

Chapter 16 OF ALAUNTES AND OF THEIR NATURE

An alaunte is of the manner and nature of hounds. And the good alauntes be those which men call alauntes gentle. Others there be that men call alauntes veutreres, others be alauntes of the butcheries. They that be gentle should be made and shaped as a greyhound, even of all things save of the head, the which should be great and short. And though there be alauntes of all hues, the true hue of a good alaunte, and that which is most common should be white with black spots about the ears, small eyes and white standing ears and sharp above. Men should teach alauntes better, and to be of better custom than any other beasts, for he is better shaped and stronger for to do harm than any other beast. And also commonly alauntes are stordy¹⁶⁴ (giddy) of their own nature and have not such good sense as many other hounds have, for if a man prick¹⁶⁵ a horse the alauntes will run gladly and bite the horse. Also they run at oxen and sheep, and swine, and at all other beasts, or at men or at other hounds. For men have seen alauntes slay their masters. In all manner of ways alauntes are treacherous and evil understanding, and more foolish and more harebrained than any other kind of hound. And no one ever saw three well conditioned and good. For the good alaunte should run as fast as a greyhound, and any beast that he can catch he should hold with his seizers and not leave it. For an alaunte of his nature holds faster of his biting than can three greyhounds the best any man can find. And therefore it is the best hound to hold and to nyme (seize) all manner of beasts and hold them fast. And when he is well conditioned and perfect, men hold that he is good among all other hounds. But men find few that be perfect. A good alaunte should love his master and follow him, and help him in all cases, and do what his master commands him. A good alaunte should go fast and be hardy to take all kinds of beasts without turning, and hold fast and not leave it, and be well conditioned, and well at his master's command, and when he is such, men hold, as I have said, that he is the best hound that can be to take all manner of beasts. That other kind of alaunte is called veutreres. They are almost shaped as a greyhound of full shape, they have a great head, great lips and great ears, and with such men help themselves at the baiting of the bull and at hunting of a wild boar, for it is their nature to

hold fast, but they be (heavy) and foul (ugly) that if they be slain by the wild boar or by the bull, it is not very great loss. And when they can overtake a beast they bite it and hold it still, but by themselves they could never take a beast unless greyhounds were with them to make the beast tarry. That other kind of alauntes of the butcheries is such as you may always see in good towns, that are called great butchers' hounds, the which the butchers keep to help them to bring their beasts that they buy in the country, for if an ox escape from the butchers that lead him, his hounds would go and take him and hold him until his master has come, and should help him to bring him again to the town. They cost little to keep as they eat the foul things in the butcher's row. Also they keep their master's house, they be good for bull baiting and for hunting wild boar, whether it be with greyhounds at the tryst or with running hounds at bay within the covert. For when a wild boar is within a strong hatte of wood (thicket), perhaps all day the running hounds will not make him come out. And when men let such mastiffs run at the boar they take him in the thick spires (wood) so that any man can slay him, or they make him come out of his strength, so that he shall not remain long at bay.

164 G. de F. has "estourdiz," which the "Master of Game" translates as "sturdy" or sturdy, but the modern sense would be hairbrained, giddy, not sturdy.

165 Means chase a horse. G. de F. says: "Se on court un cheval, ils le prennent volentiers," p. 100.
