MEUTE—continued

Certain writers in the last century advanced the theory that the term *mota* was derived from "moat," standing water, and that canes de mota signified water spaniels or those kept for the purpose of hunting water-fowl, but of course this theory does not bear critical examination.

In a hunt of King John of France which G. de la Buigne describes, the chief huntsman advises him to have only thirty-eight or forty hounds uncoupled, but the King insists on throwing off fifty at once:

> "Adonques se va mettre a la suite Avec cinquante chiens de meute."

> > (Phil. Soc. Misc., vol. ii. p. 17).

Besides these hounds ten or twelve had been reserved for the relays. Chiens de meute was the name given to those hounds that were laid on after the stag (or other beast of the chase) had been started or dislodged by the lymer. The relays of hounds were not included in the Meute. As the word primarily meant those hounds which moved or pushed on the stag when roused from his lair, it was called the meute d'attaque.

To take a stag with the first hounds laid on without relaying was called taking it "de meute à mort" (see Appendix: Relays).

MEW, Mue, to shed, cast, or change. "The hart mews his horns," the deer casts his head, or sheds his antlers. From the French muer, and the Latin mutare, to change, of hawks to moult.

MOVE, Meu, Meue, mewe, meeve, old forms of move. To start a hart signified to unharbour him, to start him from his lair.

G. d. F. says: Allons le laisser courre, but the word meu or meve was also used in old French in the same way as in English.

Twici says: Ore vodroi ioe savoir quantez des betes sunt meuz de lymer, e quanz des bestes sunt trouez des brachez. . . Sire, touz ceaus qe sunt enchaces; sunt meuz de lymer. E tous ceaus enquillez sunt trovez de brachez. (Now I would wish to know how many beasts are moved by a lymer and how many beasts are found by the braches. Sir, all those which are chased are moved by a lymer. And all those which are hunted up are found by braches.) (Line 18.)

Ses chiens ont envoié mover. En I espoise I fier sengler (Tristan. i. 4337).

Par l'esfrois d'els (the hounds) qui sont venu Ont un grant saingler esmeu (Partonopeus de Blois, 607).

In these instances the word is used in the same sense as in our M. of G.

MUSE, Meuse. An opening in a fence through which a hare or other animal is accustomed to pass. An old proverb says: "Tis as hard to find a hare without a muse, as a woman without scuse."

"A hare will pass by the same muses until her death or escape" (Blome, p. 92).

NUMBLES. M. E. nombles, noumbles; O. F. nombles. The parts of a deer between the thighs, that is to say the liver and kidneys and entrails. Part, and sometimes the whole of the numbles were considered the right of the huntsman, sometimes the huntsman only got the kidneys and the rest was put aside with the tit bits reserved for the King or chief personage (Turb. p. 128–129). Numbles by loss of the initial letter became umbles (Harrison vol. i. p. 309), and was sometimes written humbles whence came 'humble pie' now only associated with the word humble. Humble pie was a pie made of the umbles or numbles of the deer and formerly at hunting feasts was set before the huntsman and his followers.

anything of the chase of the Otter, but merely refers one at the end of the chapter on "The Nature of the Otter" to Milbourne, the King's Otter hunter for more information and says, "as of all other vermin I speak not" (p. 40). The Otter was evidently beneath his notice as being neither regarded as a beast of venery nor of the chase.

"And three other bestis ben of gret disport,
That ben neyther of venery ne chace;
In huntyng ofte thei do gret comfort,
As aftir ye shal here in other place,
The grey is one therof with hyse slepy pace,
The cat an other, the otre one also."

(Twety and Gyfford), Brit. Mus. MS. Vesp. B XII.

But the very fact that the King had an Otter hunter shows that it was a beast not altogether despised, although probably hunted more for the value of its skin and for the protection of the fish than for the sport.

The Milbourne referred to by Duke of York, can scarcely be any other than the William Melbourne we find mentioned in Henry IV.'s reign as "Valet of our Otter hounds" (Privy Seal, 674/6456, Feb. 18th, 1410).

We do not know for how long he held this office, but we find him succeeded by his brother John under Henry vi., from a grant made at Westminster Dec. 12th, 1422: "During pleasure by assent of the council, to John brother of William Melbourne deceased, the office of keeping the Kings dogs for otter hunting which the said Melbourne held" (Pat. Rolls, Henry VI.). But long before this reign, the English Kings had their otter-hounds. By charter of Henry II. (about 1175) a grant was made to the King's otter-hunter Roger Follo, and Ralph and Godfrey or Geoffrey were declared to be the King's otter-hunters by Letters Patent dated Dunstapbel, June 7, 18 John. These were the two whom the King previously sent to the Sheriff of Somersetshire "with two men and two horses, and twelve otterhounds, as long as they find employment in capturing Otters in your shire. And as soon as they OTTER—continued

cannot capture any, you are forthwith to send them back to us, and any cost you may incur through them shall be accounted to you at the Exchequer."

"As witness my hand, at Bristol 26th day of July in fourteenth year of our reign." (Close

Rolls, 14 John.)

Between this date and the reign of Henry IV. we find mention of other keepers of the King's otter-hounds (Pat. Rolls, 6 Henry III. Mem. 6; Ward. Accs., 34 Ed. I.; Close Rolls, 13 Ed. III.; Pat. Rolls, I Richard II. Mem. 27). After William and John Melbourne, who appear to have been the royal otter-hunters for the first half of the 15th century, Thomas Hardegrove had the grant of the office in 1461 (Pat. Rolls, Ed. IV.), in 1484 he shared the duties with Thomas Dormer (Pat. Rolls, 2 Richard III. Mem. 18), and on the accession of Henry VII., Edward Bensted and Philip Botireley squiers, had the grant of the office of otter-hunter (Rolls of Parl. vol. ii. p. 354). It is interesting to note that the strength of the otter-hound kennel seems neither to have decreased nor increased for over two and a half centuries, there were not more than twelve otter-hounds and a brace of greyhounds in this establishment in 1485, the same number as is mentioned in 1212.

An annual payment was made in Wales called Kilgh Dourgon for the King's or Prince's water dogs, with which they hunted Otters,1 and in a plea relating to the custody of Harlech Castle and the Shrievalty of Merioneth in 44 Edward III., among the payments we read: "And for the chace of fynbryns (otters) claims a certain provision of different tenants, who hold their lands repaying that provision for a certain office which is called the training of otterhounds" (Rec. Carnarvon, H. Ellis 1838). There is, as has already been remarked, nothing in our MS. respecting the hunting of the Otter, and the first at all detailed description we get of this sport in English is the account given in Turbervile's "Arte of Venery." This, although it was published some 150 years later than our MS., is really contemporary with it, for Turbervile's is nothing more than a translation of the chapter on Otterhunting given by G. de F. (p. 234-236). From him, it was taken by Du Fouilloux's publishers (see Bibliography) and printed at the end of La Venerie with other chapters of Gaston's; from here it was again copied by Turbervile into owed their origin to Roy Modus (fol. xlii.).

According to G. de F. three or four varlets with a limer went out a couple of hours before daylight to look on the banks of the streams or rivers for traces of the otter. His marches or marks, as the footprints of the otter were then called, were easily recognised by the want of a heel and the impression left by the round ball of the foot, and the webbed toes, such signs as well as the spraintes (O. F. espreintes = excrements) were sought for, his hough or couch, as

his dwelling was called, was located, and then the hunters returned to the "solemn assembly" to make their report as was done in stag-hunting (Turb. p. 200).

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In Roy Modus the varlets seem to have gone out without any limers. In both Roy Modus and G. de F. the men are told to divide, and a couple to go on one side of the river and a couple on the other, two of them to hunt up stream, and two down stream. On starting from the meet particular care seems to have been taken that the hounds were to be uncoupled at some distance from the place where the Otter had been located:

Puis quant vous venrez ainsi comme traict de trois arbalastres du giste ou vous l'avez destourné, laissez aler vos chienes, pource que leur roideur sera passée quant ils venront au giste (Roy Modus, fol. xlii. v.).

Turbervile's Englishing of this passage written some two hundred and fifty years before by the Frenchman is as follows:

"He shall cause his hounds to be uncoupled a bowshot or twaine before he came at the place where he thinketh that the otter lyeth because they may . . . cast about a while untill they have cooled their bawling and brainesicke toyes which all hounds doe lightly use at the first uncoupling (Turb. p. 200.)

The chief difference between the hunting then and now would seem to be that every otter-hunter of old, carried a spear with which he was to prod at the poor beast every time he came to the surface to get air, or vent as it was and is technically called. Roy Modus says every hunter should have a fork to put on to the haft of his spear in this chase, this accounts for the trident we see in our Pl. XIII. Probably after the hunt the fork would be removed, and the hunting spear resumed its normal appearance. In the 17th century and until well on in the 19th century a two pronged fork was used in England which we see depicted in the illustrations to Blome. But in all the earlier pictures of G. de F., Stradanus, etc., a trident is shown.

There is however an illustration in a 15th-century MS. of Roy Modus (in the Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal Paris, 3079 or 3080) which has a picture showing men and dogs otter-hunting; short sticks are held in the men's hands, instead of the usual fork, the small stream has a net stretched across it.

English. Parts of Gaston's chapter on the Otter owed their origin to Roy Modus (fol. xlii.).

According to G. de F. three or four varlets with a limer went out a couple of hours before daylight to look on the banks of the streams or

When the Otter's holt has been found, the hunters were told to look well up and down stream to see if the hounds find him, but chiefly up stream, as the otter usually goes up stream to feed, the water bringing the smell of the fish down to him.

Gesner says an otter can wind a fish forty furlongs off, but Isaak Walton who probably knew more from his constant observation of his natural enemy the fish poacher, says it can smell a fish a hundred yards from him.

In spite of the spear so much railed at by modern sportsmen there seems to have been According to the old Welsh laws the skin of an otter was worth 8d. (Venedolian Code).