

Chapter 34 HOW THE HART SHOULD BE MOVED WITH TH...

When the hart is harboured as before is said and they before named come to the meeting that some men call the assembly, and also the scantilon,²⁰⁶ and the fumes well liked by the Lord and Master of the Game, then shall the Master of the Game choose of the sergeants or of the yeoman at horse, which of them shall be at the finding, or all, or some. Nevertheless, if the deer be likely to fall among danger it were good to assign some of the horsemen among the relays to help more readily the hounds, if they fall upon the stint,²⁰⁷ and when the hunters on horseback be assigned then he must assign which of the yeomen berrers on foot shall be finders, and which hounds he shall have with him to the finding, and the lymerer and the pages to go with him. And after that to assign the relays by advice of them that know the country and the flight of the deer. And there where most danger is, there set the readiest hunters and the best footers with the boldest hounds with them. And at every relay sufficeth two couple of hounds or three at the most. And see that amid the relays, somewhat toward the hinder-most relay, especially if it be in danger, that one of the lymerer's pages be there with one of the lymers. And the more danger (there is) the older and the readier, and the most tender nosed hound. And when all is ordained then shall the Lord and the Master of the Game, if he liketh better to be at the finding than with a relay, shall go thither where the deer is harboured, and set ready waits about the quarter of the wood that the deer is in, to see what cometh out, or to see if the deer that is harboured would start and steal away ere the lymer moved him. And this done, then should the Lord and Master of the Game bid the lymerer bring them there where he marked that the hart went in, and when they be there the lymerer should take away the boughs he laid over the trace at the harbouring, and set his lymer in the fues, and then shall the Lord if he can blow, blow three motes, and after him the Master of the Game, and after the hunters, as they be greatest in office, that be at the finding, and then the lymerer. And after that if the lymer sue boldly and lustily the lymerer shall say to him loud; "Ho moy, ho moy, hole hole hole." And ever take good heed to his feet, and look well about him. And as oft as he findeth the fues, or if it be in thick spires,²⁰⁸ boughs or branches broken, where the deer hath

walked, he should say aloud-“Cy va-cy va-cy va,” and rally with his horn, and always should the yeoman berner the which is ordained to be finder, follow the lymer and be as nigh him as he might with the raches that he leadeth for the finding, and if the lymer as he sueth, overshoot and be out of the fues, the lymere should always, till his hounds be fallen in again, speak to him, calling his name, be it Loyer, or Beaumont, or Latimer or Bemond according to what the hound is named, and anon as he falls in again and finds the fues or branches as before is said he shall say loud, “Cy va” as before and rally and so forth at every time that he findeth thereof, until that the lymer move him. Nevertheless I have seen when a lymer sueth long and could not so soon move him as men would, that they have taken up the lymer and uncoupled one or two hounds, to have him sooner found, but this truly no skilful hunter ought to do, unless the lymer cannot put it forth, nor bring it any further, or that the deer be stirring in the quarter, and hath not waited for the moving of the lymer. Or else that it be so far advanced in the day, that the sun hath dried up the fues, and that they have little day enough to run him and hunt him with strength. But now to come again to the lymer, it is to wit that when the lymer hath moved him, if the lymere can see him he shall blow a mote, 209 and rechace (recheat),²¹⁰ and if the deer be soule (alone) the Berners shall uncouple all the finders, and if he be not alone two hounds sufficeth till he be separated, and if the lymere saw him (not) at the moving he should go to his lair and look thereby whether it be a hart or not, and if he see by the lair or by the fues that it is the same deer, that he hath sued (hunted) and alone he should rechase without a long mote, for the mote should never be blown before the rechasing,²¹¹ unless a man seeth that which he hunteth for. And then the Berner should do as I have said before, and if he be not alone the Berner should do as above is said, for it is to wit that the mote before rechasing (recheating) shall never be blown but when a man seeth what he hunteth for, as I have said. Now furthermore, when the hart is moved and the finders cast off, then should the lymere take up his hounds and follow after, and foot it in the best wise that he can. And the Berner also and every horseman go that can go, so that they come not into the fues (across the line) nor in front of the hounds, and shape (their course) as often as they can to meet him. And as often as any man see him or meet him, he should go to the fues and blow a mote and rechace and then holloa to the hounds to come forth withall, and this done, speed him fast in the manner that I have said to meet with him again. And the relay that he (the hart) cometh to first should take good heed that he vauntlay²¹² not, if other relays be behind for dread of bending out from the relay. But he should let the deer pass and go to the fues, and there blow a mote, and rechace and rally upon

the fues. And the hunter ought to be advised that his hounds catch it (the scent) well in couple, ere he relay, that they run not counter.²¹³ For that might make the hounds that come therewith and the hunters to be on a stynt (at fault), and peradventure not recover it all the day after. And if it so be that the hunter that hath relayed, see that the deer be likely to fall into danger, that is to say among other deer, and else it needeth not, he should when he hath relayed stand still in the fues, and holloa the hounds that come forth therewith and take up the hindermost, and if it be in a park go stand again with them at his place, and if it be out of park in a forest or other wood follow after as well as he is able. And in this wise ought every relay to do till he come among the back relays. For if they at the back see by the spreading of the clees (claws) by setting fast and deep his ergots (dew claws) in the earth, and if they see him also cast his chaule,²¹⁴ then they ought to vauntlay for advantage of the hounds, for so shall they sooner have him at bay, and from then he is but dead if the hunters serve aright the hounds. Nevertheless men have seen at the first finding or soon after, deer turn the head (to bay), and oftenest in rutting time, but I mean not of deer that turneth so to bay, but I mean of hunted deer when men have seen of them the tokens said before that he stand at bay. And if it be so that the hounds have envoised²¹⁵ or have overshot, or that they be on a stynt by any other ways, those hunters on horseback or on foot to whom belongs the right, first should blow the stynt as I shall devise in a chapter that shall be of all blowing.²¹⁶ And after that he should fall before the hounds as soon as he can and take them up, and if so be that they have envoysed two deer of antler²¹⁷ they should not be rated badly, but get in front off them and take them off in the fairest way that men can. And if they run ought else they should be got in front of and rated and well lashed. And what hounds they may get up, bring them to the next rights (right line) if they know where, or else there where he (the hart) was last seen. And if it be great danger they ought to blow a mote for the lymer and let him sue till he hath retrieved him or else till he hath brought him out of danger. And as oft as he findeth or seeth that he is in the rights the lymerer should say loud, "Cy va" twice or thrice-and recheat, and so should the hunters as oft as they lust to blow. And if the lymer overshoot or cannot put it forth, every hunter that is there ought to go some deal abroad for to see if he may find the rights by vesteying (searching) thereof. And whoso may find it before the lymer be fallen in again, he should recheat in the rights, and blow after that a mote for the lymer and sue forth as is said before. And if the lymer gave it up, and cannot and will not do his devoire (duty), then should they blow two motes for the raches and cast them off there where they were last in the rights. And if the hunters hear that the hounds

run well and put it lustily forth they should rout and jopey²¹⁸ to them lustily and often and recheat also. And if there be but one hound that undertaketh it lustily they shall hue and jopey to him, and also recheat. As oft as they be on a stynt they should blow the stynt and do as before is said. And if any of the aforesaid hounds retrieve him so that men may know and hear it by the doubling of their mence,²¹⁹ but if they hear any hunter above them that hath met (the deer) that bloweth the rights and holloaeth else (where) they should haste them thither where they thought the hounds retrieved it; or else to meet with the hounds for to see the fues whether it be the hunted deer or not. And if it is not he, they should do as above is said when they be on a stynt, and if it be he every man shall speed him that speed may, and every relay do as before is said. And if any of the hunters happen while they be on a stynt to see a hart that he thinketh to be the hunted deer he ought to blow a mote and recheat and after that blow two motes for the hounds and stand still before the fues till the Berner with the hounds do come. And if they suppose that they may not hear him he should draw to them till they have heard him. And when any of the Berners or the lymerer hear a man blow for them, they should answer blowing in this wise in their horn: "trut trut trut," but he should know readily by the fues after the tokens that have been said before, whether it be the hunted deer or not. And in the same wise shall a hunter do that findeth an hart quat (couched), and he thinketh it to be the hunted deer, and he sees that his fellows and the hounds be on a stynt, he should well beware that he blow not too nigh him, lest he start, and go away, before the hounds come. Nevertheless for to wit whether it be the hunted deer or no, the tokens have been rehearsed before-and when he hath been so well run to and enchased and retrieved, and so oft relayed and vauntelayed to, and that he seeth that (neither) by beating up the rivers nor brooks nor foiling him down, nor going to soil, nor rusing to and fro upon himself, which is to say in his own fues, can help him, then turns he his head and standeth at bay. And then as far as it may be heard every man draweth thither, and the knowing thereof is that the hunter that cometh first, and the hunters (one) after the other they holloa all together, and blow a mote and rechace all at once. And that they never do but when he is at bay or when bay is made for the hounds, after he is dead, when they should be rewarded or enquerreyde. ²²⁰ And when the hunters that held the relays be there, or that they be nigh the bay, they should pull off the couples from the hounds' necks and let them draw thither. And the hunters should break the bay as often as they can for two causes; the one lest he (the stag) hurt the hounds, if he stand and rest long in one place; another is that the relays that stand far can come up with their hounds the while he is alive, and be at the death.

And it is to be known that if any of the hunters have been at any time while the deer hath been run to out of hearing of hound and horn, he should have blown the forloyn^e,²²¹ unless he were in a park, for there it should never be blown. And whoso first heard him so blow should blow again to him the "perfect,"²²² if it so be that he were in his rights, and else not. For by that shall he be brought to readiness and comfort who before did not know where the game or any of his fellows were. And when it so is, that they have thought that the bay has lasted long enough, then should he whoso be the most master bid some of the hunters go spay²²³ him behind the shoulder forward to the heart. But the lymerer should let slip the rope while he (the deer) stood on his feet, and let the lymer go to (him), for by right the lymer should never (go) out of the rope, though he (be let) slip from ever so far. And when the deer is dead, and lieth on one side then first it is time to blow the death, for it should never be blown at hart hunting till the deer be on its side. And then should the hounds be coupled up and as fast as a man can. One of the Berners should encorne him, that is to say turn his horns earthwards and the throat upwards, and slit the skin of the throat all along the neck, and cut labelles (small flaps) on either side of the skin, the which shall hang still upon the head, for this belongeth to an hart slain with strength, and else not. And then should the hunter flay down the skin as far as he can, and then with a sharp trencher cut as thick as he can the flesh down to the neck bone, and this done every man stand abroad and blow the death, and make short bay for to reward the hounds. And every man (shall) have a small rod in his hand to hold the hounds that they should the better bay and every man blow the death that can blow. And as oft as any hunter beginneth to blow every man shall blow for the death to make the better noise, and make the hounds better know the horns and the bay, and when they have bayed a while let the hounds come to eat the flesh, to the hard bone from in front of the shoulders right to the head, for that is their reward of right. And then take them off fair and couple them up again. And then bring to the lymers and serve each by himself, and then should the Lord if he list or else the Master of the Game, or if he be absent whoso is greatest of the hunters, blow the prise at coupling up, and that should be blown only of the aforesaid, and by no others. Nevertheless it is to wit that if the Lord be not come soon enough to the bay, while the deer is alive they ought to hold the bay as long as they can, without rebuking the hounds, to await the Lord, and if the Lord remains away too long, when the deer is spayed and laid on one side, before they do ought else, the Master of the Game, or which of the horsemen that be there at the death, should mount their horses and every man draw his way blowing the death till one of them hath met with him, or heard of him,

and brought him thither. And if they cannot meet with him, and that they have word that he is gone home, they ought to come again, and do, whoso is greatest master, as the Lord should do, if he were there, and right so should they do to the Master of the Game in the Lord's absence. Also if the Lord be there all things should be done of the bay and rewarding as before is said, and then he should charge whom he list to undo the deer, if the hounds shall not be enquiryid thereon, for if they should, there needeth no more but to caboche²²⁴ his head, all the upper jaw still thereon, and the labelles aforesaid; and then hold him and lay the skin open, and lay the head at the skin's end right in front of the shoulders. And when the hounds are thus inquirreide the lymers should have both the shoulders for their rights, and else they should not have but the ears and the brain whereof they should be served, the hart's head lying under their feet. But on the other hand if the lord will have the deer undone, he that he biddeth as before is said, should undo him most woodmanly and cleanly that he can and wonder ye not that I say woodmanly, for it is a point that belongeth to woodmancraft, though it be well suiting to an hunter to be able to do it. Nevertheless it belongeth more to woodmancraft than to hunters, and therefore as of the manner he should be undone I pass over lightly, for there is no woodman nor good hunter in England that cannot do it well enough, and well better than I can tell them. Nevertheless when so is that the paunch is taken out clean and whole and the small guts, one of the groom chacechiens should take the paunch and go to the next water withal, and slit it, and cast out the filth and wash it clean, that no filth abide therein. And then bring it again and cut it in small gobetts in the blood that should be kept in the skin and the lungs withal, if they be hot and else not, and all the small guts withal, and bread broken therein according whether the hounds be few or many, and all this turned and meddled together among the blood till it be well brewed in the blood, and then look for a small green, and thither bear all this upon the skin with as much blood as can be saved, and there lay it, and spread the skin thereupon, the hair side upward, and lay the head, the visage, forward at the neck end of the skin. And then the lord shall go take a fair small rod in his hand, the which one of the yeomen or of the grooms should cut for him, and the Master of the Game and other, and the sergeants, and each of the yeomen on horse, and others, and then the Lord should take up the hart's head by the right side between the surroyal and the fork or troche whichever it be that he bear, and the Master of the Game, the left side in the same wise, and hold the head upright that the nose touch the earth. And then every man that is there, save the berners on foot and the chacechiens and the lymers which should be with their hounds and wait upon them in a fair

green where there is a cool shadow, should stand in front on either side of the head, with rods, that no hound come about, nor on the sides, but that all stand in front. And when it is ready the Master of the Game or the sergeant should bid the berners bring forth their hounds and stand still in front of them a small quoit's cast from thence, as the bay is ordained. And when they be there the Master of the Game or sergeant should cry skillfully loud: "Devour" and then holloa every wight, and every hunter blow the death. And when the hounds be come and bay the head, the Berners should pull off the couples as fast as they can. And when the Lord thinketh the bay hath lasted long enough, the Master of the Game should pull away the head and anon others should be ready to pull away the skin and let the hounds come to the reward, and then should the Lord and Master of the Game, and all the hunters stand around all about the reward, and blow the death. As oft as any of them begin every man bear him fellowship till the hounds be well rewarded, and that they have nought left. And right thus should be done when the hounds should be enquiryed of the whole deer. And when there is nought left then should the Lord, if he wishes, or else the Master of the Game or in his absence whoso is greatest next him, stroke (blow) in this wise, that is to say blow four motes and stynt (stop) not (for the time of) half an Ave Maria and then blow other four motes a little longer than the first four motes. And thus should no wight stroke, but when the hart is slain with strength, and when one of the aforesaid hath thus blown then should the grooms couple up the hounds and draw homewards fair and soft. And all the rest of the hunters should stroke in this wise: "Trut, trut, tro-ro-row, tro-ro-row," and four motes all of one length not too long and not too short. And otherwise should no hart hunter stroke from thenceforth till they go to bed. And thus should the Berners on foot and the grooms lead home the hounds and send in front that the kennel be clean and the trough filled with clean water, and their couch renewed with fresh straw. And the Master of the Game and the sergeant and the yeoman at horse should come home and blow the menee at the hall door or at the cellar door as I shall devise. First the master, or whoso is greatest next him, shall begin and blow three motes²²⁵ alone, and at the first mote²²⁶ the remnant of the aforesaid should blow with him, and beware that none blow longer than another, and after the three motes even forthwith they should blow the recoupling as thus: "Trut, trut, troro row," and that they be advised that from the time they fall in to blow together, that none of them begin before (the) other nor end after (the) other. And if it be the first hart slain with strength in the season, or the last, the sergeant and the yeoman shall go on their office's behalf and ask their fees of the which I report me to the old statutes and customs

of the King's house. And this done the Master of the Game ought to speak to the officers that all the hunters' suppers be well ordained, and that they drink not ale, and nothing but wine that night for the good and great labour they have had for the Lord's game and disport, and for the exploit and making of the hounds. And also that they may the more merrily and gladly tell what each of them hath done all the day and which hounds have best run and boldest.

206 Measure of the deer's footprint. In old English, a measure (Stratmann).

207 Wrong scent, or check.

208 Shoots, fresh-growing young wood.

209 A long note.

210 Recheat, a hunting signal on the horn.

211 Recheating. See Appendix: Hunting-Music.

212 Vauntlay, to cast off the relay before the hounds already hunting have passed. See Appendix: Relays.

213 Do not hunt heel: contre, counter.

214 Drop his jaw. (?)

215 Gone off the right line.

216 This chapter does not exist.

217 If the hounds have gone away after two stags.

218 Call to the hounds encouragingly.

219 Shirley MS.: "doubling of their mouths," from the Fr. menee. See Appendix: Menee.

220 See Appendix: Curée.

221 A horn signal denoting that the chase is being followed at a distance by those who blow. From the Fr. fortloin, written forlonge. See Appendix: Forlonge.

222 A note sounded only by those who are on the right line.

223 To kill with a sword or hunting knife. See Appendix: Spay.

224 Cut off the head close behind the antlers. Shirley MS.: "Cabache."

225 Shirley MS. says four notes.

226 Should read: "at the last moot."
