VENERY—*continued*

well versed, and any transgression in speech or manner of the customs to be observed would have been considered as showing a greater lack in education in olden days than an illiterate and badly spelt letter would be to-day. We shall not here give a list of the various terms of venery, for these have been treated of separately under the various headings in the Appendices, as have also the various animals of venery. In a preliminary note (p.XLVI.) we have also sketched a history of venery in England, showing that at the time our MS. was written there were several methods of hunting the deer, *i.e.*, stag-hunting proper with scenting hounds, and shooting and coursing driven game put up by harriers or teasers. One chapter of our text describes stag-hunting, and the last a kind of battue within boundaries made by stations or stables of hounds and huntsmen, such as we find Twici also writing of (*see* Appendix: Stables). G. de F. also speaks of coursing deer with relays of greyhounds, within such boundaries, which he calls a *chasse a tître*, and the stations of huntsmen he calls *fortriteurs* (G. de F. p. 2). He mentions this as a good way of blooding hounds and to show good sport for those ladies and foreign lords who may have come to the hunting but who did not care to hunt much (*et ne vouldroient guères courre*) (pp. 176–177). But it is always the hunting with scenting hounds that he speaks of with the greatest enthusiasm, and in this spirit he writes of the best of all chases, during which one can watch the hounds work and help them when puzzled with the change; we learn from him how best to place the relays of hounds usual in those days, of the foiling and doubling of the stag, how he will seek the herd and try to baffle the hounds by keeping with the hinds and lesser deer, and as our text says by soiling up and down (*i.e.*, going up and down in water). His book is characterised all through with that spirit of fair play and love of sport which indeed could scarcely be absent from that of a great knight in the most flourishing period of chivalry.

The M. of G. has but three chapters describing the actual chase of beasts of venery, the two on the stag already mentioned, and one on the hare. Although he gives the natural history chapters from G. de F. on the wild boar and the wolf these animals were becoming very scarce in England and the Duke of York may therefore not have considered it worth while to write more about the hunting of them. As for the fox it was still considered as vermin.

The first chapter on the chase of the stag, entitled "How ye Hart should be meuyd with the lymer and ronne to and slayn with strenkthe" is on what we call stag-hunting. This hunting was the French chase with scenting hounds, and still conducted in England in the time of Henry IV. in the same manner as had been introduced by the Normans, and it is on account of this that we so often refer to the French books on early venery when describing or tracing the origin of any words or customs of venery that obtained in old English hunting. The fact that the Duke of York translated the chapters relating to all the preliminaries of a day's stag-hunting from G. de F. without making any alterations, may lead us to conclude, if nothing else would, that French and English customs were in his day still identical. Even in the original chapter on the chase itself we can find nothing that could not as well have been written by any old French veneur, and we search through it in vain for any notable distinction in English methods.

The stag-hunting season being from the 3rd of May to the 14th of September, it is evident that the hunt breakfast was a sort of picnic held under the shade of some forest trees, near a stream if possible. We have several illustrations of these "assemblies" or meets of the 15th century, the most interesting being the one we have reproduced (Pl. XXXIV.). The prime of the season was after midsummer, and as always the biggest hart possible was harboured we can understand that pace was not one of the principal elements of stag-hunting in those days, we are told indeed that a *light* or swift deer, or a young boar, that could run any length of time before the hounds was not considered a desirable chase.

On p. 90 we are warned that it was no "good token" if certain signs of the stag's gait were found, as it showed that he was a "light deer well running and of great flight." Such a deer would not have been willingly chased at the time of our text, and even until the early days of the 19th century we find sportsmen expressing the opinion that such a deer should not be hunted. Lord Graves wrote to Lord Ebrington between 1812–1818, "If it can possibly be avoided a young male deer should never be run, such a chase kills the hounds and horses and fenders them unserviceable for a fortnight" (Fortescue, p. 36).

The warrantable stag was sought for by a huntsman holding a track or scenting hound in leash or liam (*see* Appendix: Limer). He came to the meet and made a report of his morning's work to the Master, producing from his horn the fumes or droppings of the stag he has found, or maybe a fraying stock, and explains why he thinks the deer he has harboured is a deer of ten or more points and not a hind or a young hart or rascal.

The master then separated the hounds into three or four batches, or relays (*see* Appendix: Relays) and instructs the men who are holding them on leash where they are to take up their stands, one lot of hounds being kept back to uncouple as soon as the deer is roused or unharboured. These were called the *finders* (the *meute d'attaque* of French venery). This done the harbourer took his hound and proceeded to the covert, followed at a convenient distance by berners holding the *Finders* and the whole assembly of hunters. When he reached the place where he had found traces of his stag having entered the covert, and which by sticking a twig in the ground or breaking a branch he had marked

VENERY—*continued*

in the morning, so as to make no mistake (*see* Appendix: Branches), he encouraged his limer to follow the line until the stag was traced to his lair where he was resting after his morning in the neighbouring corn or turnip-fields. When he was once started by the harbourer and his limer, and when the huntsman saw that he is *moved*, *i.e.*, on foot, and *soule*, *i.e.*, by himself, he blew three notes on his horn for the first lot of hounds to be uncoupled. If the stag were accompanied by his *esquire* (*see* Appendix: Hart) or other deer were with him, only a couple of hounds would be uncoupled till he was separated from his companions.

Sportsmen of old were as particular as possible about chasing the hart they had first started and killing him only; and however often the stag might push up another deer and make him take his place, he himself lying down in some copse or thicket, his antlers laid low on his back, thus hiding himself and trying to make the hounds hunt his substitute, no huntsman or hounds worth anything would accept the change. From the earliest days most praise has been lavished on those hounds who would never leave the line of the first stag hunted, and who were good at "unravelling a change" and keeping to their quarry even if he had taken refuge in a whole herd of deer.

When the hounds were puzzled by finding other tracks, crossing or mingling with those of their stag, or if anything else made them check because uncertain of the right line it was called being on *a stynt*; if they followed another line of scent than that of their quarry, it was being at *defaulte*; to hunt wide of the line or to go off in another direction or after other deer was called to *envoyse*, a word taken directly from the French and to be found repeatedly in *Roy Modus*. When the hart returned on his own tracks it was called *foiling* or *doubling*, and any tricks played to rid himself of his persecutors was called *rusing*. Such and many other are the terms of venery we find in our text as interesting to the sportsman as to the antiquary.

On the death of the stag the quarry or curée was held, *i.e.*, the hounds were rewarded with parts of the deer, the antlers were carried home and the carcass divided among the many claimants of the different portions and a few titbits only reached the lord's or master's table. The blowing of the prise at the hall door and a supper for the huntsmen finished the day. In our text (p. 102) we find the huntsmen were treated to wine after a day's hunting, and it was customary to give them some before they started on their quests, *i.e.*, to harbour the hart (p. 83). There was an ancient French custom which may also have obtained in England although we have no written evidence that it did, that of giving the huntsman who was to *undo*, or *break up* the deer a drink of wine before he began his job. It was supposed that the venison would go bad if this was not done.

Some of the huntsmen in England seem to have been on horseback and some on foot (p. 7). We find, for instance in the reign of Henry IV. as well as before and after it, with the buckhounds, besides the Master, three or four men on foot, berners for the hounds, and fewterers for the greyhounds. With the harthounds besides the Master, or chief huntsman, there were two mounted berners or fewterers, and other berners and fewterers, &c. on foot (*see* Appendix: Hunt Officials and Raches). These all seem to have carried hunting horns which they were allowed to sound whenever they thought the occasion demanded. On p. 96 we read: "as often as any man see him (the stag) or meet him, he should go to the fues, and blow a moot and recheat and then holloa till the hounds come forth withall." Probably as the hunting would be confined to Royalty and the richer aristocracy with their trained huntsmen not as much confusion arose as would infallibly be the case did every rider carry a horn and follow the above instructions in these modern days of monster fields.

In the last chapter of our text describing what we may call a royal drive, the game was put up within an enclosed district by harriers or teasers (pp. 107–109). The sportsmen had trysts, or stands allotted to them from where they could shoot as the deer came by, also at each stand a man seems to have stood with greyhounds to let slip at his master's orders to course such deer as he thought fit, and some of the wounded deer were chased by the harthounds. The huntsmen stationed at the boundaries holloaed back any game that tried to break past them, and let slip at those which succeeded in so doing. It was this kind of sport that seems gradually to have gained in popularity and ousted the real wild-deer hunting of the Normans from its premier place. It was not, however, till after the decay of chivalry that this kind of battue or driving reached its zenith, and it was in the middle of the 16th and during the 17th century that coursing and shooting in parks was the sport *par excellence*. In Queen Elizabeth's reign we find the compiler of the "Art of Venerie or Hunting" content to take all his matter for the same from a Frenchman's book until he came to the end of his work and found he had nothing in it on coursing, and had to write an original chapter on this favourite pastime (Turbervile, pp. 246–250). "Because I finde nothing in myne Author particularly written of coursing with Greyhounds, it seemeth unto me, that they have not that kind of Venerie so much in estimation in France, as we do hold it heare in England. But that they use their Greyhounds only to set backsets or receytes for Deare, Wolfe, Fox. or such like. Whereas we here in England do make great account of such pastime as is to be seen in coursing with Greyhounds at Deare, Hare, Foxe, or such like, even of themselves, when there are neyther hounds hunting, nor other meane to help them, so that I have thought it correspondent unto this myne enterpryse, to set downe some briefe rules which