WILD BOAR—*continued*

The great danger in the attack of the wild boar was considered to lie in the poison of his tusks. Many hounds were ripped open and wounded in attacking him, and Du Fouilloux relates how out of a pack of fifty hounds that started on a boar chase scarcely a dozen came back to the kennel whole and sound, and G. de F. says he has seen men and horses killed by a blow from his tusks (G. de F. p. 57; M. of G. p. 27).

Stories of the boar have remained among us as a tradition connected with many good old customs of Christmastide that have disappeared. In the time of Queen Elizabeth the boar was constantly served during the season, and Harrison gives the following amusing description of the custom:

"With us it is accounted a great piece of service at the table, from November until Februarie be ended, but cheeflie in the Christmasse time. With the same also we begin our dinners eche daie after other: and because it is somewhat hard of digestion a draught of Malueseie, bastard, or muscadell, is usually droonke after it, where either of them are convenientlie to be had: otherwise the meaner sort content themselves with their owne drinke, which at that season is generallie verie strong, and stronger indeed than all the yeare beside." So much for the appreciation of brawn in the days of good Queen Bess. It is as well perhaps that it is out of fashion, for who knows if the modern substitutes for "Malueseie, bastard and muscadell" would be as effective as the old vintage in the aid of digestion! From the point of picturesque custom it is to be regretted that we can no longer see the garland and rosemary-bedecked boar's head brought in in triumph to the singing of

"*Caput apri differo*
Reddens laudes Domino."

"The bores heed in hande bring I,
With garlands gay and rosemary;
I praye you all syng merely,
Qui estis in convivio.

"The bores heed I understande,
Is the chefe servyce of this lande;
Loke where ever it be fande
Servite cum cantico.

"Be gladde, Lordes bothe more and lasse
For this hath ordeyned owr stewarde,
To chere you all this Christmasse
The bores heed with mustarde."

(From a collection of carols printed by Wynkyn de Word in 1521. Vol. iv. Percy Society.)

The following 15th-century carol is also interesting as belonging to the same period as the M. of G. Curiously enough it is taken from the *Porkington MS.*! I copy it as given by Halliwell, also in vol. iv. of the Percy Society.

"Hey, hey, hey, hey,
The borrys hede is armyd gay.
The boris hede in hond I bryng,
With garlond gay in porttoryng,
I pray yow alle with me to synge,
With hay.

"Lordys, knyzttes, and skyers,
Persons, prystis, and wycars,
The boris hede ys the furt mes,
With hay.

"The boris hede, as I yow say,
He takis his leyfe, and gothe his way,
Gone after the .XIJ. theyl ffyt day,
With hay.

"Then commys in the secunde kowrs with mykylle pryde,
The crannus, the heyrrouns, the bytteris, by ther syde,
The pertrychys and the plowers, the woodcokus and the snyt,
With hay.

"Larkys in hot schow, ladys for to pyk
Good drynk therto, lycyus and fyne,
Blwet of Allmayne, romnay and wyin,
With hay.

"Gud bred alle and wyin dare I welle say,
The boris hede with musterd armyd soe gay;
Furmante to pottage, with wennissun fyne,
And the hombuls of the dow, and all that ever commis in;
Cappons i-bake, with pesys of the roow,
Rysons of corrons, with odyre of spysis moo."

WILD CAT (*Felis Catus*), which at one time was extremely common in England, was included among the beasts of the chase. It is frequently mentioned in Royal grants giving liberty to enclose forests land and licence to hunt there. In the reign of King John several grants were made including this right, one to William Briwere who received a licence to enclose his woods at Toare, Cadelegh, Raddon, Ailesberie and Burgh Walter, with free liberty to hunt the hare, fox, cat and wolf throughout all Devonshire (Dugdale's Baronage, vol. i. p. 701). From a charter of liberties granted by the same King when Earl of Moreton, to the inhabitants of Devonshire, it appears that the wild cat was at that time included among the beasts of venery of that country. The original deed is still preserved in the custody of the Dean and Chapter of Exeter. (Ex Autographo penes Dec. et Capit. Exon. from Bp. Lyttleton's collection. Quoted by Pennant, British Zoology, vol. ii. p. 308.) In 1286 one caracute of land in the county of Huntingdon was held by the serjeantry of hunting the wolf, fox and wild cat, and driving away all vermin out of the forest of the King in that county (Blount's Anc. Ten. p. 230).

In 1205 Gerard Camoile had a special licence to hunt the hare, fox, and wild cat, throughout all the King's forests; and in 1239 (23 Henry III.) in consideration of a Goshawk given to Simon de Pierpont, Earl Warren obtained leave to hunt the Buck, doe, cat or any other wild beasts in certain lands of Simon's (Harting, Zoologist, June 1880, p. 251). In 1297 *John of Engaine* died seized *inter alia* of certain lands in the "Pytesle" in the county of Northampton, found to be held of the King by the service of hunting wolf, fox, and wild cat, badger, wild boar and hare; and likewise of the manor of Great Gidding

WILD CAT—*continued*

in the county of Huntingdon held by service of catching the hare, fox, and wild cat, and wolf within the counties of Huntingdon, Northampton, Buckingham, and Rutland. Nearly a century later (1368) we find *Thomas Engaine* at his death was seized of fourteen yardlands and meadow, and 14*s.* 4*d.* rent in "Pightesle," in the county of Northampton held by service of finding at his own proper cost, certain dogs, for the destruction of wolves, foxes, martens, wild cats, and other vermin in the counties of Northampton, Rutland Oxford, Essex and Buckingham.

During the reign of Henry IV. Sir Thomas de Aylesbury Knight and Catherine his wife, held of the King, in capite, the manor of Laxton, *inter alia* with the appurtenances in the county of Northampton by "Grand Serjeantry," viz., by the service of taking wolves, foxes, and wild cats, and other vermin in certain counties named.

Robert Lindsay in his "Chronicles of Scotland" (vol. ii. p. 346) informs us that in 1528 the Earl of Atholl entertained James V. with a great hunt which lasted three days; "It is said at this time, in Atholl and Stratherdaill boundis, thair was slaine threttie scoir of hart, hynd, with other small beastis, such as roe and roebuck, woulff, fox, and wyld cattis." A century later Sir Robert Gordon in his Genealogical History of the Earldom of Sutherland from its origin in the year 1630 especially mentions the wild cat amongst the beasts of chase in Scotland at that period (*Zoologist*, 1878, p. 251, written by J. E. Harting).

In one of the last forest courts held in 1632, Sir Edmond Sayer claimed to hunt hares, foxes, wild cats, and to keep his dogs unlawed, and pleaded for it a charter of Richard I. made to the Abbot of Waltham Holy-Cross in Essex. His claim was disallowed, for said Noy: "The Abbot had twenty mannors, and yet there was but one hunter; but now we shall have twenty hunters if those Grants be allowed" (Jesse, ii. p. 13). In writing of Cranbourne Chase, Chafin mentions that there were three sorts of animals of chase there besides deer, viz., foxes, hares and marten cats, but says he believed the race of the latter to be nearly extinct; their skins being too valuable for them to be suffered to exist (Cranbourne Chase, p. 421).

It was probably more for its skin than for diversion that the wild cat was hunted, as its fur was much used for trimming dresses at one time. In Archbishop Corbeuil's Canons anno 1127, it is ordained: "that no abbess or nun use more costly apparel than such as is made of lambs or cats skin," and as no other part of the animal was of any use, it grew into a proverb that "you can have nothing of a cat but her skin."

The wild cat is believed to be now extinct, not only in England and Wales, but in a great part of the South of Scotland. A writer in the new edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica* (art. Cat) expresses the opinion that the wild cat still exists in Wales and in the North of England, but gives no proof of its recent occurrence there.

Harvie-Brown in his *Vertebrate Fauna of Argyll* (1892) defines the limit of the range of the wild cat by a line drawn from Oban to Inverness; northward and westward of this line, he states, the animal still existed. But there is no doubt that of late years the cessation of vermin trapping in many parts of Scotland, which has caused a marked increase in the Golden Eagle, has had the same effect upon the wild cat. Thus my friend Mr. J. Hamilton Leigh, who rents a forest of some eight thousand acres in Argyllshire, has had eight wild cats trapped there within the last seven years. They were all fine specimens and have been declared to be the true wild cat by the authorities at the Natural History Museum.

"Perhaps the last genuine wild cat seen in England was the one shot by Lord Ravensworth at Eslington, Northumberland, 1883, although so recently as March 1883 a cat was shot in Bullington wood, Lincolnshire, which in point of size and colour and markings was said to be quite indistinguishable from the wild Felis Catus. Bullington wood is an almost continuous chain of woodlands extending from mid Lincolnshire to near Peterborough, and as much of the district has never been preserved for game and keepers are few and far between, the wild animals have enjoyed an almost complete immunity from persecution. Cats are known to have been bred in these woods in a wild state for generations, and there is no improbability that the cat in question may have descended directly from the old British wild cat. Under all circumstances however it seems more likely to be a case of reversion under favourable conditions from the domestic to the wild type" (J. E. Harting in the *Field*, Nov. 20 and 27, 1886).

The natural history chapter of the wild cat is taken by the Duke of York from G. de F.; did we not know this, some confusion might have arisen through the fact being mentioned that there are several kinds of wild cat, whereas only one was known to the British Isles. G. de F. says there were wild cats as large as leopards which went by the name of *loups, serviers* or *cat wolves*, both of which names he declares to be misnomers. He evidently refers to the *Felis Lynx* or *Lynx vulgaris* which he properly classes as a "manner of wild cat," although some of the ancient writers have classed them as wolves (Pliny, Lib. viii. cap. 34). Lynxes were at one time plentiful in the Pyrenees, and probably in G. de F.'s adjoining territories, although he expressly says, "men hunt them but seldom," and that one does not "quest for them, but only hunts them when one comes across them when drawing for fox, hare, or other beasts. If it be a common wild cat it will fly to a tree at once, then it should be killed by a shot from a long- or cross-bow. If it be a large one like unto a leopard (Felis Lynx) then there will be more sport, for after having run a little, it will stand at bay like a boar before the hounds. Then the greyhounds were put into the wood with the running hounds, and all the people on foot went in