WILD CAT—continued

with their glaives (hunting knives) or they were killed by the archers if there be any. But the chase n'est pas de grant mestrise" (G. de F. p. 233).

M. of G. speaks for the number of wild cats in England in his day, saying that; "every hunter in England knoweth them and their falseness and malice well enough. But one thing well dare I say that if any beast hath the devil's spirit in him without doubt it is the cat both the wild and the tame" (p. 39).

WOLF. For a long time it was a popular delusion that wolves had been entirely exterminated in England and Wales in the reign of the Saxon King Edgar (956-957), but Mr. J. E. Harting has by his researches proved beyond doubt, that they existed some centuries later and did not entirely disappear until the reign of Henry vII. (1485-1509). In his interesting treatise on the wolf (Ex. Brit. An.) he says that; "As might be expected the historical evidence of the existence of the wolf in Great Britain before the Norman conquest is meagre and unsatisfactory, and the abundance of these animals in our Island prior to that date is chiefly to be inferred from the measures which in later times were devised for their destruction." The wolf was reckoned as a beast of venery before the conquest (Man. p. 160), but in the laws of Canute they were not accounted beasts of the forest or of venery (Ibid. p. 160). But nevertheless we find that in the 15th century it is classed again as a beast of venery (verses preceding Twety and Giffard, Cotton MS. Vesp. B XII.) and as a beast in the chase of which one may blow the menee (see Appendix: Menee). In speaking of the hare Twici says: hom ne poet corneer menee de ly ausv cum len fet autres bestes, cum de cerf, e de sengler e de lou (Twici, p. 1).

There must therefore have been wolves to hunt in Master Twici's time. Indeed, so far from Edgar having extirpated them, Harold is said to have demanded and to have received the "ancient and accustomed" tribute of wolf-skins from the Welsh princes (1056). And Mr. Harting quotes many ancient records dating between the 11th and 14th centuries wherein the wolf is mentioned, rewards being paid to those that kill wolves, and grants of land given on the condition that wolves are destroyed, and payments made to wolf-hunters every one of which are interesting, but would take too much space to give here in full. Those of the 14th and 15th centuries which bring us to the period of our MS. may be quoted, as they will show us that it was "a common beast enough at that time." In 1327-1377, says Mr. Harting, "so far as can be gathered from history it would seem that while stringent measures were being devised for the destruction of wolves in all or most of the inhabited districts which they frequented, in the less populous and more remote parts of the country steps were taken by such of the principal landowners as were fond of hunting to secure their

own participation in the sport of finding and killing them" (Ex. An. p. 147).

In Edward III.'s time Conan, Duke of Brittany, in 1342, gave pasture for cattle through all his new forest of Richmond in Yorkshire to the inmates of the Abbey of Fors in Wensleydale, forbidding them to use any mastiffs to drive the wolves from their pastures. In the same year, Alan, Earl of Brittany, gave them common of pasture through all his forest of 'Wendesleydale'; . . . and if the monks or their servants found any flesh of wild beasts in the forest, killed by wolves, they might take it to their own use. In 1348 we find that Alan, son and heir of Walter de Wulfhunte, paid a fine to the King of 2s. 4d. for his relief in respect of lands at Mansfield Woodhouse in the county of Nottingham, which he held by the service of hunting wolves out of the forest of Shirewood, if he should find any of them." Thomas Engaine held certain lands in Pightesle (now called Pitchley) in the county of Northampton by the service of finding at his own proper costs certain dogs for the destruction of wolves, foxes, martens, cats and other vermin within the counties of Northampton, Roteland, Oxford, Essex and Buckingham.

In Richard II.'s reign (1377–1399) the account rolls of Whitby Abbey show amongst the disbursements made between 1394–1396 the following entry of a payment for dressing wolf-skins: "pro tewyng xiiij pellium luporum . . . 10s. ixd." In Henry Iv.'s reign (1399–1413) Sir Thomas de Aylesbury, knight, and Catherine his wife, held of the King in capite, the manor of Laxton, interalia, with appurtenances in the county of Northampton by "grand serjeanty," viz., by the service of taking wolves, foxes, wild cats, and other vermin in the counties of Northampton, Rutland, Oxford, Essex, Huntingdon, and Buckingham.

In this reign however the wolf must have been rare, though not extinct, for the M. of G. says merely, that there are "few men beyond the sea that have not seen some of them," and thus not conceding that it was a common beast in our country (p. 31). Our forests however had not been entirely purged of them for in the eleventh year of Henry VI. (1433) Sir Robert Plumpton, knight, was seized of one bovate of land in Mansfield Woodhouse, in the county of Nottingham, called Wolfhunt land, held by the service of winding a horn and chasing or frightening the wolves in the forest of Shirewood. In 1439 Robert Umfraville held the castle of Herbotell and manor of Otterburn, of the King, in capite, by the service of keeping the valley and liberty of Riddesdale, where the said castle and manor are situated, free from wolves and robbers (Ex. Brit. An. p. 149).

As neither in the reign of Henry VII. (1485–1509) nor in any subsequent reign are wolves mentioned they must have been rare if not extinct after the 15th century in England (Ex. Brit. An. p. 151). The last wolf in Scotland is said to have been killed in the 18th century by one MacQueen of Pall-a'-chrocain who died in the year 1797

WOLF—continued

(Stuart Lays, ii. p. 245). In Ireland the last wolf was killed according to Richardson in 1770, or, according to Sir James Emerson Tennent, subsequently to 1766 (Ex. Brit. An. p. 204).

Both Turbervile and Blome say that although the wolf was extinct in England in their day, still they give chapters on the manner of hunting the animal as there were still many in Ireland.

"In Ireland (as I have heard) there are a great store of them: and because many Noblemen and Gentlemen, have a desire to bring that Country to be inhabited and civilly governed (and would to God there were more of the same mind) therefore I have thought good to set downe the nature and manner of hunting at the Wolfe according to mine Author" (Turb. p. 203). And Blome more than a hundred years later says: "I shall bestow a Chapter or two in the discourse thereof, notwithstanding at present England is not anoyed with any of those strong and great Devourers, which heretofore inhabited our woods and forests; but however Ireland is yet infected therewith in several parts, so that it will not be lost labour to treat thereof, but a benefit to that Kingdom as also many of our American Planta-

tions, where they frequent (p. 104). G. de F. gives eight chapters on the Wolf; Of the wolf and his nature, How to hunt and take the wolf (that is with running hounds), and the other six chapters deal with different ways of trapping, netting and laying snares and trains to catch and kill them. For although wolfhunting was becoming a rare pastime in England, in the 14th century in France the destruction of wolves was a vital question. The country laid waste by raids of the English and internal wars between the great feudal barons of the Kingdom as well as the awful ravages of the pestilence, had contributed to the enormous increase of wolves, who, following the path of army or of the "Black Death" became so voracious and, once being accustomed to human flesh which as our MS. says they found "is savoury and so pleasant" that they would eat nought else,1 they became a constant danger even to the inhabitants of the villages and towns, entering the walls of the latter in search of their favourite prey, and carried off men, women and children. According to the diary of a Burgher of Paris they killed in the near neighbourhood of that town, between Montmartre and the Porte St. Antoine, 14 people in the last week of September 1439, so one can imagine how numerous these terrifying wolves must have been in the more sparsely inhabited parts of the country when winter made them yet more savage. The result was that every means were taken to get rid of these pests by traps, pits, poison, "needles," as the contrivance was called which was made of two pointed sticks tied together and hidden in a bait of flesh, which, when digested, allowed

the sticks to fly apart at right angles and thus pierce the entrails of the wolf. Running hounds chased the cubs, large greyhounds coursed the old wolves. Nets were stretched round the coverts or parts of the forest where they were known to be, greyhounds and archers were placed near the nets, and then armies of peasants with drums and horns beat the bush till the wolves, flying before the unaccustomed noise, ran to the nets where arrows were shot at them, greyhounds let slip, clubs thrown at them; in fact they were slaughtered in any way possible, without any law. Every district in France had its appointed wolf-hunters since the days of the Capetian Kings, whose duty it was to keep down the numbers of the wolves, and for the payment of these necessary officials a levy was made on the towns in their district to which every "fire" or house had to contribute, not only a tax in money, but when summoned every man had to attend the wolf hunts in person to help in the destruction. The term Louveterie which, later on, was applied to the wolf-hunting establishments so widely used in France, is not given by G. de F.

There were many old superstitions concerning the wolf which seem to have been handed down from time immemorial and were still firmly believed in till the 17th century if not later. The chief of these was the firm conviction that nearly all parts of the wolf, but particularly its excrements, were most valuable as medicine.

The right eye of a wolf salted and tied on the arm of a fever patient, cured him; the teeth of a wolf hung round a child's neck prevented the child being frightened at night, and caused it to cut its teeth easily. The head of a wolf nailed to the doorpost was a splendid protection against all bewitchments. The wool of any animal killed by a wolf would ever be infected by vermin, even if woven with other wool into a garment; on the other hand the fur of the wolf was vermin-proof. The wolf's eyes were luminous at night, and "its biting was venemous," &c. &c.

A Wer wolf although merely designating a man-eating wolf in the M. of G. as well as in G. de F. who calls such "lous garoulz," was, in the common acceptation of the term, a man turned for the time being into a wolf, but retaining human intelligence, and therefore were more to be dreaded than the ordinary animal. In Brittany they went by the name of Bisclavet and in Normandy Garwalt.

Roy Modus insrtucts the poor man how to take wolves de quoy il y a tant en sons pays qu'ilz luy destruisent toutes ses bestes (fol. lxx.r.) and then proceeds to show how aiguilles or needles should be put in a bait, and this chapter G. de F. has copied almost exactly. But we find also in Modus a chapter on how to hunt him otherwise: Comme on prent le leup à force de chiens sans filet. He who will take a wolf by strength of hounds, let him not hunt an old wolf, for the old wolf

Albertus Magnus writing in the 13th century says the same thing, and recalls the fable that when the wolf vomits the earth and satisfies himself with his prey.