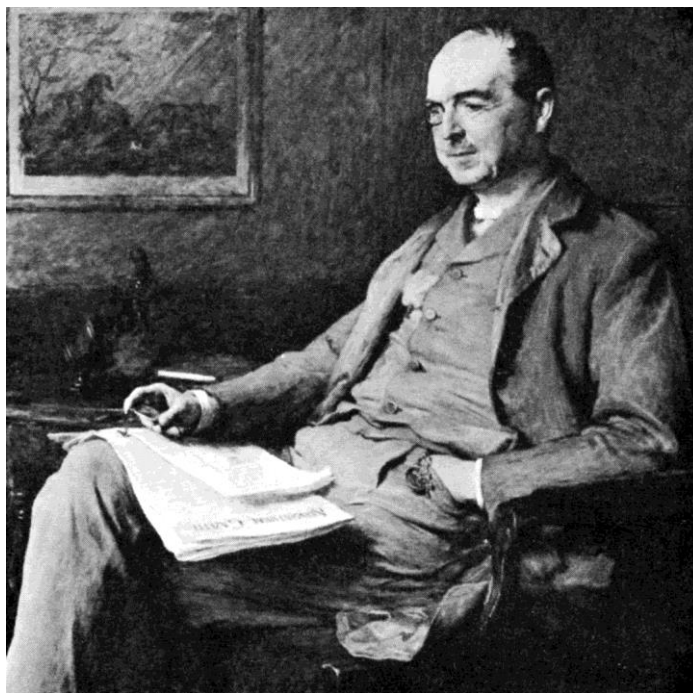

The Late Sir WALTER GILBEY, Bart.

WE deeply regret to announce that Sir Walter Gilbey, Bart., passed peacefully away yesterday afternoon, about four o'clock, at Elsenham Hall, Essex. As has been mentioned from time to time, Sir Walter has been in failing health for some years past, and has gradually withdrawn from the numerous activities that for a long period made him one of the most influential public men of his day, and particularly in connection with the horse-breeding industry of the country.

Sir Walter Gilbey, Burke tells us, was the fifth son of the late Henry Gilbey, of Bishops Stortford, and was born there on May 2nd, 1831. As a youth he entered the office of his cousin, an estate agent at Tring, and no doubt we may to some extent attribute his knowledge of, and interest in, agriculture and horse-breeding to the experience he acquired in that position. After his return from the Crimea, where he went as a Civil Servant of the Crown during the war, the business which bears his name was started by himself and his brother. To say that from a small beginning it has risen to be the largest of its kind is simply recording bare facts. But the career of Sir Walter, as far as it has affected the welfare of agriculturists and stock breeders, will be of more interest to our readers, and we give a brief account of the work which he has accomplished in connection with the improvement of horse breeding and the development of the various live stock and agricultural societies.



THE LATE SIR WALTER GILBEY, BART

From the Portrait by Sir W.Q. Orchardson R.A., presented by 1,234 subscribers in recognition of Sir Walter's services in the revival of the national industry of horse-breeding. The presentation was made by H.R.H. the Prince of Wales, afterwards King Edward, on March 3rd. 1891

During his residence at Hargrave Park, Stansted, Essex, Sir Walter displayed the great love which he has always cherished for country pursuits, and did much to

extend the popularity of the Jersey breed of cattle, his herd having been brought to a high state of excellence. But his special interest and choicest affection have always been centred in horses of all kinds, and opportunity was afforded to gratify his tastes when he obtained possession of Elsenham Hall. The extensive and well-arranged paddocks form the principal feature of the property. The house is filled to repletion with pictures by some fine old English painters of country scenes and horses, comprising an unrivalled collection of the works of George Stubbs and Morland. In addition, however, such well-known animal painters of the last century as Wootton, Seymour, Sartorius, and Sawrey Gilpin are well represented ; and there are also fine examples of the later school of animal painters—Ben Marshall, Henry Aiken, Reinagle, and Herring, sen. In the library and smoking-room a wonderful collection of curios , bronzes, models of horses, dogs and other animals, together with gold and silver prize medals, engage the rapt attention of the connoisseur, while one of the richest libraries of sporting and agricultural works in these islands will delight cultivated readers to whom this attractive class of literature specially appeals.

Sir Walter was one of the first to recognise the vast importance which the breeding of superior live stock must assume as a result of the altered conditions of modern British agriculture, and the value of his services in helping to carry out practical schemes for benefiting the landed industry in this direction is acknowledged on every hand. Nearly a quarter of a century has passed since, in addressing a gathering of farmers in Essex, he pointed out the loss sustained by the country through the practice of purchasing from foreign nations the horses which could very well be raised at home. In order to assist in the more extended production of English horses, he felt at the outset that local efforts were indispensable, and, observing the scarcity and high price of all descriptions of agricultural horses, he gathered round him a number of interested friends and neighbours, who joined him in January. 1877, in forming a small company for the purpose of purchasing two Shire stallions. The company continued for three seasons, and was very successful.

SUPPORT OF SHIRE HORSE BREEDING.

He then started, at Elsenham Hall, his own Shire Horse stud, of which the fame has gone forth to all lands, and in which some remarkably fine specimens of the old English cart horse have been bred and used. The high price paid for the stallion Spark gave the first impetus to the breeding of these massive animals, and the other noted sires at Elsenham, in addition to this champion horse, have included Staunton Hero, Real Briton, Mars Victor, and others, while few better mares were ever sent out than Cosy and Glow, both bred in this stud. A select number of young animals sold by public auction in 1885 realised the high average of £172 4s. 6d. per head. When the society was established for promoting the breeding of the Old English Cart Horse, now known as the Shire Horse Society, Sir Walter gave it the most generous support, and it was largely owing to his assistance that it has attained its remarkable success. The London shows of Shires especially benefited from his counsel, guidance and liberality, and the breed has vastly improved since the foundation of the Society. The first volume of its Stud Book was published in 1880, and numerous volumes have since appeared, containing the pedigrees of thousands of stallions, mares. and produce. So vast is the improvement wrought in this valuable breed that when the Duke of Cambridge presented the challenge cup and gold medal which the Elsenham stud had won at the London Shire Horse Show in 1883, H.R.H. gave enthusiastic expression to his sense of the services Sir Walter had rendered to the nation by the resuscitation of horse-breeding, which, ten years before, had fallen

away almost to nothing. It should be mentioned that Sir Walter has contributed to the literature of the breed, his account of its descent during a period of some three centuries, having done much to increase the popularity of these ponderous beasts of draught in foreign countries. His contention is that from its long line of descent the Shire breed should appeal to the intelligent, both at home and abroad, as being the most certain animal to produce size and strength. In 1888 he published a brochure entitled "The Old English War Horse, or the Great Horse as it appears at intervals in contemporary coins and pictures during the centuries of its development into the Shire Horse." This little volume contains historical information of much value to breeders and students.

Sir Walter Gilbey wrote many other books on his favourite subjects about twenty volumes in all came from his pen and were published by Messrs. Vinton & Co., London. Among these were his large works on "Animal Painters (three volumes)," "Life of 'George Stubbs.'" "Farm Live Stock 100 Years Ago," "The Royal Family and Agriculture," etc.'



ELSENHAM HALL ESSEX

The Residence of the Late Sir Walter Gilbey, Bart.

ENCOURAGEMENT OF LIGHT HORSE BREEDING.

From Shire horses Sir Walter proceeded to assist in the formation of the Hackney Horse Society and to show his zeal in reference to this variety, it may be mentioned that in 1893 he gave 5,000 gs. to retain in this country Danegelt, the most celebrated Hackney stallion in the world, who was the sire of eighteen of the prize-winners at the Hackney Horse Society's Show held in March, 1894, in London.

As we have already mentioned, the condition of the supply of riding and driving horses occupied much of Sir Walter's attention. This subject had been brought prominently before the public by the inquiry of the Select Committee of the House of Lords, presided over by the Earl of Rosebery, in 1873, and by the paper compiled by Earl Cathcart for the Journal of the 'Royal Agricultural Society of England ten years later. But little had been practically done to accomplish the objects in view. In 1885

Sir Walter Gilbey read a paper at the London Farmers' Club on "Riding and Driving Horses: Their Breeding and Rearing" and in the same year he arranged for a few premiums to be given for thoroughbred stallions at the London Spring Show. The experiment of offering premiums and fixing small service fees having proved successful, he next assisted in the formation of the Hunters' Improvement Society, which was established, to improve the breeding of hunters and other horses need for riding and driving purposes. It was explained that the Hunters' Improvement Society sought to carry out in the United Kingdom by private support all that was done in France, Germany and other nations by Government aid. Money premiums of £50 were to be given at the London Show as a subsidy to the owners of sound stud horses in order to induce them to accept service fees not exceeding £2 10s., so that tenant-farmers and others might have an opportunity of breeding from superior stallions. The effect of the work thus inaugurated by the Hunters' Improvement Society was far-reaching. The Royal Agricultural Society, following the example, also offered handsome premiums, and, finally, as the result of a discussion introduced in the House of Lords, through Sir Walter's instrumentality, the money previously given by Queen Victoria for racing plates was diverted from the Turf, a Royal Commission on Horse Breeding was appointed, and the sum placed at its disposal was expended in carrying out on a more comprehensive scale the plan commenced at the London Show in 1885. The Board of Agriculture now administers the fund for premiums for thoroughbred stallions. Having been relieved of this part of its work, the Hunters' Improvement and National Light Horse Breeding Society has directed its efforts to encouraging the improvement of brood mares and young hunter stock.

Space would fail us were we to attempt to enlarge upon the benefits that have resulted from these admirably managed Societies, of which Sir Walter was for years the life and soul but we may explain that he always alluded to these institutions as "the outcome of the united efforts of representative men from every county in England." Mention may also be made of the part which he took in establishing the London Cart Horse Parade on Whit-Monday, than which no function of a similar nature has ever succeeded in gaining so firm a hold in the affections of the public. The sole object of these parades is to ameliorate the lot in life of the London working horse, and to improve his condition by every legitimate means. In order to encourage horse-breeding among the neighbouring farmers and others, Sir Walter for a number of years carried on a spring show of mares and young stock at Bishop Stortford, the expenses being defrayed and the prize-money furnished by him.

WORK FOR OTHER SOCIETIES.

Appointed to the Council of the Royal Agricultural Society in 1881, and elected a Governor in 1889, Sir Walter always evinced the liveliest interest in its welfare and prosperity. When the International Show was held at Kilburn in 1877 he organised a series of special prizes for the leading breeds of horses and cattle, and as Chairman of the Committee of the Jubilee Show at Windsor in 1889 he was instrumental in raising several thousand pounds towards the expenses of the finest exhibition of live stock that was ever witnessed. The honour was conferred on Sir Walter of being elected President of the Royal Agricultural Society in 1896, and in that year the very successful show was held at Leicester. He took an active part in connection with the acquisition of a permanent home for the Society, and a site for the annual shows. Sir Walter was also a member of The Council of the Farmers' Club, the British Dairy Farmers' Association, the Smithfield Club, the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons, and Chairman of the Royal Agricultural Hall Company.

Sir Walter has at various times occupied the Presidential chair of the Shire Horse Society, the Hackney Horse Society, the polo Pony Society, the Shetland Pony Society, the Smithfield Club, the Hunters' Improvement Society and the Essex Agricultural Society. The Royal Agricultural Benevolent Institution-also profited greatly from his powerful advocacy. He repeatedly appealed to the public for aid to its funds, and it may be recalled that one year his presentation of its claims to support proved so effectual that there was an increase in the receipts from donations of more than £5,000 compared with the figures of previous years, thus enabling the Council to elect no fewer than 125 pensioners, a great advance on the forty or fifty usually elected in each preceding year.

Little surprise will be felt that, in commemoration of these multifarious services, a number of gentlemen combined in 1889 to present to Sir Walter Gilbey two admirable portraits of himself and the late Lady Gilbey, by Sir W. Q. Orchardson, R.A., in which that accomplished artist has caught the likeness of his two subjects to the very life. The picture of Sir Walter bore the following inscription:—" This portrait, together with that of his wife, was presented by 1,234 subscribers in recognition of Mr. Gilbey's services in the revival of the national industry of horse-breeding." The presentation was made by the late King Edward, then Prince of Wales, on March 3rd, 1891, at a large gathering at the Royal Agricultural Hall, presided over by the Duke of Portland, then Master of the Horse.

In 1893 a fitting climax was put to this honourable, industrious, and useful life; so full of benefit to the human race and rich in example to all, when Her Majesty Queen Victoria empowered Mr. Gladstone to offer a baronetcy to one of the most deserving recipients of that honour upon whom it was ever conferred.

Any attempt to sketch Sir Walter Gilbey's life and character would fall far short of the mark were we to omit all mention of the "countless unremembered acts of kindness and of love "unremembered by him, but never forgotten by those whom he has obliged which have earned him the reputation of the kindest, most unselfish, and truest of friends. His advice and sympathy were never withheld from those who possessed the slightest claim upon him, and many an applicant for guidance and aid had reason to rejoice that, in his or her hour of trouble, appeal was made to him. For this reason the elevation of Sir Walter Gillbey to the baronetcy called forth a general outburst of favour and approbation, and he continued to lead the same industrious, active, and useful life, devoting himself with rare singleness of purpose to the benefit of others.

Sir Walter is survived by four sons—Mr. Henry Walter Gilbey, Mr. Arthur N. Gilley, Mr. Tresham Gilbey, and Mr. Guy Gilbey and by four daughters Mrs. Hine, Mrs. Routledge, Mrs. Stroyan, and Mrs. Barrow.

The date of the funeral will be given in the daily papers.

In his vast and varied experiences as a landowner and an agriculturist, Sir Walter made many interesting experiments that had for their object the betterment of the people living around him, and by that we mean the humble people. He laid down modal cottages; he grew fruit, lavender and mint, and on his estate jam was made by the village folk. Sir Walter's lavender water gained for its maker a fame world wide. There are not far short of 100 acres at Elsenham devoted to fruit and the lavender and pepper mint. The whole estate to day bears the mark of great care and assiduous attention. Sir Walter was a firm believer in being master of the thing you take in hand.

Agricultural cottages were one of Sir Walter's hobbies for forty years, and his architectural knowledge was considerable. The cottages on his estate are well worth,

study. An opinion of Sir Walter Gilbey's, expressed to Mr. Gladstone, was understood to have led to the famous Jam Speech of the latter. Sir Walter had early perceived the anomalous state of affairs when the country was importing foreign jams at a large expense while tons of good fruit were left to rot in our own orchards. Factories for production and a better system of distributing the produce were the Elsenham recipe for improving the trade in home-made jam, and steered for once by the judgment of a practical man, Mr. Gladstone himself strayed into the practical.

SIR WALTER'S LOVE FOR THE HACKNEY

Essex had few better-known or, worthier sons than the Squire of Elsenham. There was no branch of agriculture, in which Sir Walter Gilbey had not taken an interest, but the horse was the subject of his longest and fullest attention. Hackney breeders and lovers of that type of horse will be struck with the coincidence that Sir Walter's demise occurs in the same year that his great young stallion Antonius died, and in the fall of the summer in which Sir Walter sold off his Hackney stud and retired from the active list of breeders and exhibitors of the old-time horse of Norfolk. What Sir Walter did for the breed of Hackney horses no one will ever be able to estimate.

No man has bred more winning Hackneys than did Sir Walter Gilbey, and this is borne home to one as he looks with wide-eyed wonderment at the multitudinous glass cases of rosettes and ribbons of championship and special badges, and decorations that line the walls of the reception-room for visitors in the Elsenham Paddocks. To run one's eye through those rosettes and ribbons is to read Hackney history at a glance.

From one case we learn that Hedon Squire, Sir Walter's first lord of the Elsenham Hackney has won first and Champion at the Agricultural Hall, and first at the Royal, the Royal Counties, the Yorkshire, and the Lancashire Shows--a round of honours worth a lot in these days. Then also Lady Keyingham, Genesta, Country Lily, May Rose, and Rosaline carried all before them in their cycle of shows. In 1896 Hedon Squire was champion at the London Show, and Royal Danegelt' was junior champion. May Royal was also first and reserve for special at that London Show, and Lady Keyingham led her classes at the Bath and West and Yorkshire Shows, and was champion at the Royal and the Peterborough exhibitions. In 1897 Hedon Squire was first at the Brussels International Show, and won the challenge cup at Dublin. Royal Danegelt won a special and was reserve for the championship at the London Show. He was champion at the Royal, held in Manchester, and first in all ages at Yorkshire.

Then in 1898 Royal Danegelt was champion in London, taking all before him, and such horses as Dashing Duke, Gay Connaught, Gay Danegelt (first and champion at the Royal at Birmingham), upheld the honour of Elsenham elsewhere. In 1900 Hedon Squire won £300 and three gold championship medals, beating all the horses entered at the Paris International Show, and in 1901 Bonny Danegelt won at London and at the Royal and Colchester. In 1902 Royal Danegelt was champion in London, and his own son, Bonny Danegelt, was reserve. No more need be written in this strain. The records of the stallions and mares that have come and gone since 1902 to the days of Flash Cadet and Antonius need no recalling. Antonius would have made history had he been spared.