**SNARES**—*continued*

various manners of taking beasts "by falseness." One can almost hear the sigh of disgust as he writes: "I will speak no more of this chase, for it is one pertaining to villains, to the common people, and to the peasants!"

Our own laws show that the taking of deer and other beasts by traps and gins was not unknown in Britain, and that such poaching had to be legislated against, but our literature on the subject gives few details about the devices favoured by the poacher. Most authors seem to agree with Blome, the compiler of the well-known "Gentleman's Recreation" (1686), who says:

"I should now proceed to show you several ways to take deer, both with the toils or nets and without, as also the manner of making them, but I forbear lest I should be thought to teach the art to steal venison; custom and the laws having so prevailed amongst us as to discountenance all ways of taking them, but by hunting them with dogs."

Although Blome wrote in the seventeenth century, illegal deer-hunting or rather deer-stealing seems to have been pursued vigorously until the latter half of the eighteenth century and was often followed by men of good standing. Of this Chafin's "Cranbourn Chase" gives several amusing anecdotes. The fine for poaching a deer was then £30, and this sum the respectable poacher kept in his pocket for instant use, so that he could repeat his sport the following night if he chose to venture, until an Act of Parliament made the second offence a felony. One of these gentlemen who was addicted to poetry and music besides being a strict churchman, one fine Sunday, on his way home from divine service, marked some deer going into a small coppice. Laying his nooses, which appear to have been constantly in his pockets, he proceeded to move the deer towards the snares by gently throwing pebbles into the wood and soon had three of the primest deer hanging by their necks. Having despatched them he climbed into an oak tree from which he had a good view of the neighbourhood, and taking his "Hudibras" out of his pocket passed a long afternoon with it till the shades of night enabled him to call his friends and remove their booty.

In Henry VII.'s time the "common folk," *i.e.*, persons not having a certain amount of land and money, were not allowed to have in their possession guns, bows, greyhounds or other dogs, ferrets, tramels, lowbells (*see* Plate XXXXI.) or harepipes, or keep any deer-hayes or buck-stalls or other snares and engines to take game.

The same Statute (cap. 10, s. 19), enacting that "none shall stalk with any bush or beast to any deer except in his own park on pain to forfeit £10," brings us to the subject of the stalking-horse. In the *Gaston Phoebus* picture here reproduced (Plate XXXXIV.) it consisted of a cloth cut and painted in imitation of a horse in the act of grazing. It was thrown over two attendants, and under cover of this contrivance, which was gradually moved nearer and nearer to the unsuspicious deer, the stalker got to within shooting distance. Stalking-cows made in the same manner, or painted on canvas screens that were stretched on laths, were also much used, as we see in several of Stradanus' prints. Oldest of all these stalking contrivances were the trained deer used by the Franks. According to their ancient laws, the killing of such a trained stag was punished by very heavy fines, doubly so if the owner could prove that he had actually killed wild deer with its aid. According to Blome and other writers of the seventeenth century, trained live stalking-horses must have been constantly used in England, particularly by the wild-fowler. The latter made use of other artificial contrivances under the shelter of which he could approach his quarry, such as stalking-hedges and stalking-trees or bushes, but, as Blome remarks, "These dead Engines which carry not the shape of a living creature are not so useful to stalk with, for seeing a dead thing move will cause apprehension."

Plate XXXXV. represents a way of approaching game as well known to-day in some parts of Europe as it was in the days of Gaston, who devotes a short chapter to the description of the "charrette" or stalking-cart. These carts are particularly effective in districts where game is accustomed to the sight of similar conveyances, and where the rumbling and creaking of their wheels are sounds frequently heard.[1] Gaston is very particular in telling his readers that not only the horse, the cart and the driver, but also the sportsman inside the vehicle, must be decked out with branches and green twigs, and that both men should be dressed in clothes of green colour, while the cart-wheels should be tightened up in such a manner that they will creak more loudly, for this noise will attract the attention of the deer so that they will pay less heed to the real danger. The cart was driven slowly in circles, gradually narrowing round the herd, till it finally got close enough for the sportsman to let off his cross-bow. It would be interesting to know why Gaston advised the men to bedeck themselves with green boughs, for inasmuch as the wood-fellers and charcoal burners, to whose sight the deer had become familiar, were not so disguised, it would appear on the face of it that a bough-covered cart or man would sooner arouse the suspicion of game than the sight of individuals and vehicles such as they were accustomed to see. Emperor William and many other sportsmen annually kill hundreds of roebucks, fallow deer, and also red deer by using stalking-carts. Shirley, in his "Deer Parks," mentions that Lord Winchilsea used to shoot his fallow bucks in Eastwell Park by approaching them in a pony carriage with due attention to the wind, but adds that this device will not succeed more than once or twice.

Another trap described in Gaston Phoebus

[1] I was shooting but a few weeks ago in a forest where most of the stags were killed from low carts that can be driven in every direction through the woods.

STALKING HARTS BY MEANS OF THE STALKING HORSE