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JAMA, THE JOURNAL of the American Medical Association (ISSN 0002-9955) is published weekly by the American Medical Association, 535 North Dearborn Street, Chicago, IL 60610. Phone 751-6000 (Area Code 312). Cable address "Medic" Chicago.

SUBSCRIPTION RATE—The subscription price per year for members of the AMA is \$2, included in the annual membership dues. The subscription price per year for nonmembers is \$30 in the United States and US possessions; \$50 in all other countries, payable in advance. Price to medical students, interns, and residents, \$10 in the United States and US possessions. Address all subscription communications to Circulation-Fulfillment Department.

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The Cover

Most of us have a favorite season, and for those who ride to hounds fall is certainly the best, for it is the season of formal hunting. Hound exercise and "cubbing" in the drab informal dress termed "rat-catcher" give way with the blessing of the hounds to formal dress or "scarlet." The scene on this week's cover might be that of any one of the more than 100 hunts in the United States and Canada, although it actually is of a European hunt.

In the foreground the huntsman and staff are followed by a tightly bunched, well-disciplined pack of hounds as they ride along a country lane bordered by trees turning to the colors of fall. Following at an appropriately respectful distance are the riders who make up the field and who are really spectators at the hunt.

Soon the huntsman will cast the hounds in search of a fox and should they pick up a scent, for they hunt only by smell and not by sight, a contest will evolve between the fox aided by the country and the weather and the hounds directed by the huntsman. The chase will take the riders across many miles of country and be a real test of horsemanship, and hopefully injuries suffered by the riders will be few (see p 1883). Seldom is the fox killed, for he can usually outrun and outwit even the best hounds, horses, and men.

For those who ride to hounds, the word hunt means to search or seek, not kill, and fox hunters carry no weapons. They are ardent conservationists and derive

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