

Chapter 4 OF THE BUCK AND OF HIS NATURE

A buck is a diverse beast, he hath not his hair as a hart, for he is more white, and also he hath not such a head. He is less than a hart and is larger than a roe. A buck's head is palmed with a long palming, and he beareth more tines than doth a hart. His head cannot be well described without painting. They have a longer tail than the hart, and more grease on their haunches than a hart. They are fawned in the month of June and shortly to say they have the nature of the hart, save only that the hart goeth sooner to rut and is sooner in his season again, also in all things of their kind the hart goeth before the buck. For when the hart hath been fifteen days at rut the buck scarcely beginneth to be in heat and bellow.

And also men go not to sue him with a lymer, nor do men go to harbour him as men do to the hart. Nor are his fumes put in judgment as those of the hart, but men judge him by the foot other head as I shall say more plainly hereafter.

BUCK-HUNTING WITH RUNNING HOUNDS

(From MS. f. fr. 616, Bib. Nat., Paris)

They crotey their fumes in diverse manners according to the time and pasture, as doth the hart, but oftener black and dry than otherwise. When they are hunted they bound again into their coverts and fly not so long as doth the hart, for sometimes they run upon the hounds.⁵⁴ And they run long and fly ever if they can by the high ways and always with the change. They let themselves be taken at the water and beat the brooks as a hart, but not with such great malice as the hart, nor so gynnously (cunningly) and also they go not to such great rivers as the hart. They run faster at the beginning than doth the hart. They bolk (bellow) about when they go to rut, not as a hart doth, but much lower than the hart, and rattling in the throat. Their nature and that of the hart do not love (to be) together, for gladly would they not dwell there where many harts be, nor the harts there where the bucks be namely together in herds. The buck's flesh is more savoury⁵⁵ than is that of the hart or of the roebuck. The venison of them is right good if kept and salted as that of the hart. They abide oft in

a dry country and always commonly in herd with other bucks. Their season lasteth from the month of May into the middle of September. And commonly they dwell in a high country where there be valleys and small hills. He is undone as the hart.

54 They do not make such a long flight as the red deer but by ringing return to the hounds.

55 G. de F., p. 29, completes the sense of this sentence by saying that "the flesh of the buck is more savoury to all hounds than that of the stag or of the roe, and for this reason it is a bad change to hunt the stag with hounds which at some other time have eaten buck."
