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THE WORKS OF  
G. J. WHYTE-MELVILLE

EDITED BY

SIR HERBERT MAXWELL, BART.

VOLUME II.





KATERFELTO









  
CALAND 96.

“NELLY, WILL YOU GIVE ME ONE OF THOSE FLOWERS?”

*Frontispiece.*

# KATERFELTO

A STORY OF EXMOOR

BY

G. J. WHYTE-MELVILLE

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY G. H. JALLAND

LONDON

W. THACKER & CO., 2 CREED LANE, E.C.

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## INTRODUCTION

“LET every lad learn to ride well, to shoot straight, and to speak the truth.” More elaborate than the ancient Persian formula is the education code required by modern civilisation, yet it is well that there are still masters who will not suffer the man to be eclipsed in the student—well for our nation that there are still plenty of apt and willing pupils in the old lore. Of such masters surely none was ever more gentle and unassuming than George Whyte-Melville, none ever set before his disciples a more faultless example of Baldassare’s *perfetto cortegiano*. Born in 1821, he was sent in due course to Eton, where, despite the manifest and manifold imperfections of that Alma Mater, on which reform had not yet laid its meddlesome finger, he acquired, as many have done before and since, an affection for the classics which tinged his whole habit of thought. Whyte-Melville entered the army in 1839, and having exchanged into the Coldstream Guards in 1846, left it in 1849. But when the

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war with Russia broke out in 1854 he volunteered for active service, and served throughout the campaign with the Turkish Irregulars.

When peace was declared, he devoted himself to the chase, being especially fond of making young horses. A keen critic and acknowledged arbiter of hunting equipment, his own costume in the field was the reverse of elaborate. He always wore a black coat and jack-boots, and to a friend who once told him he really ought to get a red coat, he replied, "So I will, old fellow, if you like. I daresay the crossing-sweeper in Berkeley Square will lend me one." All that he made by his writings, which must have come to a considerable figure, was spent in good works—not indiscriminate charity, but useful plans for promoting the comfort and recreation of working men, such as reading-rooms for grooms, etc.

Could Whyte-Melville look again into Hyde Park one of these May mornings, or take his place by the coverside among his beloved Leicestershire pastures, his eye would find much on which to rest with pleasure. Twenty years of agricultural depression, it is true, have left their mark on the habits of our youth; many have had to exchange a canter on a hundred-guinea hack for a trundle, at best, on a Beeston-Humber. A good deal of hunting, even, is witnessed from a bicycle—a contrivance which finds no mention in



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Whyte-Melville's notes on the world, as he knew it; but if the old acres do no longer send out their squadrons as of yore, new men are there to prove that hand and seat, nerve and grace, are no monopoly of county families, and that the innate qualities of the British race require only means and opportunity to display themselves, *Uno avulso non deficit alter*—as “Nimrod” assuredly would have observed under similar circumstances; if the squire has to send his stud to the hammer, the stockbroker is eager to bid for them, ay, and ready to send them along as straight as if he had been born in the pigskin. Long may it be thus in Merry England! Long may it be before men of means are driven to find their pastime in other and less ennobling scenes, and the twang of horn and cry of hounds is heard no more in our pastures and woodlands!

Most Englishmen learn horsemanship for themselves, beginning at such a tender age that they acquire the art by imitation rather than by instruction. Every generation has its ideals and models, and is apt to despise the elegancies of the *haute école*. Yet Whyte-Melville was too just a critic not to perceive the excellency of *manège*, as well as the fine attainments of natural horsemen. Many persons still living must remember the pleasure they derived from watching the perfect union of both schools in that con-

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