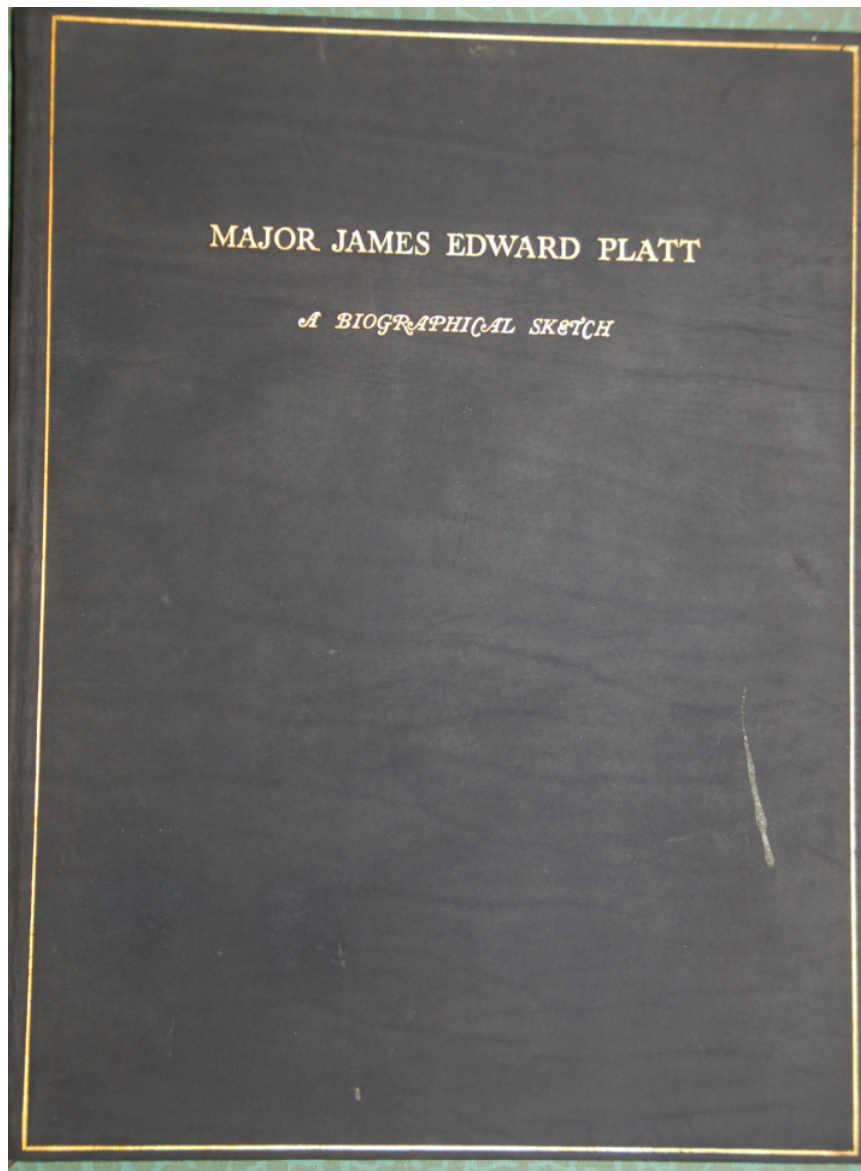


Major James Edward Platt - A Biographical Sketch



With the Compliments of  
Major James Edward Platt.



MAJOR JAMES EDWARD PLATT

*A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH*

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*Major James Edward Platt with the Cottesmore Foxhounds*

### **MAJOR JAMES EDWARD PLATT**

To be one of the best types of sportsmen of the old school, which is still the finest school, is the reputation enjoyed by Major James Edward Platt. Born at Oldham in the year 1856, he is the fifth son of the late Mr. John Platt, M.P., of the same place. He was educated at Harrow, and on leaving school entered the family firm of Platt Bros. Ltd., of Oldham, being appointed a director a few years later. The firm, founded by his grandfather, was carried on by successive members of his family, and still ranks as one of the leading Lancashire houses in the textile machinery industry, employing over 12,000 hands.

An interesting event occurred in 1873, when he was gazetted to the Duke of Lancaster's Own Yeomanry Regiment at the early age of sixteen. He took a keen interest in all his regimental duties, and after twenty years' continuous service retired with the rank of honorary Major.

Sport of every kind has always made a powerful appeal to Major Platt, and in that realm there surely must be few men who have had a more catholic education and have subsequently put it to the test in more varied fields than he.

Hunting, shooting, salmon-fishing, coaching, horse-racing, polo, the breeding of thoroughbreds and of Red Poll cattle, besides a large dairy Shorthorn herd, have in turn afforded him recreation and brought him at the same time no small distinction. In fact, it is not too much to say that there is scarcely an English sport which has not included Major Platt among its devotees.

For some twenty years, during which time he made his home in Cheshire, he was a regular follower of the Cheshire, North Shropshire, and Sir Watkin Wynn's Hounds, the latter under the mastership of the late Sir Watkin Wynn. Major Platt's first initiation to the hunting-field was through the now defunct Oldham Harriers, and after that he turned out with the Lyme Harriers, now disbanded, whose then Master was the famous Arthur Brocklehurst.

For the next fifteen to twenty years, the Cheshire, Shropshire, and Sir Watkin Wynn's filled up most of his hunting week, but he has, of course, had seasons in other counties, notably in Rutlandshire and Leicestershire. There were also several seasons when he confined his hunting mainly to Mr. Fernie's and the Cottesmore. Choosing Manton as his headquarters, he hunted in turn with the Cottesmore, Fernie's, and the Quorn.

Major Platt was one of the fortunate few to take part in the historic run with the Cottesmore led by Lord Lonsdale, the then Master, mounted on his famous white horse, and Tom Firr, the huntsman, on his equally famous chestnut White Legs. The find was at the celebrated Cream Cheese Gorse and the pace was killing throughout the whole run, fully equal to that of a steeplechase, and it lasted without a break for twenty-seven minutes. It was Major Platt who led the field at the finish, and he was actually walking his horse round to get his wind when Tom Firr arrived on White Legs, followed a few minutes later by Lord Lonsdale.

He has also very good reason to remember a famous jump in the Pytchley country near Cottisbrook where, many years ago, when staying with that well-known sportsman, the Rev. Cecil Legard, he was the central figure of an episode from which the spot has acquired the sinister name of "Platt's Grave." The place in question presented a terrific jump, almost impossible to negotiate, formed by a shallow ditch, a new timber fence, and the wide irregular course of a dried-up brook. The rest of the field, only too well acquainted with its character, naturally divided to left and right. Major Platt was a stranger to that country and in addition he was riding a thoroughbred horse which was a great goer and was pulling so hard that his rider completely failed to check his stride and had to let him take the leap. The fox went to ground at the same brook, and the checked field, seeing Major Platt's horse rejoin them minus its rider, were left in painful suspense as to the result of his involuntary heroism. Great was their relief and surprise when he climbed unhurt out of the deepest part of the brook, his horse having actually cleared the obstacle and landed in the brook, where it deposited its rider at the last and least convenient moment.



Major Platt continued to hunt for many years in Leicestershire. Later on he also made Yorkshire his hunting centre for a few seasons, and turned out with the Bramham Moor and the York and Ainsty, with which he remained until 1914, and incidentally enhanced his reputation as “a rum ‘un to follow, a bad ‘un to beat.”

Another incident in Major Platt’s hunting career, though in this instance it was an amusing one, occurred when he was enjoying a day with the Newmarket and Thurlow Hounds. They were hunting in the neighbourhood of Newmarket, and on this occasion several of the trainers and jockeys joined the hunt. It so happened that it was a very fast run, which was somewhat unusual for these hounds, and Major Platt was riding a brilliant horse, bought from the late Jack Robinson, of Foxhill, which carried him exceptionally well that day. He noticed that several of the jockeys were riding well up and going freely, but although they apparently tried hard they could not get near him and were finally compelled to give it up.

It was not until some years afterwards, when at one of the Newmarket race—meetings, that Major Platt was informed by one of the trainers that it had been prearranged on that particular day for the jockeys to take Major Platt on and ride him down. The news that they had failed in their efforts soon spread, and needless to say, caused much amusement in Newmarket, where everyone told the story of how “they tried to ride the Major down, but could not do it.”

On being enlightened, Major Platt could recall the incident with great pleasure and natural pride, for he was quite unaware of their intentions at the time.

Amongst hunting men of the last half-century there are few who have ridden horses better suited to the different types of country than Major Platt. He had, to start with, the great asset of a good eye for a country and a mount, and so picked up many unusually fine fencers. Major Platt did not give big prices for his hunters, preferring to buy them from sporting farmers after he had himself seen what the horses could do across country.



*MAJOR JAMES E. PLATT ON MOONSTONE AND SIR WILLIAM COOK ON PRINCE PLAYING IN A MATCH, STAMFORD v ST. NEOTS, AT BURGHLEY PARK, 1902*

Occasionally he acquired an animal that was obviously too full of courage for its owner. Some of these were the best he ever rode, after he had once got them going and had schooled them to work on his own lines, the first thing of course being to cure the faults developed by timid riding. Now and then he acquired a hard puller, but Major Platt knew how to deal with this class of animal.

Sometimes if hounds checked suddenly a hard-mouthed horse did make himself rather a nuisance, as was the case with Milton, his mount in the memorable run with the Cottesmore already referred to. There were others as well, including a wonderful one— eyed grey he purchased from the late Colonel Rivers Bulkeley, which pulled when walking, trotting, or galloping. So great was this grey's courage that Major Platt used to ride him on a very tight curb, the only way to keep him in check. This horse never gave Major Platt a fall.

Another that pulled as hard, called Aaron, he sold to the Bramham Moor Hunt to carry the late huntsman Tom Smith, and this puller proved a glutton for going and was never tired. Others included Wellington, a thoroughbred which won the big steeplechase for officers at the Curragh ; Whist, a stuffy thorough bred, a perfect lady's hunter which carried Mrs. Platt and won a succession of flapping" races in Ireland, was bought from the late Charlie Archer, who had him from Mr. Joe Widger.

Another of his purchases was Laddie, a thoroughbred then in the hands of the late Jack Robinson, the trainer, who used him to lead his two—year—olds over three furlongs in the early Spring. Robinson having purchased him from Mr Basset, one of his patrons, who had found him beyond his control. In many runs with the Bramham Moor Major Platt led the field on this horse.

A brilliant leaper named Pendulum, a thoroughbred by a son of Ascetic whose own sire was the famous Hermit, he bought from his breeder, the late Duchess of Hamilton. This horse provided his new owner with not a few exciting runs in Leicestershire.

During Major Platt's hunting career he was invariably in the first-flight, and was not at all subject to nerves. He had sound judgment, always preferring to take his own time and a clean place for his take—off as well as for landing.

He never asked his horse to attempt what was beyond his capacity nor to risk a fall needlessly. He realised that this only frightens a horse and causes him to lose confidence in his rider, whereas horses ridden with sound judgment will always take an extra big jump provided horse and rider have mutual confidence in each other and act together as one.

Major Platt speaks in high terms of the remarkable ability of his former stud-groom Corston. No better man could there have been than he to look after hunters and get them fit for their work. He spared no pains in getting Major Platt's mounts ready to carry him to the front, however long the runs might be, and the horses were ever ready to do their best. Later on, Corston took over Major Platt's thoroughbreds and devoted the same care, judgment, and skill in their welfare, and it was greatly through his excellent management that Major Platt had such success at the yearling sales, where big prices were given for stock of his breeding. Corston was always considered to be one of the best and most successful stud—grooms of his day.





*Maid Marian and Colt by Galopin*

Shortly after going to Bruntwood, Cheadle, Cheshire, Major Platt had his first experience of polo. In those days the Manchester Polo Club played regularly on their ground at Old Trafford, close to the cricket ground which still survives. From enthusiastic member Major Platt became the club's energetic secretary, and held that position for several seasons. During his term of office he instituted a scheme which allowed the officers of the Cavalry Regiments quartered at Hulme Barracks, Salford, the exclusive use of the ground on one afternoon a week, leaving three afternoons to the club's members. The 3rd and 13th Hussars and the 9th Lancers availed themselves of the invitation during their stay, giving the club many enjoyable matches and Major Platt a store of playing experience.

From a sporting doctor at Rugby he bought two ponies, Piquet, a four-year-old mare, and Piper, a three-year-old, both, light chestnuts and both by a thoroughbred horse called Chypre, by Blinkhoolie. Piquet was a perfect covert hack and could go miles at a steady hand—canter without breaking. She trained quite naturally for polo and such was her aptitude for the game that she ultimately became the property, at a high figure, of Mr. Mildmay (now Lord Mildmay of Flete), a very well-known Hurlingham player, for whom she won the annual prize for the best pony of the club. Piper was only slightly behind her in merit and was sold to one of the Peat brothers, a famous polo family of that period.

Colonel Walker and his brother officers of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Hussars presented a Challenge Cup to be run for by members of the club at their annual races, and in four years it became Major Platt's property, he having won it in the first, second, and fourth year. It had been held during

the third year by Mr. Charles Lyon, who won it with his pony Dancer, a justly celebrated iron—grey pony. Besides Mr. Lyon, Sir Humphrey de Trafford, Mr. Edmund de Trafford, his brother, and Mr. Percy Hargreaves were contemporary members of the Manchester Club.

When he left Cheadle for Howbury Hall, near Bedford, Major Platt necessarily resigned his secretaryship and took a ten years' holiday from polo. At the end of that time he joined the Bedford and St. Neots Clubs. After such a long interval he found himself under a serious handicap, as without the best ponies the game had become too fast for him. He found the necessary speed in two first-class ponies, Moonstone and Second Hand, which he purchased from the late Mr. John Watson.

They were two brilliant polo ponies and knew the game by heart, both being easy to ride, Second Hand following the ball like a cat, with every indication of enjoyment. She was shown in the stud-book as a thoroughbred and had a thoroughbred's peculiar temper. She might not always condescend to go on the polo ground when her rider wished and had to be humoured. Major Platt often had to gallop her round the ground before a game to discourage her habit of running away, but in the game itself she was perfect.



*Kendal*

Moonstone was more solidly built in body and temperament, and in addition to being a perfect polo pony was a brilliant hunter, having previously carried Mrs John Watson over the Meath country in Ireland. Second Hand took the first prize in the lightweight class at the Hurlingham Pony Show and Moonstone first prize in the heavyweight class and the Show's Champion prize.

Such ponies enabled Major Platt to keep up with the fastest game, and in one particularly hard match, St. Neots against Burghley Park, played at Burghley on August 2nd,

1902, Moon stone, and in a lesser degree, Second hand, carried the whole game to St. Neots advantage. Major Platt left Howbury Hall shortly afterwards to live at Chesterfield Park, near Saffron Walden, when he finally gave up his ponies and the game.

Major James Platt had a short but successful experience of pony racing. His most famous ponies were Rubies, Parvo, and May Queen II. Rubies, after defeating Colonel Hall Walker's (the present Lord Wavertree) Water Lily at Chester, was sold to an Indian Rajah, she having proved herself the fastest 13.2 pony in England. For her Indian owner she won the Rajah's Cup at Byculla, the most important pony race in India. This event was for ponies up to 13.2 hands, and good ponies of that height were as valuable as they were rare. Parvo won some good races in England before being sold to go to India, where he also won the Rajah's Cup.

The playing of polo ponies to qualify them for racing provided many interesting and occasionally unpleasant incidents. Ponies able and fit for racing were all but impossible to manage on the polo ground. They would neither turn nor stop, and Rubies in particular would bound high into the air at every swing of the stick. On one Occasion Major Platt, finding himself with the ball before an open goal, and surrounded by cries of "Hit it," made his shot without regard to Rubies' unpleasant habit, with the result that he was thrown on to his head and, it being July and the ground very hard, he sustained concussion. Carried unconscious into the pavilion, he awoke to ask whether he had scored, and relapsed into happy oblivion on being told that he had.

One of the most interesting chapters in Major Platt's sporting record would contain an account of his experiences in breeding thoroughbreds, as for many years he ran one of the outstanding studs in this country.

When Major Platt first took up the breeding of thoroughbred stock for sale as yearlings he began in a very modest way, but he was not long realising that to make a success it was necessary to have only the best that could be obtained.

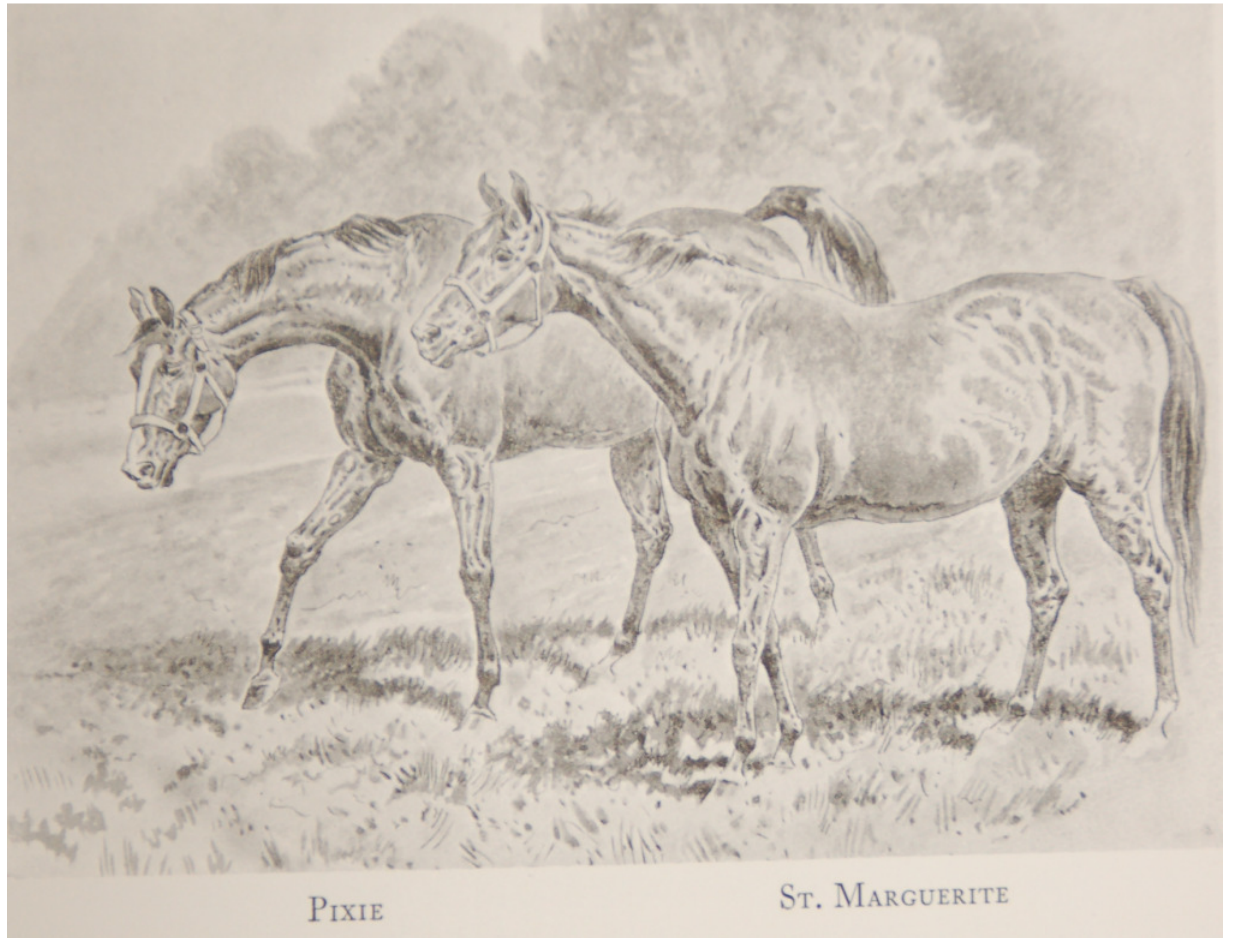
The principle he adopted was to secure mares that had already produced first-class winners and to mate them with the leading sires of the day. Nominations to the leading sires had to be obtained a few years in advance, and great care had to be observed in the mating of his mares with these sires so as to ensure, as far as human skill was concerned, that proved nicks of blood were followed. To acquire mares of the right sort necessitated careful research. They could be found sometimes at public sales, especially at the compulsory dispersal of a well-known stud, and occasionally by private purchase from small owners. Major Platt considered a first-class groom essential to successful breeding. He endeavoured always to place his paddocks on limestone soil, with rich grass, and paid particular attention to the size and situation of the boxes and to the railing.

He was a highly successful breeder and some notable animals came from his stud. He invariably made big prices at the Doncaster Sales and was not far behind the late Sir Tatton Sykes in his averages and on one occasion actually beat him. At the sales in later years he sold without reserve and found it made no difference in the prices obtained.

One of the most noted animals Major Platt bred was Wolf's Crag, by Barcaldine out of Lucy Ashton, by Scottish Chief. He won the Chesterfield Nursery at Derby as a two-year-old, and the following spring, as a three-year-old, won the Lincolnshire Handicap easily by three lengths. He was one of the best three year-olds of his year and when retired to the stud became a successful sire. Amongst others of note was Pietermaritzburg, by St. Simon out of Sea Air. He was the property of Mr. George Faber, who bought him as a yearling for 3,000 guineas, and was trained by the late John Porter. He won several first-class races, the best being the Jockey Club Stakes at Newmarket in 1901 when a four-year-old, winning in a canter, having behind him some of the best three-year-olds of the year. He was sold for 15,000 guineas to go to South America, where he became a very successful sire. Then there was Ercildoune, by Kendal out of Maid Marian, the dam of Polymelus. As a three-year-old he won the Duke of York Stakes in 1899 at Kempton Park, in which race he strained a leg, but in spite of that was only beaten by a short head in the Cesarewitch a fortnight later. Grafton, by Galopin out of Maid Marian, should also be mentioned, as on being exported to Australia he became their leading sire for some years. His daughters were also much prized, for they in turn produced many good winners.

Another good foal which he bred was Ice Maiden, by Kendal out of Lonely, winner of the Oaks. She won several races for Mr. George Faber, now Lord Faber. Another was Valiant, by Ladas out of Surprise-me-not, a grand-daughter of Thistle. He was trained by the late Sam Darling and won a lot of good races. In after life many of the fillies bred at Major Platt's stud became good brood mares and foaled many winners, whilst some of the colts turned out good sires. Sweet Marjorie was the dam of Simon Square and sister to Tredennis, a good sire which Major Platt also bred. He was the last foal of the celebrated St. Marguerite, by Hermit, winner of the One Thousand Guineas, and dam of several first-class horses, including Seabreeze, winner of the Oaks and the St. Leger. She died after foaling, and Tredennis was brought up on a cart-mare. As a yearling he sold to the late Captain Machell for 2,000 guineas, and was re-sold at the dispersal sale of Captain Machell's horses at Newmarket. He eventually was sold at 120 guineas to Mr. Lowry, who acquired him for the stud, and he stood in Ireland, where he died in 1926. He has turned out a profitable sire and many of his sons and daughters have won leading races, for instance, Bachelor's Double, winner of the Royal Hunt Cup at Ascot and the Jubilee Stakes at Kempton ; Golden Myth, winner Of the Ascot Gold Cup; Hidennis, Pons Asinorum, and several others.





As regards sires Major Platt only had one of note, viz Kendal, which he bought from Mr. Gubbins, of Knockanny, Ireland, for 18,000 guineas. Kendal was the only horse that ever beat Ormonde, the event being a celebrated trial at Kingclere when the jockeys rode in colours and Kendal and Ormonde were two—year—olds. This trial is mentioned in John Porter's book of reminiscences. Kendal's stock were brilliant, and included Galtee More, a winner of the Triple Crown (the Two Thousand Guineas, the Derby, and the St. Leger), who was afterwards sold to go to Germany as a sire. Many of his daughters produced first-class horses. Kendal was sold by Major Platt to go to South America, where he got excellent stock, and his yearlings fetched phenomenal prices and turned out excellent racers besides being invaluable at the stud. He was also the sire of Tredennis. Major Platt also went in for King's Premium stallions, with which he did well, notably with Storm Signal, Silver Crown, Connaught, and others. Eventually he decided to dispose of his stud, as he found the supervision and responsibility of such a valuable establishment a source of growing anxiety, and so in the autumn of 1905 he sent the whole stud up to Newmarket to be sold without reserve, and big prices were paid for his mares and foals.

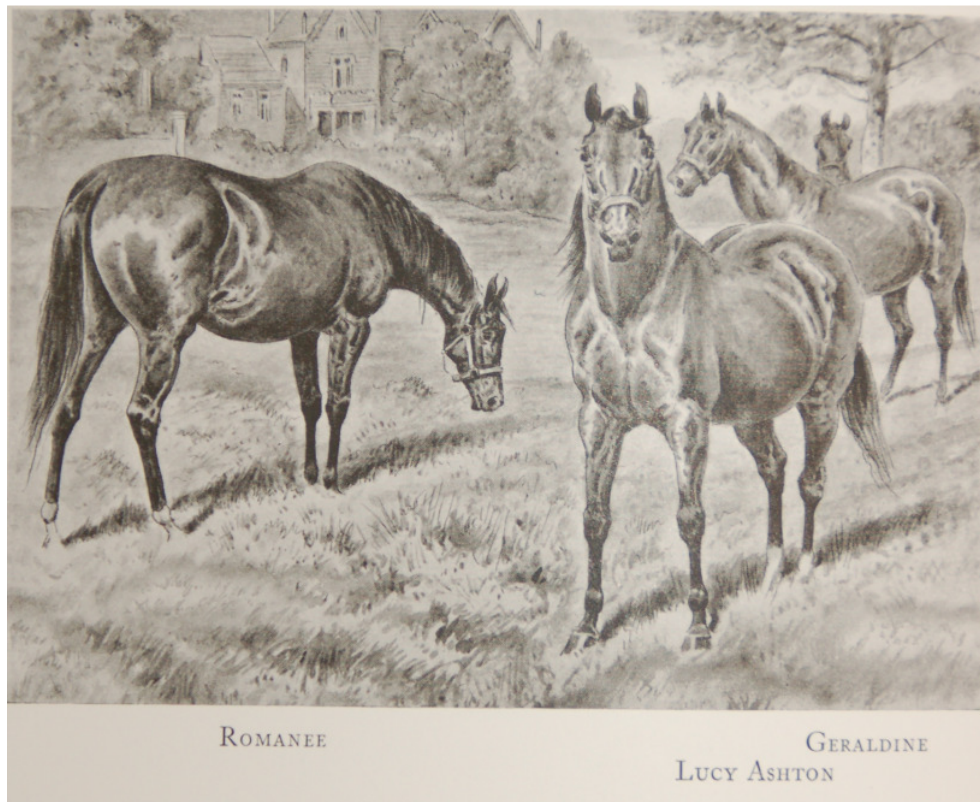
After an interval of many years he was induced to speculate in four mares sent from South America by Senor Unzue. These mares were in foal to Senor Unzue's stallion Tracery, which he had purchased in England. He was by Rock Sand, winner of the English Derby, the



Two Thousand Guineas, and the St. Leger, out of one of the daughters of the celebrated Plaisanterie. These four mares produced three colts and one filly. One colt met with an accident and was destroyed; another, named Gothic, went to Australia and is very highly thought of, having won some of the best races there. The filly was bought by Mr S. Tattersall and is called Foliation, being trained by Alec Taylor, In 1926 she won the Nassau Stakes at Goodwood and the Atlantic Cup, Liverpool, besides other races, and was undoubtedly the best three-year-old filly of that season. Quite satisfied with the success of his speculation, Major Platt soon afterwards sold the four mares.

Before leaving the horses, reference ought to be made to a wonderful trotting stallion called Warlock, which Major Platt bought in the United States. He belonged to a trotting enthusiast who was selling off his stud, and was by Belmont by Hambletonian, the crack trotting stallion of his day, out of a Pilot Junior mare. These Pilot Junior mares were very valuable and had bred some of the fastest trotters of the day. It was by pure luck that Major Platt bought him, but as English breeders did not appreciate him Major Platt sold him back to America at a very big price, it having transpired that a son of his, called Warrior, his only offspring in the United States, had trotted a remarkable record. Major Platt heard later that he had been put into training again and had covered the mile in two minutes and five seconds.

Coaching used to occupy a great deal of Major Platt's leisure. He was very fond indeed of handling the ribbons, and years ago was regularly to be seen at the meets of the Coaching Club tooling his team.



We must not omit mention of Major Platt's considerable success in breeding dairy Shorthorn and Red Poll cattle, which he took up in addition to horse-breeding. It was at the end of the last century that Major Platt started a large herd of dairy Shorthorns and worked them up to great efficiency, having several cows that gave over a thousand gallons of milk per year, and which included two London Dairy Show's Champions. His records were published and were considered remarkable at the time. This herd was sold by Messrs. Thornton and fetched extraordinary prices. It was shortly afterwards replaced by a Red Poll dairy herd, as a polled herd could be introduced into Major Platt's thoroughbred horse paddocks with safety where horned cattle could not. Many of these Red Poll cows gave over a thousand gallons per year, and he had one very famous milker called Omlette, which had taken the Lord Mayor's prize at the London Dairy Show. He was not content with merely a dairy herd, but soon began to add show animals of the highest class, and when the late Mr. Colman's (of Trowse) Norwich herd was dispersed Major Platt bought a number of the best show animals, with which he won several first, second, third, and champion prizes at the Royal and at other shows where there were classes for Red Polls, and further, he was the means of getting the Bath and West of England Show to introduce classes for Red Polls. This herd was eventually dispersed when Major Platt left Howbury Hall to go and live in Cambridgeshire.

Whilst he farmed at Bruntwood, Cheadle, Cheshire, and at Howbury Hall, Bedfordshire, he went in for fat poultry farming on a large scale and employed skilled poultry men from Sussex to work it for him. He took several prizes at Smithfield Show for dead table poultry, and once showed a pair of cockerels that weighed 14½ lbs. each. He used to send all his stock to the London Central Market, whence it was principally bought for the West End clubs, in fact, a leading poulterer said that Major Platt's was the finest poultry that came into the market.

Although his shooting experiences were practically confined to England and Scotland, Major Platt can show a record extending, over half a century which few sportsmen of the present generation can hope to equal. In 1872, at the early age of sixteen, he was invited by his eldest brother, the late Colonel Henry Platt, C.B., to his shoot at Dundonald Lodge on the shores of Little Loch Broome, and it was here that he first learned and practiced the art of deerstalking. The hills around Dundonald are very steep and rugged, and the deer were numerous. During the last two seasons that he was there Major Platt did remarkably well, considering that he was a novice and a mere youth. On one day he was lucky or skilful enough to get four stags. It was at Dundonald, too, that he accomplished the rare feat of getting a stag, a salmon, and a grouse on the same day.

Having passed the novitiate stage, he rented a shoot in the island of Jura from a Mr. Macfarlane. It was a lovely spot in the north of the island, and not difficult to walk, although the usual means of getting there was by open boat across the Little Minch, which can be very rough and has strong tides. The crossing is one of about seven miles, and on several occasions it has been necessary to hire a small steam-yacht. The grouse- shooting was moderate, and a few black game were got, but the deer were all that could be desired. It is true that Major Platt's immediate neighbour in the south part of the island, Mr. Evans, was

more favoured than he in this respect, but Major Platt had no difficulty in getting his limit. The deer on the Atlantic side were much smaller than those on the east side and each species kept rigidly to their territory. It is almost certain that the smaller deer of the western side were the original stock, which had resisted the mixture of the improved blood. It is also remarkable that although Jura was celebrated for what are called Chromics (the horns of which go straight back), Major Platt never saw one.



In the following year he took a seven years' lease of Craig Dalmally from Lord Breadalbane. Major Platt's holding was a very large area which is now divided into several small shootings. He cleared the ground bordering on the Black Mount deer forest and erected several miles of Corrie Monie fencing, which gave a greatly improved stalking area in that it was free from sheep. This Craig shooting was very good for grouse and as many as six hundred to eight hundred brace were got in good seasons. The bags also included a large number of blackcock and woodcock, especially on the slopes of Ben Cruachan, where roe-deer and rabbits also abounded. The latter were very numerous on the Home Beat and many enjoyable days were spent amongst the bracken, where rides had been cut out and an excellent team of terriers employed to drive the rabbits out.

Major Platt's happiest recollections of stalking are centred on the Craig shoot. Accompanied by his stalker, Gow, the son of the celebrated Atholl stalker, he saw many a lordly stag fall to his rifle. Gow was brought up in all branches of sport at Taymouth Castle and in addition to his skill as a stalker was an excellent fisherman and dog-breaker.

Amongst the stags which Major Platt got at Craig were one 14—pointer, a 13—pointer, one very fine 10—pointer. It was here that he tried the experiment of crossing the American wapiti with the red deer. He obtained ten hinds from England, six of whom were in calf, and one of their progeny was a remarkable stag and a royal at two years old. He put these hinds in a park with a two-year—old wapiti stag which he had bought from the late Mr. Christopher Wilson, of Rigmaden Park, Westmorland. The first crop of the union was three stags and six hinds. During the second year, however, the wapiti stag got too big for the hinds and the crop were not so numerous, which induced Major Platt to sell the stag to the late Sir Peter Walker, who already had a small wapiti herd in his park at Osmaston, near Derby.

The three cross-bred stags showed a most interesting variation of habits. Two followed the red deer and when they reached maturity were almost indistinguishable from them in appearance or behaviour. The third inherited all the traits of size, colour, and character of the wapiti. He was always seen alone, and if met suddenly would trot away, seldom ever breaking into a gallop, and making the peculiar whistling noise which a wapiti emits when disturbed. In the rutting season he became a great sultan and gathered together a very large herd of hinds. His bellowing was by far the loudest Major Platt ever heard from a stag, and he ultimately became such a nuisance that he was sold to Mr. Jack Jones, the owner of the Knoidart deer forest.

From Craig Major Platt went to the Forest of Killiehonate in Loch Aber, about nine miles from Fort William, which he rented from the late Lord Abinger. The shoot had an area of about 30,000 acres and marched with the Mamore Forest. Major Platt had the No. 3 fishing beat of the Spean, to which he added in the spring the No. 4 beat, which contained the celebrated Mucommer Pool, a quarter of a mile long, and capable of accommodating two rods easily when the water was in order, without risk of either interfering with the other.

The Killiehonate deer forest was an excellent one. It marched with Ben Nevis and its great altitude was one of its special merits, as the stags could summer in the high corries and were never absent from the forest during a long migration. It is of course a most important feature for large forests to be able to keep the herds on their own ground. The celebrated Corrie Rea is in the Killiehonate forest, and is three miles long, all grass and open to the south. It is very steep and not easy to stalk, but it was possible on account of its size to get a deer at the top end without disturbing the whole corrie. There were other corries almost as good, and as the forest contained several beats it could be stalked by two or three parties and fairly frequently. There was an extensive flat area on the north side, before the hills were reached, where good stags could be got late in the season, and where there was excellent grouse, black game, and rabbit shooting.

No doubt in view of his long lease Major Platt improved Killiehonate by building a road near the hills along the whole length of this flat area, to allow easier access to the ground, and adding several pony paths to the various beats. There was already a good road to the back of the south side of the forest.

The stags shot in the forest were of very good average indeed without providing anything exceptional. There was an entire absence of corn—feeders, as a deer fence along the railway kept them away from the crops. Major Platt and his friends got several royals, and on one notable day, when the sanctuary being moved, the Major himself got two royals and two at his stand and two more royals by stalking, establishing a record of four royals in one day. The sanctuary was an exceptionally large one, about five miles by three, being in the centre of the forest among the wildest scenery it is possible to imagine.

On its west side it turns towards Ben Dearagh (the red hill), Scotland's second highest mountain, and it was here that Major Platt shot a stag at an altitude of over 3,000 feet. The same corrie by tradition is the scene of the exploits of a blind sportsman who, armed with bow and arrows, sat on a rock and killed stags as they were driven past him through a narrow pass at the end of the corrie. To this forest Major Platt brought his cross-bred wapiti—red-deer hinds and the park-bred stag, which from twelve points at two years, now displayed no less than sixteen.

The grouse shooting was very good, though, like all west-coast moors, it varied considerably with the seasons. From the commencement of his shooting career Major Platt had bred and maintained a first-class kennel of setters and pointers. He had received a wonderful bitch, by Tutsam Trip, as a gift from the late Rev. E. G. Popham, who in those days acted as judge at Field Trials. This bitch was the founder of Major Platt's kennel and by breeding to the best Field Trial winners he produced generations of excellent dogs, which not only served him well in the field but won a series of prizes. His pointers carried off the Brace Stakes at Shrewsbury and some years later Jim and Juno, two very famous dogs, won the Grouse Stakes at both the Scotch and the Irish Field Trials, and also the Brace Stakes at Shrewsbury, and many other stakes.





A REMARKABLY FINE SPECIMEN OF A 10-Pointer, SHOT AT CRAIG DALMALLY

After Killiehonate Major Platt held only one shoot of note in Scotland, and that for but one season. This was Carradale, near Campbeltown, which belonged to Mr. Austin Mackenzie. It was a bad grouse year and it would perhaps be unfair to judge the shoot by the results, especially as the river provided excellent compensation with sea-trout and a few salmon. The disappointing season over, Major Platt took a sporting one week's lease, in the neighbouring island, of the Arran deer forest. He was allowed six days' stalking and six stags of his own choice. The result was that with six shots he got one stag on each of the six days,

the first three of which were fine and the last three providing a wild gale with driving rain. The six stags were two royals, one 11-pointer (a very heavy corn-feeder), and three 9-pointers.

In his very early days he shared with his brother, Mr. S. R. Platt, the enjoyments of a grouse moor in Yorkshire, where the Major gained his first experience of driven grouse. Shortly afterwards they took the celebrated Rippondon Moor, the property of Captain Savile, whose head keeper, a man named Sykes, provided a revolution and more than a nine days' wonder for the shooting world of the 'seventies by inventing and introducing the system of driving grouse.

Major Platt can offer only two foreign shooting experiences, and these were but secondary objects in the journeys that took him from England. While making a world tour with his cousin, Mr. Samuel Radcliffe, they halted at Kattywar in India and accounted for some very good black buck, nilghai, and a few chinkara, a species of ravine deer. In more recent years he made a trip to British Columbia, where he lived an open—air life in camp in the Cariboo, and claimed a grizzly bear, a fine cariboo stag, and a moose.

Major Platt used to be deeply interested in politics, and twice contested Yarmouth as a Liberal, being defeated on each occasion by a small majority. Since that day changed conditions have brought him into the Conservative ranks.

He still takes a keen interest in bloodstock, and has summarised his experiences and given much practical advice in his book entitled "The Thoroughbred Racehorse : Its Breeding and Early Management."

He is a Justice of the Peace for the West Riding of Yorkshire and the County of Cheshire, and up to a few years ago held a similar office for Lancashire.

For many years the Wellington, the Cavalry, and the Reform used to be included amongst his clubs, but at the present time the Cavalry is the only London club of which he remains a member. He is one of the founder—members of the Mougins County Golf Club at Cannes.

Major Platt generally spends the winter at a charming villa he has built on the Riviera—the Villa Annunciata, Californie, Cannes—whilst his town house is 10, Cadogan Square, S.W.

### **Digitisation**

This book, available at Melyniog, was digitised by William Bridge in January 2016, who is the first cousin three times removed of Major James Edward Platt.

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