charitable divided the human race, for his sake, into Men, Women, and Carew.

The same philosophic few, however, who denied him talent, averred that he was half mad; and indeed Fortune had so lavishly showered her favors on him from his birth, that it might well be that they had turned his head. His father had died while Carew was but an infant, so that the surplus income from his vast estates had accumulated to an enormous sum when he attained his majority. In the mean time, his doting mother had supplied him with funds out of all proportion to his tender years. At ten years old, he had a pack of harriers of his own, and hunted the county regularly twice a week. At the public school, where he was with difficulty persuaded to remain for a short period, he had an allowance the amount of which would have sufficed for the needs of a professional man with a wife and family, and yet it is recorded of him that he had the audacity—"the boy is father to the man," and it was "so like Carew," they said—to complain to his guardian, a great lawyer, that his means were insufficient. He also demanded a lump sum down, on the ground that (being at the ripe age of fourteen) he contemplated marriage. The reply of the legal dignitary is preserved, as well as the young gentleman's application: "If you can't live upon your allowance, you may starve, Sir; and if you marry, you shall not have your allowance."

You had only—having authority to do so—to advise Carew, and he was positively certain to go counter to your opinion; and did you attempt to oppose him in any purpose, you would infallibly insure its accomplishment. He did not marry at fourteen, indeed, but he did so clandestinely in less than three years afterward, and had issue; but at the age of five-and-thirty, when our stage opens, he had neither wife nor child, but lived as a bachelor at Crompton, which was sometimes called "the open house," by reason of its profuse hospitalities; and sometimes "Liberty Hall," on account of its license; otherwise it was never, called any thing but Crompton; never Crompton Hall, or Crompton Park—but simply Crompton, just like Stowe or Blenheim. And yet the park at Crompton was as splendid an appanage of glade and avenue, of copse and dell, as could be desired. It was all laid out upon a certain plan—somewhere in the old house was the very parchment on which the chase was ordered like a garden; a dozen drives here radiated from one another like the spokes of a wheel, and here four mighty ave-

nues made a St. Andrew's cross in the very centre — but the area was so immense, and the stature of the trees so great, that nothing of this formality could be observed in the park itself. Not only were the oaks and beeches of large, and often of giant proportions, but the very ferns grew so tall that whole herds of fallow deer were hidden in it, and could only be traced by their sounds. There were red deer also, almost as numerous, with branching antlers, curiously mossed, as though they had acquired that vegetation by rubbing, as they often did, against the high wooden pale — itself made picturesque by age — which hedged them in their sylvan prison for miles. Moreover, there were wild-cattle, as at Chartley (though not of the same breed), the repute of whose fierceness kept the few public paths that intersected this wild domain very unfrequented. These animals, imported half a century ago, were of no use nor of particular beauty, and would have dwindled away, from the unfitness of the locality for their support, but that they were recruited periodically, and at a vast expense. It was enough to cause their present owner to strain every nerve to retain them, because they were so universally objected to. They had gored one man to death, and occasionally maimed others, but, as Carew, to do him justice, was by no means afraid of them himself, and ran the same risk, and far oftener than other people, he held he had a right to retain them. Nobody was obliged to come into his park unless they liked, he said, and if they did, they must "chance a tossing." The same detractors, whose opinion we have already quoted, affirmed that the Squire kept these cattle for the very reason that was urged against their existence; the fear of these horned police kept the park free from strangers, and thereby saved him half a dozen keepers.

That his determination in the matter was pig-headed and brutal, there is no doubt; but the Squire's nature was far from exclusive, and the idea of saving in any thing, it is certain, never entered into his head. The time, indeed, was slowly but surely coming when the park should know no more not only its wild-cattle, but many a rich copse and shadowy glade. Not a stately oak nor far-spreading beech but was doomed, sooner or later, to be cut down, to prop for a moment the falling fortunes of their spendthrift owner; but at the time of which we speak there was no visible sign of the coming ruin. It is recorded of a brother prodigal, that after enormous losses and ex-

penses, his steward informed him that if he would but consent to live upon seven thousand a year for the next ten years, the estate would recover itself. "Sir," returned he in anger, "I would rather die than live on seven thousand a year." Our Carew would have given the same reply had twice that income been suggested to him, and been applauded for the gallant answer. The hint of any necessity for curtailment would probably have caused him to double his expenditure forthwith, though, indeed, that would have been difficult to effect. He had already two packs of hounds, with which he hunted on alternate days, and he had even endeavored to do so on the Sunday; but the obsequious "county" had declined to go with him to that extent, and this anomaly of the nineteenth century had been compelled to confine himself on the seventh day to cock-fighting in the library. He kept a bear to bait (as well as a chaplain to bully), and ferrets ran loose about Crompton as mice do in other houses. He had a hunter for every week in the year, yet he often rode his horses to death. He had a stud of racers, and it was this, or rather his belief in their powers, which eventually drained his vast resources. Not one of them ever won a great race. This was not their fault, nor that of their trainer, but his own; he interfered in their management, and would have things his own way; he would command every thing, except success, which was beyond his power, and in missing that he lost all. Otherwise, he was lucky as a mere gambler. His audacity, and the funds he always had at his disposal, carried him triumphantly, where many a more prudent but less wealthy player withdrew from the contest. Games of skill had no attraction for him, but at an earlier date in his career he had been a terror to the club-keepers in St. James's, where his luck and obstinacy had broken a dozen banks. It was said—and very likely with truth—that he had once cut double or quits for ten thousand pounds.

His moral character, as respected the softer sex, was such as you might expect from these traits. No modest woman had been seen at Crompton for many a year; although not a few such—if at least good birth and high position include modesty—had, since his majority, striven to give a lawful mistress to the place. His eccentricities had not alarmed them, and his shamelessness had not abashed them. Though his constitution was said to be breaking up through

unparalleled excesses, his heart, it was currently reported in domestic circles, was sound: and what a noble feat would it be to reclaim him! It was also reckoned impossible that any amount of extravagance could have seriously embarrassed such a property as he had inherited, indeed long since, but of which he had had the sole control only a few years. At the time of which we speak Carew was but thirty-five, though he looked much older. His muscles were still firm, his limbs yet active, and his hand and eye as steady with the gun or bridle as ever. But his bronzed face showed signs of habitual intemperance; his head was growing prematurely bald; and once or twice, though the fact was known to himself only, his iron nerve had of late failed him. The secret consciousness of this last fact made him more venturesome and reckless than ever. "Time," he swore, "should never play *him* tricks. He was as good a man as ever he was. There was a quarter of a million, more or less, to be got through yet, and, by Jove, he would see it out!" Of course he did not swear by Jove; for, as we have said, he kept a chaplain, and was therefore no heathen.

One of the arguments that the mothers of those young ladies who sought his hand were wont to make use of, to their great comfort, was that Mr. Carew was a churchman. There was a private chapel at Crompton, the existence of which, of course, explained why his presence did not grace the parish church. Then his genealogy was of the most satisfactory description. Carews had dwelt at Crompton in direct succession for many a century. Charles I., it is almost unnecessary to state, had slept there—that most locomotive of monarchs seems to have honored all old English mansions with a night's visit—and had hunted in the chase next morning. Queen Elizabeth had also been most graciously pleased to visit her subject, John Carew, on which occasion a wooden tower had been erected for her in the park, from which to see "ten buckes, all having fayre lawe, pulled down with grey-houndes;" she shot deer, too, with her own virgin hands, for which purpose "a cross-bowe was delivered to her by a nymph with a sweet song." These things, however, were in no way commemorated. Carew was all in all: his devouring egotism swallowed up historical association. His favorite female bull-dog, with her pups, slept in the royal martyr's apartment. The places in Crompton Chase held remarkable were those where its present

owner had made an unprecedentedly long shot, or had beaten off one of the wild cattle without a weapon, or had run down a stag on foot. There was no relic of ancient times preserved whatever, except that at midsummer, as in Lyme, that very curious custom was kept of driving the red deer round the park, and then swimming them through the lake before the house—a very difficult feat, by-the-by, to any save those who have been accustomed to "drive deer." One peculiar virtue of Carew—he was addressed, by-the-way, by all his inferiors, and some of his equals, as "Squire" only—was, we had almost forgotten to say, his regard for truth, which may truly be said to have been "passionate," if we consider the effect produced in him when he discovered that any one had told him a falsehood. He would fall upon them tooth and nail, if they were menials; and if guests, he would forbid them his house. This was surely one excellent trait. Yet it was maintained by those carpers already alluded to, that to tell truth was comparatively easy in one who was as careless of all opinion as he was independent in means; moreover, that a love of truth is sometimes found to exist in very bad company, as in the case of the Spartan boy who stole the fox, and if the veracious Squire did not steal foxes (which he did, by-the-by, indirectly, for a bagged one was his delight), he was guilty of much worse things. However, this is certain, that Carew of Crompton never told a lie.

CHAPTER II.

WAITING FOR AN INTRODUCTION.

We have said that Carew was not exclusive; so long as he had his own way in every thing he was good-tempered, and so very good-natured that he permitted not only his friends but his dependents to do pretty much as they would. He was a tyrant only by fits and starts, and in the mean time there was anarchy at Crompton. Every soul in the place, from the young lords, its master's guests, down to the earth-stopper's assistant, who came for his quantum of ale to the

back-door, did pretty much as seemed right in his own eyes. There were times when every thing had to be done in a moment under the master's eye, no matter at what loss, or even risk to limb or life; but usually there was no particular time for any thing—except dinner. The guests arose in the morning, or lay in bed all day, exactly as they pleased, and had their meals in public or in their own rooms; but when the great dinner-gong sounded for the second time it was expected that every man should be ready for the feast, and wearing (with the single exception of the chaplain) a red coat. The dinner-parties at Crompton—and there was a party of the most heterogeneous description daily—were literally, therefore, very gay affairs; the banquet was sumptuous, and the great cellars were laid under heavy contribution. Only, if a guest did happen to be unpunctual, from whatever cause, even if it were illness, the host would send for his bear, or his half-dozen bull-dogs, and proceed to the sick man's room, with the avowed intention (and he always kept his word) of "drawing the badger." In spite of his four-legged auxiliaries, this was not always an easy task. His recklessness, though not often, did sometimes meet with its match in that of the badger; and in one chamber door at Crompton we have ourselves seen a couple of bullet-holes, which showed that assault on one side had met with battery upon the other. With such rough manners as Carew had, it may seem strange that he was never called to account for them at twelve paces; but, in the first place, it was thoroughly understood that he would have "gone out" (a fact which has doubtless given pause to many a challenge), and would have shot as straight as though he were partridge-shooting; and secondly, as we have said, he had a special license for practical jokes; the subjects of them, too, were not men of delicate susceptibilities, for none such, by any accident, could have been his guests. In consideration of good fare, good wine, a good mount in the hunting-field, excellent shooting, and of a loan from the host whenever they were without funds, men even of good position were found to "put up" very good-naturedly with the eccentricities of the master of Crompton, and he had his house full half the year. It is not to be wondered at, therefore, that his servants were found willing to compound for some occasional ill usage, in return for general laxity of rule, and many unconsidered trifles in the way of perquisites. His huntsmen and whips got now and then a severe beating; his grooms found it

very inconvenient when "Squire" took it into his mad head to sally forth on horseback across country by moonlight; and still worse, when he would have the whole stud out, and set every servant in his employ, not excepting his fat French cook, in the saddle, to see how they would comport themselves under the unaccustomed excitement of a steeple-chase. But upon the whole, the retainers at Crompton had an easy berth of it, and seldom voluntarily took their discharge.

Perhaps the best situations, as being less liable to the *per contras* in the shape of the master's passionate outbursts, were those of the park-keepers, of whom old Walter Grange was one. He was a bachelor, as almost all of them were. It was not good for any one with wife or daughter (if these were young, at least) to take service with Carew at all; and living in a pleasant cottage, far too large for him, in the very heart of the chase, Grange thought it no harm to take a lodger. The same old woman who cooked his victuals and kept his rooms tidy would do the same office for another who was not very particular in his food, and could rough it a little in other respects; and such a one had Walter lately found in the person of a young landscape-painter, Richard Yorke. This gentleman was a stranger to Crompton and its neighborhood; but having (as he said) happened to see a certain guarded advertisement in the *Times* headed, "To Artists and Others," that lodgings in the midst of forest scenery could be procured for what seemed next to nothing, he had come down from London in the autumn on the chance, and found them suitable.

To poet or painter's eye, indeed, the lodge was charming; it was small, of course, but very picturesquely built, and afforded the new tenant a bow-windowed sitting-room, with an outlook such as few dwellings in England, and probably none elsewhere, could offer. In the fore-ground was an open lawn, on which scores of fine-plumaged pheasants strutted briskly, and myriads of rabbits came forth at eve to play and nibble—bordered by crops of fern, above which moved stately the antlered deer. A sentry oak or two of mighty girth guarded this open space; but on both sides vast glades shut in the prospect with a wall of checkered light and shadow that deepened into sylvan gloom. But right in front the expanding view seemed without limit, and exhibited all varieties of forest scenery;

coppices with "Autumn's fiery finger" on their tender leaves; still, shining pools, where water-fowl bred and dwelt; broad pathways, across which the fallow deer could bound at leisure; or one would leap in haste, and half a hundred follow in groundless panic. The wealth of animal life in that green solitude, where the voice of man was hardly ever heard, was prodigious; the rarest birds were common there; even those who had their habitations by the sea were sometimes lured to this as silent spot, and skimmed above its undulating dells as o'er the billow. The eagle and the osprey had been caught there; and, indeed, a specimen of each was caged in a sort of aviary, which Grange had had constructed at the back of the lodge; while Yorke's sitting-room was literally stuffed full of these strange feathered visitants, which had fallen victims to the keeper's gun. The horse-hair sofa had a noble cover of deer-skin; the foot-stool and the fire-rug were made of furs, or skins that would have fetched their price elsewhere, and been held rare, although once worn by British beast or "varmint." The walls were stuck with antlers, and the very handle of the bell-rope was the fore-foot of a stag. Each of these had its story; and nothing pleased the old man better than to have a listener to his long-winded tales of how and where and when the thing was slain. All persons whose lives are passed in the open air, and in comparative solitude, seem in this respect to be descendants of Dame Quickly; their wearisome digressions and unnecessary preciseness as to date and place try the patience of all other kinds of men, and this was the chief cross which Grange's lodger had to bear as an offset to the excellence of his quarters. It must be confessed that he did not bear it meekly. To stop old Walter in mid-talk — without an open quarrel — was an absolute impossibility; but his young companion would turn the stream of his discourse, without much ceremony, from the records of slaughter into another channel (almost as natural to it) — the characteristics and peculiarities of his master Carew. Of this subject, notwithstanding that that other made him fret and fume so, Yorke never seemed to tire.

"I should like to know your master," he had said, half musingly, after listening to one of these strange recitals, soon after his arrival; to which Grange had answered, laughing: "Well, Squire's a very

easy one to know. He picks up friends by every road-side, without much troubling himself as to who they are, I promise you."

The young man's face grew dark with anger; but the idea of self-respect, far less of pride, was necessarily strange to a servant of Carew's. So Grange went on, unconscious of offense: "Now, if you were a young woman," he chuckled, "and as good-looking as you are as a lad, there would be none more welcome than yourself up at the big house. Pretty gals, bless ye, need no introduction yonder; and yet one would have thought that Squire would know better than to meddle with the mischievous hussies—he took his lesson early enough, at all events. Why, he married before he was your age, and not half so much of a man to look at, neither. You have heard talk of that, I dare say, however, in London?"

Richard Yorke, as the keeper had hinted, was a very handsome lad—brown-cheeked, blue eyed, and with rich clustering hair as black as a sloe; but at this moment he did not look prepossessing. He frowned and flashed a furious glance upon the speaker; but old Grange, who had an eye like a hawk, for the objects that a hawk desires, was as blind as a mole to any evidence of human emotion short of a punch on the head, and went on unheeding:

"Well, I thought you must ha' heard o' that too. We folk down here heard o' nothing else for all that year. She got hold o' Squire, this ere woman did, though he was but a school-boy, and she old enough to be his mother, bless ye, and was married to him. And they kep' it secret for six months; and that's what bangs me most about it all. For Carew, he can keep nothing secret—nothing: he blurts all out; and that's why he seems so much worse than he is to some people. Oh, she must have been a deep one, she must!"

"You never saw her, then?" asked Yorke, carelessly shading his eyes, as though from the westering sun, which Midas-like, was turning every thing it touched in that broad landscape into gold.

"Oh yes, I see her; she was here with Squire near half a year. Mrs. Carew—the old lady, I mean—was at Crompton then; and the young one—though she was no chicken neither—she tried to get her turned out; but she wasn't clever enough, clever as she was, for that job. Carew loved his mother, as indeed he ought, for she had never denied him any thing since he was born; and so, in that pitched

battle between the women, he took his mother's side. And in the end the old lady took his, and with a vengeance. I do think that if it had not been for her, young madam would have held on—Why, what's the matter, young gentleman? That was an oath fit for the mouth of Squire hisself."

"It's this cursed toothache," exclaimed Yorke, passionately. "It has worried me so ever since you began to speak that I should have gone mad if I had not let out at it a bit. Never mind me; I'm better now."

"Well, that's like the Squire again," returned the keeper, admiringly. "He seems allus to find hisself better for letting out at things, and at people too, for the matter of that. To hear him sometimes, one would almost think the ground must open; not that he means any harm, but it's a way he's got; but it does frighten them as is not used to him, surely. I mind that day when he first took the fox-hounds out, and Mr. Howard the sheriff as was that year—he's dead and gone long since, and his grandson is sheriff now again, which is cur'ous—well, he happened to ride a bit too forward with the dogs, and our young master—Oh dear, dear," and the old man began to chuckle like a hen that has laid two eggs at a time, "how he did swear at the old man!"

"You were talking about Mrs. Carew the elder," observed the artist, coolly.

"Was I? True, so I was. Well, she and the young Squire was for all the world like a deer with her fawn—all tenderness and timidity, so long as he was let alone; but when this 'ere woman came, as she considered his enemy, she was as bold as a red stag—nay, as one of our wild-cattle. It was through her, I say, that the bride got the sack at last; and when that was done the old lady seemed to have done her work, and was content enough when her son portioned her off, and persuaded her to live at the dower-house at Morden; and indeed she could hardly have staid at Crompton, with such goings on as there are now—feastings and fightings and flirtings—"

"Just so," interrupted the young painter; "she got her way, I know. But with respect to the younger lady, Mrs. Charles Carew, what was *she* like, and what did people say of her?"

"Well, not much good, I reckon. What could they say of a school-mistress who marries her pupil?"

"A school-mistress, was she?" said Yorke, in a strange husky voice. "We never heard that in London."

"Well, she was summut of that sort, Sir, though I don't know exactly what. Young as he was, Carew was not quite child enough to be at a dame's school, that's true. But she was not a mere servant-girl, as some said, any way, for she could play and sing—ay, songs that pleased him too—and she had book-learning, I've heard, such as would have astonished you; so that some folks said she was a witch, and had the devil's help to catch Carew. But a woman don't want magic, bless you, to come over a lad of seventeen—not she. What nonsense people talk! If any pretty girl about Crompton was to take a fancy to *you* now, as is like enough, do you suppose—"

"But I thought you said that Mrs. Charles Carew was not a girl?"

"Nor more she was: she was five-and-thirty if she was a day; and yet—*there* was the wonder of it—she did not look much over twenty! I've heard our gentlemen, when out shooting, liken her to some fine Frenchwoman as never grew old, and was fell in love with unbeknown by her grandson. Now, what was her name? I got it written down somewhere in my old pocket-book; it was summut like Longclothes."

"*Ninon de l'Enclos*?" suggested Yorke, without a smile.

"Ay, that's the name. Well, Mrs. Charles Carew, as you call her, was just like her, and a regular everlasting! She was not what you would call pretty, but very "taking" looking, and with a bloom and freshness on her as would have deceived any man. Her voice was like music itself, and she moved like a stag o' ten; and the Squire being always manly looking and swarthy, like yourself, there was really little difference between them to look at. I dare say she's gone all to pieces now, as women will do, while the Squire looks much the same as he did then."

"I have never even seen him," said the landscape-painter, moodily.

"Well, don't you stare at him, young master, when you do get that chance, that's all. Some comes down here merely to look at him, as if he was a show, and that puts him in a pretty rage, I promise you; though to get to know him, as I say, is easy enough, if you go the right way about it. If you were a good rider, for instance, and could lead the field one day when the hunting begins, he'd ask you to dinner to a certainty; or if you could drive stags—why, he would have given you a hundred pounds last midsummer, when we couldn't get the beasts to swim the lake. There's a pretty mess come o' that, by-the-by; for, out of the talk there was among the gentlemen about that difficulty, the Squire laid a bet as *he* would drive stags; not as *we* do, mind you, but in harness, like carriage-horses; and, cuss me, if he hasn't had the break out half a dozen times with four red deer in it, and you may see him tearing through the park, with mounted grooms and keepers on the right and left of him, all galloping their hardest, and the Squire with the ribbons, a-holloaing like mad! For my part, I don't like such pranks, and would much sooner not be there to see 'em. There will be mischief some day with it yet, for all that old Lord Orford, down at Newmarket some fifty years ago, used to do the same thing, they say. It ain't in nature that stags should be druv four-in-hand, even by Carew. However, the Squire won his wager; and we haven't seen none o' *that* wild work o' late weeks, though we may see it again any day."

"I have heard of that strange exploit," observed Yorke; "but as driving deer, even in the ordinary way, is not my calling, and as I am no great rider, even if I had a horse, I don't see how I am to introduce myself to your mad Squire, and yet I have a great fancy for his acquaintance. Do you think he'd buy any of these drawings, taken in his own park, from his own timber?" The young man touched a portfolio, already well stocked with studies of oak and beech. "Here is a sketch of the Decoy Pond, for instance, with the oldest tree in the chase beside it; would not that interest him, think you? You think not?"

"Well, young gentleman," said the keeper, frankly, "if I say no, it ain't that I mean any slight to your drawing. It's like the tree enough, for certain, with the very hoop of iron as I put round it with my own hands twenty years ago—and, by the same token, it will want another before this winter's out; but I don't think the Squire