HARE—*continued*

The chase of the stag was confined to the royal packs and those of great seigneurs or princes of royal blood, whereas any poor gentleman with a couple of greyhounds or a few "raches" could have a good run with the hare, even though he might not possess a horse. That the Gauls as well as the Franks were from the earliest days a nation fond of coursing and hunting the hare simply for the sake of the sport, and "not to live by what they catch," Arrian shows, and the writings of the early French veneurs illustrate how poor and rich in France pursued the hare, if not always by the fairest methods. In *Roy Modus* there is a chapter that tells us how to hunt the hare with running hounds (fol. xxx.), and afterwards another which tells the poor man who has only a *reseul* (a pocket or bag net) how he is to capture hares in the fields and vineyards, and one also which instructs a man how he should go out on horseback with bow and arrow, accompanied by a man on foot with two greyhounds. He is to go into the cornfields and look for the place where the hare is formed, then if the hare can see the greyhounds she will remain seated, and the archer will be able to shoot easily from his horse (fol. lxi.). The time for hunting the hare with running hounds, it is said, is in the months of March and April, because during these two months the hares are more feeble than at any other season and more full of corn. G. de F. says they can be hunted all the year round except when the ground is too hard. Six ways of taking the hare, besides hunting her, are described by him. How to shoot at hare in their forms; How to take them with nets of all kinds. Two of the illustrations (Pl. 41 and 42) belonging to these chapters of G. de F. are given, showing a net stretched between the wood and the cornfield in which the hares have gone to feed, and the men are holding a rope to which bells are attached, and as they walk along with it they drive the hares into the net; the other shows nets stretched across the usual path of the hare at the crossing of roads.

In our MS., at the end of the chapter on the nature of the hare (p. 14), the Duke of York says that he "trows no good hunter would slee them so," alluding to pockets, pursenets, and other poaching devices; and although G. de F. brings these instructions for pot-hunting, he does not approve of such methods for the true sportsman (*see* Appendix: Snares), and starts his chapter on this subject with an amusing protest: "Also one can take hares in divers manners with cords, for which I would that they who take hares thus should have them [the cords] round their own necks" (p. 171). Snaring hares was never considered legitimate sport. In hare-hunting proper, the hounds were taken into the fields to find the hare, as at present; or hare-finders were sent out early in the morning, and the tufts of grass or plants where the hare was likely to be seated were beaten, and the hounds uncoupled only when the hare was started. One of the chief differences in the sport between then and now, was that often when the hare was once on foot, greyhounds were also uncoupled, and our Plate XXXVIII. shows greyhounds and running-hounds hunting seemingly happily together. It must have been rather discouraging for the old-fashioned, slow scenting-hound to have the hare he has been diligently hunting suddenly "bitten" in front of him by the swifter greyhound. Trencher-fed packs also existed as early as the fourteenth century, and we read in Gace de la Buigne that the small farmers would assemble together, bringing all told some forty hounds of different breeds and sizes, immensely enjoying their sport, and accounting for many hares.

In our old books of hunting the chase of the hare ranks equal if not before that of the stag. Twici and Boke of St. Albans give as much space to the one as the other, and in Master of Game the Duke of York has given the hare the precedence in the sequence of chapters over the stag. The chapter in our MS. on hare-hunting is very similar to that in the Twety-Gyfford MS. and to the Boke of St. Albans, and is only an amplification of these: it is probably this fact that has led superficial critics to assert that the whole of the "Master of Game" is merely an enlargement on these former tracts, which the perusal of the rest of the "Master of Game" would soon have refuted.

One cannot gather very much from Twici and the Boke of St. Albans about ancient hare-hunting. The former is careful to say that one cannot blow the menee in this chase (*see* Appendix: Menee), and that the hare is a beast of the chase, ranking with the hart, bear, and wolf, and as he further says, that all beasts of the chase are moved with a limer, we may conclude that it was in his time customary for the huntsman to find the hare and start her with a limer, before the pack were uncoupled. A few directions of how to speak to the hounds, and directions how to blow the prise when she is taken, and to give the hallow to the hounds follow. In answer to the question, "What is the hallow?" the huntsman answers, "The sides and the shoulders, and the neck and the head, and the loin shall remain for the kitchen." We read also that the hare is *arrachez*—*i.e.*, torn out of his skin, and not *escorchez*, or flayed. In the more modern term of venery the term stripped or cased is used. Only of the larger animals is the hide flayed. "In the smaller animals of Venary, the skin is cut round the snout and round the lower part of each leg. The skin of the face is then turned back over the ears and so pulled off the body inside-out in a kind of *case* till it comes to the tail, which was always left attached to the skin to show what manner of beast it was" (Twici, pp. 29, 30).

The huntsmen, we gather, were provided with "*roddes*" which took the place of the modern hunting-crop. For the Master of Game says that when a hare is found seated, the horn should be

HARE DRIVING WITH LOW BELLS