

## Werk

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## CHAPTER IV.

*Reflections on Saint Hulert's stag.—Shoots a stag with cherry stones; the wonderful effects of it—Kills a bear by extraordinary dexterity; his danger pathetically described—Attacted by a wolf which he turns inside out—Is assailed by a mad dog from which he escapes—The Barons cloak seized with madness, by which his whole wardrobe is thrown into confusion.*

You have heard, I dare say, of the hunter's and sportsman's saint and protector St. Hubert; and of the noble stag, which appeared to him in the forest with the holy cross between his antlers. I have paid my homage to that saint every year in good fellowship, and seen this stag a thousand times either painted in churches, or embroidered in the stars of his knights; so that upon the honour and conscience of a good sportsman, I hardly know whether there may not have been formerly, or whether there are not even at this present day such crossed stags. But let me rather tell what I have seen myself. Having one day spent all my shot, I found myself in the presence of a stately stag, looking at me as unconcernedly as if he had known of my empty pouches. I charged immediately with powder, and upon this a good handful of cherry-stones, for I had sucked the fruit as far as the hurry would

permit. Thus I let fly at him, and hit him just on the middle of the forehead, between his antlers: it stunned him—he staggered—yet he made off. A year or two after, being with a party in the same forest, I beheld a noble stag with a fine full grown cherry-tree above ten feet high between his antlers. I immediately recollected my former adventure, looked upon him as my property, and brought him to the ground by one shot, which at once gave me the haunch and cherry-sauce; for the tree was covered with the richest fruit I ever tasted before. Who knows but some passionate holy sportsman, or sporting abbot, or bishop, may have shot, planted, and fixed the cross between the antlers of St. Hubert's stag, in a manner similar to this? They always have been, and still are, famous for plantations of crosses and antlers; and in case of distress or delemma, which too often happens to keen sportsmen, one is apt to grasp at any thing for safety, and to try any expedient rather than miss the favourable opportunity. I have many times found myself in that trying situation.

What do you say of this for example? Daylight and powder were spent one day in a Polish forest. When I was going home, a terrible bear made up to me in great speed, with open mouth ready to fall

upon me: all my pockets were searched in an instant for powder and ball, but in vain—I found nothing but two spare flints; one I flung with all my might into the monster's open jaws, down his throat. It gave him pain, and made him turn about, so that I could level the second at his back door, which, indeed, I did with wonderful success; for it flew in, met the first flint in the stomach, struck fire, and blew up the bear with a terrible explosion. Though I came safe off that time, yet I should not wish to try it again, or venture against bears with no other ammunition.

There is a kind of fatality in it. The fiercest and most dangerous animals generally came upon me when defenceless, as if they had a notion or an instinctive intimation of it. Thus a frightful wolf rushed upon so suddenly and so close, that I could do nothing but follow mechanical instinct, and thrust my fist into his open mouth. For safety's sake I pushed on and on, till my arm was fairly in up to the shoulder. How should I disengage myself? I was not much pleased with my awkward situation—with a wolf face to face—our ogling was not of the most pleasant kind. If I withdrew my arm, then the animal would fly the more furiously upon me: that I saw in his flaming eyes. In short,