

EDWARD OF NORWICH, COUNT
OF PHOEBUS

**THE MASTER OF
GAME: THE OLDEST
ENGLISH BOOK ON
HUNTING**

**Edward
Gaston III Phoebus
The Master of Game: The
Oldest English Book on Hunting**

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The Master of Game: The Oldest English Book on Hunting:*

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of Norwich Edward The Master of Game: The Oldest English Book on Hunting

INTRODUCTION

The "Master of Game" is the oldest as well as the most important work on the chase in the English language that has come down to us from the Middle Ages.

Written between the years 1406 and 1413 by Edward III.'s grandson Edward, second Duke of York, our author will be known to every reader of Shakespeare's "Richard II.," for he is no other than the arch traitor Duke of Aumarle, previously Earl of Rutland, who, according to some historians, after having been an accomplice in the murder of his uncle Gloucester, carried in his own hand on a pole the head of his brother-in-law. The student of history, on the other hand, cannot forget that this turbulent Plantagenet was the gallant leader of England's vanguard at Agincourt, where he was one of the great nobles who purchased with their lives what was probably the most glorious victory ever vouchsafed to English arms.

He tells us in his Prologue, in which he dedicates his "litel symple book" to Henry, eldest son of his cousin Henry IV., "Kyng of Ingelond and of Fraunce," that he is the Master of Game at the latter's court.

Let it at once be said that the greater part of the book before us is not the original work of Edward of York, but a careful and almost literal translation from what is indisputably the most famous hunting book of all times, *i. e.* Count Gaston de Foix's *Livre de Chasse*, or, as author and book are often called, *Gaston Phæbus*, so named because the author, who was a kinsman of the Plantagenets, and who reigned over two principalities in southern France and northern Spain, was renowned for his manly beauty and golden hair. It is he of whom Froissart has to tell us so much that is quaint and interesting in his inimitable chronicle. *La Chasse*, as Gaston de Foix tells us in his preface, was commenced on May 1, 1387, and as he came to his end on a bear hunt not much more than four years later, it is very likely that his youthful Plantagenet kinsman, our author, often met him during his prolonged residence in Aquitaine, of which, later on, he became the Governor.

Fortunately for us, the enforced leisure which the Duke of York enjoyed while imprisoned in Pevensey Castle for his traitorous connection with the plots of his sister to assassinate the King and to carry off their two young kinsmen, the Mortimers, the elder of whom was the heir presumptive to the throne, was of sufficient length to permit him not only to translate *La Chasse*

but to add five original chapters dealing with English hunting.

These chapters, as well as the numerous interpolations made by the translator, are all of the first importance to the student of venery, for they emphasise the changes – as yet but very trifling ones – that had been introduced into Britain in the three hundred and two score years that had intervened since the Conquest, when the French language and French hunting customs became established on English soil. To enable the reader to see at a glance which parts of the "Master of Game" are original, these are printed in italics.

The text, of which a modern rendering is here given, is taken from the best of the existing nineteen MSS. of the "Master of Game," viz. the Cottonian MS. Vespasian B. XII., in the British Museum, dating from about 1420. The quaint English of Chaucer's day, with its archaic contractions, puzzling orthography, and long, obsolete technical terms in this MS. are not always as easy to read as those who only wish to get a general insight into the contents of the "Master of Game" might wish. It was a difficult question to decide to what extent this text should be modernised. If translated completely into twentieth century English a great part of the charm and interest of the original would be lost. For this reason many of the old terms of venery and the construction of sentences have been retained where possible, so that the general reader will be able to appreciate the "feeling" of the old work without being unduly puzzled. In a few cases where, through the omission of words, the sense was left

undetermined, it has been made clear after carefully consulting other English MSS. and the French parent work.

It seemed very desirable to elucidate the textual description of hunting by the reproduction of good contemporary illuminations, but unfortunately English art had not at that period reached the high state of perfection which French art had attained. As a matter of fact, only two of the nineteen English MSS. contain these pictorial aids, and they are of very inferior artistic merit. The French MSS. of *La Chasse*, on the other hand, are in several cases exquisitely illuminated, and MS. f. fr. 616, which is the copy from which our reproductions – much reduced in size, alas! – are made, is not only the best of them, but is one of the most precious treasures of the *Bibliothèque Nationale* in Paris. These superb miniatures are unquestionably some of the finest handiwork of French miniaturists at a period when they occupied the first rank in the world of art.

The editors have added a short Appendix, elucidating ancient hunting customs and terms of the chase. Ancient terms of venery often baffle every attempt of the student who is not intimately acquainted with the French and German literature of hunting. On one occasion I appealed in vain to Professor Max Müller and to the learned Editor of the Oxford Dictionary. "I regret to say that I know nothing about these words," wrote Dr. Murray; "terms of the chase are among the most difficult of words, and their investigation demands a great deal of philological and antiquarian research." There is little doubt that but for this

difficulty the "Master of Game" would long ago have emerged from its seclusion of almost five hundred years. It is hoped that our notes will assist the reader to enjoy this hitherto neglected classic of English sport. Singularly enough, as one is almost ashamed to have to acknowledge, foreign students, particularly Germans, have paid far more attention to the "Master of Game" than English students have, and there are few manuscripts of any importance about which English writers have made so many mistakes. This is all the more curious considering the precise information to the contrary so easily accessible on the shelves of the British Museum. All English writers with a single exception (Thomas Wright) who have dealt with our book have attributed it persistently to a wrong man and a wrong period. This has been going on for more than a century; for it was the learned, but by no means always accurate, Joseph Strutt who first thrust upon the world, in his often quoted "Sports and Pastimes of the English People," certain misleading blunders concerning our work and its author. Blaine, coming next, adding thereto, was followed little more than a decade later by "Cecil," author of an equally much quoted book, "Records of the Chase." In it, when speaking of the "Master of Game," he says that he has "no doubt that it is the production of Edmund de Langley," thus ascribing it to the father instead of to the son. Following "Cecil's" untrustworthy lead, Jesse, Lord Wilton, Vero Shaw, Dalziel, Wynn, the author of the chapter on old hunting in the Badminton Library volume on Hunting, and many other writers copied blindly these mistakes.

Five years ago the present editors published in a large folio volume the first edition of the "Master of Game" in a limited and expensive form. It contained side by side with the ancient text a modernised version, extended biographical accounts of Edward of York and of Gaston de Foix (both personalities of singular historical and human interest), a detailed bibliography of the existing mediæval hunting literature up to the end of the sixteenth century, a glossary, and a very much longer appendix than it was possible to insert in the present volume, which, in order to make it conform to the series of which it forms part, had to be cut down to about one-sixth of the first edition. A similar fate had to befall the illustrations, which had to be reduced materially both in number and size. We would therefore invite the reader whose interest in the subject may possibly be aroused by the present pages, to glance at the perhaps formidable-looking pages of the first edition, with its facsimile photogravure reproductions of the best French and English illuminations to be found in fifteenth century hunting literature.

In conclusion, I desire to repeat also in this place the expression of my thanks to the authorities of the British Museum – to Dr. G. F. Warner and Mr. I. H. Jeayes in particular – to the heads of the Bodleian Library, the *Bibliothèque Nationale*, the Mazarin and the Arsenal Libraries in Paris, the Duc d'Aumale's Library at Chantilly, the *Bibliothèque Royale* at Brussels, the *Königliche Bibliotheken* in Munich and Dresden, the *Kaiserliche und Königliche Haus, Hof and Staats Archiv*, and the *K. and*

K. Hof Bibliothek in Vienna, to Dr. F. J. Furnivall, Mr. J. E. Harting, Mr. T. Fitzroy Fenwick of Cheltenham, and to express my indebtedness to the late Sir Henry Dryden, Bt., of Canons Ashby, for his kind assistance in my research work.

To one person more than to any other my grateful acknowledgment is due, namely to Mr. Theodore Roosevelt, President of the United States, who, notwithstanding the press of official duties, has found time to write the interesting *Foreword*. A conscientious historian of his own great country, as well as one of its keenest sportsmen, President Roosevelt's qualifications for this kindly office may be described as those of a modern Master of Game. No more competent writer could have been selected to introduce to his countrymen a work that illustrates the spirit which animated our common forbears five centuries ago, their characteristic devotion to the chase, no less than their intimate acquaintance with the habits and "nature" of the wild game they pursued: all attributes worthy of some study by the reading sportsmen of the twentieth century, who, as I show, have hitherto neglected the study of English Venery. It was at first intended to print this *Foreword* only in the American Edition, but it soon became evident that this would give to it an advantage which readers in this country would have some reason to complain of, so it was inserted also in the English Edition, and from it taken over into the present one.

London, *March 3, 1909.*

FOREWORD TO THE FIRST EDITION

During the century that has just closed Englishmen have stood foremost in all branches of sport, at least so far as the chase has been carried on by those who have not followed it as a profession. Here and there in the world whole populations have remained hunters, to whom the chase was part of their regular work – delightful and adventurous, but still work. Such were the American backwoodsmen and their successors of the great plains and the Rocky Mountains; such were the South African Boers; and the mountaineers of Tyrol, if not coming exactly within this class, yet treated the chase both as a sport and a profession. But disregarding these wild and virile populations, and considering only the hunter who hunts for the sake of the hunting, it must be said of the Englishman that he stood pre-eminent throughout the nineteenth century as a sportsman for sport's sake. Not only was fox-hunting a national pastime, but in every quarter of the globe Englishmen predominated among the adventurous spirits who combined the chase of big game with bold exploration of the unknown. The icy polar seas, the steaming equatorial forests, the waterless tropical deserts, the vast plains of wind-rippled grass, the wooded northern wilderness, the stupendous mountain masses of the Andes and the Himalayas – in short,

all regions, however frowning and desolate, were penetrated by the restless English in their eager quest for big game. Not content with the sport afforded by the rifle, whether a horse or a foot, the English in India developed the use of the spear and in Ceylon the use of the knife as the legitimate weapons with which to assail the dangerous quarry of the jungle and the plain. There were hunters of other nationalities, of course – Americans, Germans, Frenchmen; but the English were the most numerous of those whose exploits were best worth recounting, and there was among them a larger proportion of men gifted with the power of narration. Naturally under such circumstances a library of nineteenth century hunting must be mainly one of English authors.

All this was widely different in the preceding centuries. From the Middle Ages to the period of the French Revolution hunting was carried on with keener zest in continental Europe than in England; and the literature of the chase was far richer in the French, and even in the German, tongues than in the English.

The Romans, unlike the Greeks, and still more unlike those mighty hunters of old, the Assyrians, cared little for the chase; but the white-skinned, fair-haired, blue-eyed barbarians, who, out of the wreck of the Roman Empire, carved the States from which sprang modern Europe, were passionately devoted to hunting. Game of many kinds then swarmed in the cold, wet forests which covered so large a portion of Europe. The kings and nobles, and the freemen generally, of the regions which now

make France and Germany, followed not only the wolf, boar, and stag – the last named the favourite quarry of the hunter of the Middle Ages – but the bear, the bison – which still lingers in the Caucasus and in one Lithuanian preserve of the Czar – and the aurochs, the huge wild ox – the *Urus* of Cæsar – which has now vanished from the world. In the Nibelungen Lied, when Siegfried's feats of hunting are described, it is specified that he slew both the bear and the elk, the bison and the aurochs. One of the early Burgundian kings was killed while hunting the bison; and Charlemagne was not only passionately devoted to the chase of these huge wild cattle, but it is said prized the prowess shown therein by one of his stalwart daughters.

By the fourteenth century, when the Count of Foix wrote, the aurochs was practically or entirely extinct, and the bison had retreated eastwards, where for more than three centuries it held its own in the gloomy morasses of the plain south-east of the Baltic. In western Europe the game was then the same in kind that it is now, although all the larger species were very much more plentiful, the roebuck being perhaps the only one of the wild animals that has since increased in numbers. With a few exceptions, such as the Emperor Maximilian, the kings and great lords of the Middle Ages were not particularly fond of chamois and ibex hunting; it was reserved for Victor Emmanuel to be the first sovereign with whom shooting the now almost vanished ibex was a favourite pastime.

Eager though the early Norman and Plantagenet kings and

nobles of England were in the chase, especially of the red deer, in France and Germany the passion for the sport was still greater. In the end, on the Continent the chase became for the upper classes less a pleasure than an obsession, and it was carried to a fantastic degree. Many of them followed it with brutal indifference to the rights of the peasantry and to the utter neglect of all the serious affairs of life. During the disastrous period of the Thirty Years War, the Elector of Saxony spent most of his time in slaughtering unheard-of numbers of red deer; if he had devoted his days and his treasure to the urgent contemporary problems of statecraft and warcraft he would have ranked more nearly with Gustavus Adolphus and Wallenstein, and would have stood better at the bar of history. Louis XVI. was also devoted to the chase in its tamer forms, and was shooting at driven game when the Paris mob swarmed out to take possession of his person. The great lords, with whom love of hunting had become a disease, not merely made of game-preserving a grievous burden for the people, but also followed the chase in ways which made scant demands upon the hardier qualities either of mind or of body. Such debased sport was contemptible then; and it is contemptible now. Luxurious and effeminate artificiality, and the absence of all demands for the hardy virtues, rob any pastime of all title to regard. Shooting at driven game on occasions when the day's sport includes elaborate feasts in tents on a store of good things brought in waggons or on the backs of sumpter mules, while the sport itself makes no demand upon the prowess of the so-called

sportsman, is but a dismal parody upon the stern hunting life in which the man trusts to his own keen eye, stout thews, and heart of steel for success and safety in the wild warfare waged against wild nature.

Neither of the two authors now under consideration comes in this undesirable class. Both were mighty men with their hands, terrible in battle, of imposing presence and turbulent spirit. Both were the patrons of art and letters, and both were cultivated in the learning of the day. For each of them the chase stood as a hardy and vigorous pastime of the kind which makes a people great. The one was Count Gaston de Foix, author of the most famous of mediæval hunting-books, a mighty lord and mighty hunter, as well as statesman and warrior. The other was Edward, second Duke of York, who at Agincourt "died victorious." He translated into English a large portion of Gaston de Foix's *La Chasse*, adding to it five original chapters. He called his book "The Master of Game."

Gaston's book is better known as *Gaston Phæbus*, the nickname of the author which Froissart has handed down. He treats not only of the animals of France, but of the ibex, the chamois, and the reindeer, which he hunted in foreign lands. "The Master of Game" is the oldest book on hunting in the English language. The original chapters are particularly interesting because of the light they throw upon English hunting customs in the time of the Plantagenets. The book has never hitherto been published. Nineteen ancient manuscript copies are

known; of the three best extant two are on the shelves of the Bloomsbury treasure house, the other in the Bodleian Library. Like others of the famous old authors on venery, both the Count of Foix and the Duke of York show an astonishing familiarity with the habits, nature, and chase of their quarry. Both men, like others of their kind among their contemporaries, made of the chase not only an absorbing sport but almost the sole occupation of their leisure hours. They passed their days in the forest and were masters of woodcraft. Game abounded, and not only the chase but the killing of the quarry was a matter of intense excitement and an exacting test of personal prowess, for the boar, or the bear, or hart at bay was slain at close quarters with the spear or long knife.

"The Master of Game" is not only of interest to the sportsman, but also to the naturalist, because of its quaint accounts of the "nature" of the various animals; to the philologist because of the old English hunting terms and the excellent translations of the chapters taken from the French; and to the lover of art because of the beautiful illustrations, with all their detail of costume, of hunting accoutrements, and of ceremonies of "la grande venerie" – which are here reproduced in facsimile from one of the best extant French manuscripts of the early fifteenth century. The translator has left out the chapters on trapping and snaring of wild beasts which were contained in the original, the hunting with running hounds being the typical and most esteemed form of the sport. Gaston Phœbus's *La Chasse* was written just over a century

before the discovery of America; "The Master of Game" some fifteen or twenty years later. The former has been reprinted many times. Mr. Baillie-Grohman in reproducing (for the first time) the latter in such beautiful form has rendered a real service to all lovers of sport, of nature, and of books – and no one can get the highest enjoyment out of sport unless he can live over again in the library the keen pleasure he experienced in the wilderness.

In modern life big-game hunting has assumed many widely varied forms. There are still remote regions of the earth in which the traveller must depend upon his prowess as a hunter for his subsistence, and here and there the foremost settlers of new country still war against the game as it has been warred against by their like since time primeval. But over most of the earth such conditions have passed away for ever. Even in Africa game preserving on a gigantic scale has begun. Such game preserving may be of two kinds. In one the individual landed proprietor, or a group of such individuals, erect and maintain a private game preserve, the game being their property just as much as domestic animals. Such preserves often fill a useful purpose, and if managed intelligently and with a sense of public spirit and due regard for the interests and feelings of others, may do much good, even in the most democratic community. But wherever the population is sufficiently advanced in intelligence and character, a far preferable and more democratic way of preserving the game is by a system of public preserves, of protected nurseries and breeding-grounds, while the laws define

the conditions under which all alike may shoot the game and the restrictions under which all alike must enjoy the privilege. It is in this way that the wild creatures of the forest and the mountain can best and most permanently be preserved. Even in the United States the enactment and observance of such laws has brought about a marked increase in the game of certain localities, as, for instance, New England, during the past thirty years; while in the Yellowstone Park the elk, deer, antelope, and mountain sheep, and, strangest of all, the bear, are not merely preserved in all their wild freedom, but, by living unmolested, have grown to show a confidence in man and a tameness in his presence such as elsewhere can be found only in regions where he has been hitherto unknown.

The chase is the best of all national pastimes, and this none the less because, like every other pastime, it is a mere source of weakness if carried on in an unhealthy manner, or to an excessive degree, or under over-artificial conditions. Every vigorous game, from football to polo, if allowed to become more than a game, and if serious work is sacrificed to its enjoyment, is of course noxious. From the days when Trajan in his letters to Pliny spoke with such hearty contempt of the Greek over-devotion to athletics, every keen thinker has realised that vigorous sports are only good in their proper place. But in their proper place they are very good indeed. The conditions of modern life are highly artificial, and too often tend to a softening of fibre, physical and moral. It is a good thing for a man to be forced to

show self-reliance, resourcefulness in emergency, willingness to endure fatigue and hunger, and at need to face risk. Hunting is praiseworthy very much in proportion as it tends to develop these qualities. Mr. Baillie-Grohman, to whom most English-speaking lovers of sport owe their chief knowledge of the feats in bygone time of the great hunters of continental Europe, has himself followed in its most manly forms this, the manliest of sports. He has hunted the bear, the wapiti, and the mountain ram in the wildest regions of the Rockies, and, also by fair stalking, the chamois and the red deer in the Alps. Whoever habitually follows mountain game in such fashion must necessarily develop qualities which it is a good thing for any nation to see brought out in its sons. Such sport is as far removed as possible from that in which the main object is to make huge bags at small cost of effort, and with the maximum of ease, no good quality save marksmanship being required. Laying stress upon the mere quantity of game killed, and the publication of the record of slaughter, are sure signs of unhealthy decadence in sportsmanship. As far as possible the true hunter, the true lover of big game and of life in the wilderness, must be ever ready to show his own power to shift for himself. The greater his dependence upon others for his sport the less he deserves to take high rank in the brotherhood of rifle, horse, and hound. There was a very attractive side to the hunting of the great mediæval lords, carried on with an elaborate equipment and stately ceremonial, especially as there was an element of danger in coming to close quarters with the quarry

at bay; but after all, no form of hunting has ever surpassed in attractiveness the life of the wilderness wanderer of our own time – the man who with simple equipment, and trusting to his own qualities of head, heart, and hand, has penetrated to the uttermost regions of the earth, and single-handed slain alike the wariest and the grimmest of the creatures of the waste.

THEODORE ROOSEVELT.

The White House,
February 15, 1904.

CHAPTER I

THE PROLOGUE

To the honour and reverence of you my right worshipful and dread Lord Henry by the grace of God eldest son and heir unto the high excellent and Christian Prince Henry IV. by the aforesaid grace King of England and of France, Prince of Wales, Duke of Guienne of Lancaster and of Cornwall, and Earl of Chester.

I your own in every humble wise have me ventured to make this little simple book which I recommend and submit to your noble and wise correction, which book if it pleaseth your aforesaid Lordship shall be named and called MASTER OF GAME. And for this cause: for the matter that this book treateth of what in every season of the year is most durable, and to my thinking to every gentle heart most disportful of all games, that is to say hunting. For though it be that hawking with gentle hounds and hawks for the heron and the river be noble and commendable, it lasteth seldom at the most more than half a year. For though men find from May unto Lammas (August 1st) game enough to hawk at, no one will find hawks to hawk with.¹ But as of hunting there is no season of all the year, that game may not be found in every good country, also hounds ready to chase it. And since this book shall be all of hunting, which is so noble a game, and lasting through all the

¹ As the hawks would be mewing and unfit to fly.

year of divers beasts that grow according to the season for the gladdening of man, I think I may well call it MASTER OF GAME.

And though it be so my dear Lord, that many could better have meddled with this matter and also more ably than I, yet there be two things that have principally emboldened and caused me to take this work in hand. The first is trust of your noble correction, to which as before is said, I submit this little and simple book. The second is that though I be unworthy, I am Master of this Game with that noble prince your Father our all dear sovereign and liege Lord aforesaid. And as I would not that his hunters nor yours that now be or that should come hereafter did not know the perfection of this art, I shall leave for these this simple memorial, for as Chaucer saith in his prologue of "The 25² Good Women": "By writing have men mind of things passed, for writing is the key of all good remembrance."

And first I will begin by describing the nature of the hare,³ secondly of the nature of the hart, thirdly of the buck and of his nature, fourthly of the roe and of his nature, fifthly of the wild boar and of his nature, sixthly of the wolf and of his nature, seventhly of the fox and of his nature, eighthly of the badger and of his nature, ninthly of the cat and of his nature, tenthly of the marten and his nature, eleventhly of the otter and of his nature.

² The Shirley MS. in the British Museum has "XV."

³ Gaston de Foix has a different sequence, putting the hart first and the hare sixth, and having four animals more, namely, the reindeer, the chamois (including ibex), the bear and the rabbit, while the "Master of Game" has one animal, the Marten, of which Gaston de Foix does not speak.

Now have I rehearsed how I will in this little book describe the nature of these aforesaid beasts of venery and of chace, and therefore will I name the hounds the which I will describe hereafter, both of their nature and conditions. And first I will begin with raches (running hounds)⁴ and their nature, and then greyhounds and their nature, and then alaunts and their nature, and then spaniels and their nature, and then mastiffs that men call curs and their nature, and then of small curs that come to be terriers and their nature, and then I shall devise and tell the sicknesses of hounds and their diseases. And furthermore I will describe what qualities and manners a good hunter should have, and of what parts he should be, and after that I will describe the manner and shape of the kennel, and how it should be environed and arrayed. Also I will describe of what fashion a hunter's horn should be driven, and how the couplings should be made for the raches and of what length. Furthermore I will prove by sundry reasons in this little prologue, that the life of no man that useth gentle game and disport be less displeasable unto God than the life of a perfect and skilful hunter, or from which more good cometh. The first reason is that hunting causeth a man to eschew the seven deadly sins. Secondly men are better when riding, more just and more understanding, and more alert and more at ease and more undertaking, and better knowing of all countries and all

⁴ Gaston de Foix follows a different sequence, commencing with alaunts, then greyhounds, raches, spaniels, and says "fifthly I will speak of all kinds of mongrel dogs, such as come from mastiffs and alaunts, from greyhounds and running hounds, and other such."

passages; in short and long all good customs and manners cometh thereof, and the health of man and of his soul. For he that fleeth the seven deadly sins as we believe, he shall be saved, therefore a good hunter shall be saved, and in this world have joy enough and of gladness and of solace, so that he keep himself from two things. One is that he leave not the knowledge nor the service of God, from whom all good cometh, for his hunting. The second that he lose not the service of his master for his hunting, nor his own duties which might profit him most. Now shall I prove how a hunter may not fall into any of the seven deadly sins. When a man is idle and reckless without work, and be not occupied in doing some thing, he abides in his bed or in his chamber, a thing which draweth men to imaginations of fleshly lust and pleasure. For such men have no wish but always to abide in one place, and think in pride, or in avarice, or in wrath, or in sloth, or in gluttony, or in lechery, or in envy. For the imagination of men rather turns to evil than to good, for the three enemies which mankind hath, are the devil, the world and the flesh, and this is proved enough.

Nevertheless there be many other reasons which are too long to tell, and also every man that hath good reason knoweth well that idleness is the foundation of all evil imaginations. Now shall I prove how imagination is lord and master of all works, good or evil, that man's body or his limbs do. You know well, good or evil works small or great never were done but that beforehand they were imagined or thought of. Now shall you prove how imagination is the mistress of all deeds, for imagination biddeth

a man do good or evil works, whichever it be, as before is said. And if a man notwithstanding that he were wise should imagine always that he were a fool, or that he hath other sickness, it would be so, for since he would think steadfastly that he were a fool, he would do foolish deeds as his imagination would command, and he would believe it steadfastly. Wherefore methinks I have proved enough of imagination, notwithstanding that there be many other reasons the which I leave to avoid long writing. Every man that hath good sense knoweth well that this is the truth.

Now I will prove how a good hunter may not be idle, and in dreaming may not have any evil imaginations nor afterwards any evil works. For the day before he goes out to his office, the night before he shall lay him down in his bed, and shall not think but for to sleep, and do his office well and busily, as a good hunter should. And he shall have nothing to do, but think about all that which he has been ordered to do. And he is not idle, for he has enough to do to think about rising early and to do his office without thinking of sins or of evil deeds. And early in the dawning of the day he must be up for to go unto his quest, *that in English is called searching*, well and busily, for as I shall say more explicitly hereafter, when I shall speak of how men shall quest and search to harbour the hart. And in so doing he shall not be idle, for he is always busy. And when he shall come again to the assembly or meet, then he hath most to do, for he must order his finders and relays for to move the hart, and uncouple his hounds. With that he cannot be idle, for he need think of

nothing but to do his office, and when he hath uncoupled, yet is he less idle, and he should think less of any sins, for he hath enough to do to ride *or to foot it well* with his hounds and to be always near them and to hue or rout well, and blow well, and to look whereafter he hunteth, and which hounds are *vanchasers and parfifers*,⁵ and redress and bring his hounds on the right line again when they are at fault⁶ or hunting rascal.⁷ And when the hart is dead or what other chase he was hunting, then is he less idle, for he hath enough to do to think how to undo the hart in his manner and to raise that which appertaineth⁸ to him, and well to do his curée.⁹ And he should look how many of his hounds are missing of those that he brought to the wood in the morning, and he should search for them, and couple them up. And when he has come home, should he less think to do evil, for he hath enough to do to think of his supper, and to ease himself and his horse, and to sleep, and to take his rest, for he is weary, and to dry himself of the dew or peradventure of the rain. And therefore I say that all the time of the hunter is without idleness and without evil thoughts, and without evil works of sin, for as I have said idleness is the foundation of all vices and sins. And the hunter may not

⁵ The hounds that came in the first relay (van) and those in the subsequent relays. See Appendix: Relays.

⁶ Diverted or off the line.

⁷ Chasing small or lean deer. See Appendix: Hart.

⁸ To take those parts of the deer which fell to him by custom.

⁹ Curée: The ceremony of giving the hounds their reward on the skin of the animal they have chased. See Appendix: Curée.

be idle if he would fill his office aright, and also he can have no other thoughts, for he has enough to do to think and imagine of his office, the which is no little charge, for whoso will do it well and busily, especially if they love hounds and their office.

Wherefore I say that such an hunter is not idle, he can have no evil thoughts, nor can he do evil works, wherefore he must go into paradise.¹⁰ For by many other reasons which are too long to write can I prove these things, but it sufficeth that every man that hath good sense knoweth well that I speak the real truth.

Now shall I prove how hunters live in this world more joyfully than any other men. For when the hunter riseth in the morning, and he sees a sweet and fair morn and clear weather and bright, and he heareth the song of the small birds, the which sing so sweetly with great melody and full of love, each in it's own language in the best wise that it can according that it learneth of it's own kind. And when the sun is arisen, he shall see fresh dew upon the small twigs and grasses, and the sun by his virtue shall make them shine. And that is great joy and liking to the hunter's heart. After when he shall go to his quest or searching, he shall see or meet anon with the hart without great seeking, and shall harbour¹¹ him well and readily within a little compass. It is great joy and liking to the hunter. And after when he shall come to the assembly or gathering, and he shall report before the Lord

¹⁰ Gaston de Foix in the French parent work puts it even more forcefully; he says: "tout droit en paradis." See Lavallée's ed. 1854.

¹¹ Trace the deer to its lair.

and his company that which he hath seen with his eyes, or by scantilon (measure) of the trace (slot) which he ought always of right to take, or by the fumes¹² (excrements) that he shall put in his horn or in his lap. And every man shall say: Lo, here is a great hart and a deer of high meating or pasturing; go we and move him; the which things I shall declare hereafter, then can one say that the hunter has great joy. When he beginneth to hunt and he hath hunted but a little and he shall hear or see the hart start before him and shall well know that it is the right one, and his hounds that shall this day be finders, shall come to the lair (bed), or to the fues (track), and shall there be uncoupled without any be left coupled, and they shall all run well and hunt, then hath the hunter great joy and great pleasure. Afterwards he leapeth on horseback, *if he be of that estate, and else on foot* with great haste to follow his hounds. And in case peradventure the hounds shall have gone far from where he uncoupled, he seeketh some advantage to get in front of his hounds. And then shall he see the hart pass before him, and shall holloa and rout mightily, and he shall see which hound come in the van-chase, and in the middle, and which are parfitours,¹³ according to the order in which they shall come. And when all the hounds have passed before him then shall he ride after them and shall rout and blow as loud as he may with great joy and great pleasure, and I assure you he thinketh of no other sin or of no other evil. And when the

¹² See Appendix: Excrements.

¹³ See Appendix: Relays.

hart be overcome and shall be at bay he shall have pleasure. And after, when the hart is spayed¹⁴ and dead, he undoeth him and maketh his curée and enquireth or rewardeth his hounds, and so he shall have great pleasure, and when he cometh home he cometh joyfully, for his lord hath given him to drink of his good wine at the curée, and when he has come home he shall doff his clothes and his shoes and his hose, and he shall wash his thighs and his legs, and peradventure all his body. And in the meanwhile he shall order well his supper, with *wortes* (roots) *and of the neck* of the hart and of other good meats, and good wine *or ale*. And when he hath well eaten and drunk he shall be glad and well, and well at his ease. And then shall he take the air in the evening of the night, for the great heat that he hath had. And then he shall go and drink and lie in his bed in fair fresh clothes, and shall sleep well and steadfastly all the night without any evil thoughts of any sins, wherefore I say that hunters go into Paradise when they die, and live in this world more joyfully than any other men. Yet I will prove to you how hunters live longer than any other men, for as Hippocras the doctor telleth: "full repletion of meat slayeth more men than any sword or knife." They eat and drink less than any other men of this world, for in the morning at the assembly they eat a little, and if they eat well at supper, they will by the morning have corrected their nature, for then they have eaten but little, and their nature will not be prevented from doing her digestion, whereby no wicked humours or superfluities may

¹⁴ Despatched with a sword or knife. See Appendix: Spay.

be engendered. And always, when a man is sick, men diet him and give him to drink water made of sugar and tysane and of such things for two or three days to put down evil humours and his superfluities, and also make him void (purge). But for a hunter one need not do so, for he may have no repletion on account of the little meat, and by the travail that he hath. And, supposing that which can not be, and that he were full of wicked humours, yet men know well that the best way to terminate sickness that can be is to sweat. And when the hunters do their office on horseback or on foot they sweat often, then if they have any evil in them, it must (come) away in the sweating; so that he keep from cold after the heat. Therefore it seemeth to me I have proved enough. Leeches ordain for a sick man little meat and sweating for the terminating and healing of all things. And since hunters eat little and sweat always, they should live long and in health. Men desire in this world to live long in health and in joy, and after death the health of the soul. And hunters have all these things. Therefore be ye all hunters and ye shall do as wise men. Wherefore I counsel to all manner of folk of what estate or condition that they be, that they love hounds and hunting and the pleasure of hunting beasts of one kind or another, or hawking. For to be idle and to have no pleasure in either hounds or hawks is no good token. *For as saith in his book Phæbus the Earl of Foix that noble hunter*, he saw never a good man that had not pleasure in some of these things, were he ever so great and rich. For if he had need to go to war he would not know what war is, for he would not be accustomed

to travail, and so another man would have to do that which he should. For men say in old saws: "The lord is worth what his lands are worth."¹⁵ *And also he saith in the aforesaid book*, that he never saw a man that loved the work and pleasure of hounds and hawks, that had not many good qualities in him; for that comes to him of great nobleness and gentleness of heart of whatever estate the man may be, whether he be a great lord, or a little one, or a poor man or a rich one.

¹⁵ Gaston de Foix says: "Tant vaut seigneur tant vaut sa gent et sa terre," p. 9.

CHAPTER II OF THE HARE AND OF HER NATURE

The hare is a common beast enough, and therefore I need not tell of her making, for there be few men that have not seen some of them. They live on corn, and on weeds growing on waste land, on leaves, on herbs, on the bark of trees, on grapes and on many other fruits. The hare is a good little beast, and much good sport and liking is the hunting of her, more than that of any other beast that *any man knoweth*, if he¹⁶ were not so little. And that for five reasons: the one is, for her hunting lasteth all the year as with running hounds without any sparing, and this is not with all the other beasts. And also men may hunt at her both in the morning and in the evening. In the eventide, when they be relieved,¹⁷ and

¹⁶ The hare was frequently spoken of in two genders in the same sentence, for it was an old belief that the hare was at one time male, and at another female. See Appendix: Hare.

¹⁷ Means here: when the hare has arisen from her form to go to her feeding. Fr. *relever*. G. de F. explains, p. 42: *un lievre se relève pour aler à son vianders*. Relief, which denoted the act of arising and going to feed, became afterwards the term for the feeding itself. "A hare hath greater scent and is more eagerly hunted when she relieves on green corn" (*Comp. Sportsman*, p. 86). It possibly was used later to denote the excrements of a hare; thus Blome (1686) p. 92, says: "A huntsman may judge by the relief and feed of the hare what she is."

in the morning, when they sit in form. And of all other beasts it is not so, for if it rain in the morning your journey is lost, and of the hare it is not so. That other [reason] is to seek the hare; it is a well fair thing, especially who so hunteth her rightfully, for hounds must need find her by mastery and quest point by point, and undo all that she hath done all the night of her walking, and of her pasture unto the time that they start her. And it is a fair thing when the hounds are good and can well find her. And the hare shall go sometimes from her sitting to her pasture half a mile or more, specially in open country. And when she is started it is a fair thing. And then it is a fair thing to slay her with strength of hounds, for she runneth long and gynnously (cunningly). A hare shall last well four miles or more or less, if she be an old male hare. And therefore the hunting of the hare is good, for it lasteth all the year, as I have said. And the seeking is a well fair thing, and the chasing of the hare is a well fair thing, and the slaying of him with strength (of hounds) is a fair thing, for it requireth great mastery on account of her cunning. When a hare ariseth out of her form to go to her pasture or return again to her seat, she commonly goes by one way, and as she goes she will not suffer any twig or grass to touch her, for she will sooner break it with her teeth and make her way. Sometime she sitteth a mile or more from her pasturing, and sometimes near her pasture. But when she sitteth near it, yet she may have been the amount of half a mile or more from there where she hath pastured, and then she ruseth again from her pasture. And whether she go to sit near or

far from her pasture she goes so gynnously (cunningly) and wilily that there is no man in this world that would say that any hound could unravel that which she has done, or that could find her. For she will go a bow shot or more by one way, and ruse again by another, and then she shall take her way by another side, and the same she shall do ten, twelve, or twenty times, from thence she will come into some hedge or strength (thicket), and shall make semblance to abide there, and then will make cross roads ten or twelve times, and will make her ruses, and thence she will take some false path, and shall go thence a great way, and such semblance she will make many times before she goeth to her seat.

The hare cannot be judged, either by the foot or by her fumes (excrements), for she always crotieth¹⁸ in one manner, except when she goeth in her love that hunters call ryding time, for then she crotieth her fumes more burnt (drier) and smaller, especially the male. The hare liveth no long time, for with great pain may she pass the second¹⁹ year, though she be not hunted or slain. She hath bad sight²⁰ and great fear to run²¹ on account of the great dryness of her sinews. She windeth far men when they seek her.

¹⁸ Casting her excrements.

¹⁹ A mistake of the old scribes which occurs also in other MSS.; it should, of course, read "seventh" year. G. de F. has the correct version.

²⁰ G. de F. says: "She hears well but has bad sight," p. 43.

²¹ "Fear to run" is a mistake occasioned by the similarity of the two old French words "pouair," power, and "paour" or fear. In those of the original French MS. of G. de F. examined by us it is certainly "power" and not "fear." Lavallée in his introduction says the same thing. See Appendix: Hare.

When hounds grede of her (seek) and quest her she flieth away for the fear that she hath of the hounds. Sometimes men find her sitting in her form, and sometimes she is bitten (taken) by hounds in her form before she starts. They that abide in the form till they be found are commonly stout hares, and well running. The hare that runneth with right standing ears is but little afraid, and is strong, and yet when she holdeth one ear upright and the other laid low on her ryge (back), she feareth but little the hounds. An hare that crumps her tail upon her rump when she starteth out of her form as a coney (does) it is a token that she is strong and well running. The hare runneth in many diverse manners, for some run all they are able a whole two miles or three, and after run and ruse again and then stop still when they can no more, and let themselves be bitten (by the hounds), although she may not have been seen all the day. And sometimes she letteth herself be bitten the first time that she starteth, for she has no more might (strength). And some run a little while and then abide and squat, and that they do oft. And then they take their flight as long as they can run ere they are dead. And some be that abide till they are bitten in their form, especially when they be young that have not passed half a year. Men know by the outer side of the hare's leg if she has not passed a year.²² And so men should know of a hound, of a fox, and of a wolf, by a little bone that they have in a bone which is next the sinews, where there is a little pit (cavity).

Sometimes when they are hunted with hounds they run into

²² See Appendix: Hare.

a hole as a coney, or into hollow trees, or else they pass a great river. Hounds do not follow some hares as well as others, for four reasons. Those hares who be begotten of the kind of a coney, as some be in warrens, the hounds lust not, nor scenteth them not so well. The other (is) that the fues (footing) of some hares carry hotter scent than some, and therefore the hounds scenteth of one more than of the other, as of roses, some smell better than others, and yet they be all roses. The other reason is that they steal away ere they be found, and the hounds follow always forth right. The others run going about and then abide,²³ wherefore the hounds be often on stynt (at fault). The other (reason) is according to the country they run in, for if they run in covert, hounds will scent them better than if they run in plain (open) country, or in the ways (paths), for in the covert their bodies touch against the twigs and leaves, because it is a strong (thick) country. And when they run in plain country or in the fields they touch nothing, but with the foot, and therefore the hound can not so well scent the fues of them. And also I say that some country is more sweet and more loving (to scent) than another. The hare abideth commonly in one country, and if she hath the fellowship of another or of her kyndels or leverettes, they be five or six, for no strange hare will they suffer to dwell in their marches (district), though they be of their nature (kind),²⁴ and therefore men say in old saws: "Who so

²³ G. de F. has: "vonts riotans tournions et demourant," *i. e.* run rioting, turning and stopping, p. 44.

²⁴ Both the Vespasian and the Shirley MS. in the British Museum have the same,

hunteth the most hares shall find the most." *For Phebus the Earl of Foix, that good hunter, saith that* when there be few hares in a country they should be hunted and slain, so that the hares of other countries about should come into that march.

Of hares, some go faster and be stronger than others, as it is of men and other beasts. Also the pasture and the country where they abide helpeth much thereto. For when the hare abideth and formeth in a plain country where there are no bushes, such hares are commonly strongest and well running. Also when they pasture on two herbs – that one is called Soepol (wild thyme) and that other be *Pulegium* (pennyroyal) they are strong and fast running.

The hares have no season of their love for, as I said, it is called ryding time, for in every month of the year that it shall not be that some be not with kindles (young). Nevertheless, commonly their love is most in the month of January, and in that month they run most fast of any time of the year, both male and female. And from May unto September they be most slow, for then they be full of herbs and of fruits, or they be great and full of kindles, and commonly in that time they have their kindles. Hares remain in sundry (parts of the) country, according to the season of the year; sometimes they sit in the fern, sometimes in the heath, sometimes in the corn, and in growing weeds, and sometimes in the woods. In April and in May when the corn is so long that they can hide themselves therein, gladly will they sit therein. And when men

but G. de F., p. 45, has, "except those of their nature" (*fors que celle de leur nature*).

begin to reap the corn they will sit in the vines and in other strong (thick) heaths, in bushes and in hedges, and commonly in cover under the wind and in cover from the rain, and if there be any sun shining they will gladly sit against the beams of the sun. For a hare of its own kind knoweth the night before what weather it will be on the next morrow, and therefore she keepeth herself the best way she may from the evil weather. The hare beareth her kindles two months,²⁵ and when they are kindled she licketh her kindles as a bitch doeth her whelps. Then she runneth a great way thence, and goeth to seek the male, for if she should abide with her kindles she would gladly eat them. And if she findeth not the male, she cometh again to her kindles a great while after and giveth them to suck, and nourisheth them for the maintainance of 20 days or thereabouts. A hare beareth commonly 2 kindles, but I have seen some which have kindled at once sometime 6, sometime 5 or 4 or 2;²⁶ and but she find the male within three days from the time she hath kindled, she will eat her kindles. And when they be in their love they go together as hounds, save they hold not together as hounds. They kindle often in small bushes or in little hedges, or they hide in heath or in briars or in corn or in vines. If you find a hare which has kindled the same day, and the hounds hunt after her, and if you come thither the next morrow ye shall find how she has removed her kindles, and has borne them

²⁵ This is incorrect: the hare carries her young thirty days (Brehm, vol. ii. p.626; Harting, *Ency. of Sport*, vol. i. p. 504).

²⁶ Should read "three" (G. de F., p.47).

elsewhere with her teeth, as a bitch doth her whelps. Men slay hares with greyhounds, and with running hounds by strength, *as in England, but elsewhere they slay them also* with small pockets, and with purse nets, and with small nets, *with hare pipes*, and with long nets, and with small cords that men cast where they make their breaking of the small twigs when they go to their pastures, as I have before said.²⁷ But, *truly, I trow no good hunter would slay them so for any good*. When they be in their heat of love and pass any place where conies be, the most part of them will follow after her as the hounds follow after a bitch or a brache.

²⁷ See Appendix: Snares.

CHAPTER III

OF THE HART AND HIS NATURE

The hart is a common beast enough and therefore me needeth not to tell of his making, for there be few folk that have not seen some. The harts be the lightest (swiftest) beasts and strongest, and of marvellous great cunning. They are in their love, which men call rut, about the time of the Holy Rood²⁸ in September and remain in their hot love a whole month and ere they be fully out thereof they abide (in rut) nigh two months. And then they are bold, and run upon men as a wild boar would do if he were hunted. And they be wonderfully perilous beasts, for with great pain shall a man recover that is hurt by a hart, and therefore men say in old saws: "after the boar the leech and after the hart the bier." For he smiteth as the stroke of the springole,²⁹ for he has great strength in the head and the body. They slay, fight and hurt each other, when they be in rut, that is to say in their love, and they sing in their language *that in England hunters call bellowing* as man that loveth paramour.³⁰ They slay hounds and horses and men at that time and turn to the abbay (be at bay) as a boar

²⁸ September 14. See Appendix: Hart, Seasons.

²⁹ An engine of war used for throwing stones.

³⁰ G. de F., p. 12. "Ainsi que fet un homme bien amoureux" ("As does a man much in love)."

does especially when they be weary. And yet have men seen at the parting of their ligging (as they start from the lair)³¹ that he hath hurt him that followeth after, and also the greyhounds³² and furthermore a courser. And yet when they are in rut, which is to say their love, in a forest where there be few hinds and many harts or male deer, they slay, hurt and fight with each other, for each would be master of the hinds. And commonly the greatest hart and the most strong holdeth the rut and is master thereof. And when he is well pured and hath been long at rut all the other harts that he hath chased and flemed away (put to flight) from the rut then run upon him and slay him, and that is sooth. And in parks this may be proved, for there is never a season but the greatest hart will be slain by the others not while he is at the rut, but when he has withdrawn and is poor of love. In the woods they do not so often slay each other as they do in the plain country. And also there are divers ruts in the forest, but in the parks there are none but that are within the park.³³ After that they be withdrawn from the hinds they go in herds and in soppes (troops) with the rascal (young lean deer) and abide in (waste) lands and in heathes more

³¹ This word ligging is still in use in Yorkshire, meaning lair, or bed, or resting-place. In Devonshire it is spelt "layer." Fortescue, p. 132.

³² G. de F., p. 12, has "limer" instead of "greyhound."

³³ This passage is confused. In G. de F., p. 12, we find that the passage runs: "Et aussi il y a ruyt en divers lieux de la forest et on paix ne peut estre en nul lieu, fors que dedans le part." Lavallée translates these last five words, "C'est à dire qu'il n'y a de paix que lorsque les biches sont pleines." In the exceedingly faulty first edition by Verard, the word "part" is printed "*parc*," as it is in our MS.

than they do in woods, for to enjoy the heat of the sun, they be poor and lean for the travail they have had with the hinds, and for the winter, and the little meat that they find. After that they leave the rascal and gather together with two or three or four harts in soppes till the month of March when they mew (shed) their horns, and commonly some sooner than others, if they be old deer, and some later if they be young deer, or that they have had a hard winter, or that they have been hunted, or that they have been sick, for then they mew their heads and later come to good points. And when they have mewed their heads they take to the strong (thick) bushes as privily as they may, till their heads be grown again, and they come into grease; after that they seek good country for meating (feeding) of corn, of apples, of vines, of tender growing trees, of peas, of beans, and other fruits and grasses whereby they live. And sometimes a great hart hath another fellow that is called his squire, for he is with him and doth as he will. And so they will abide all that season if they be not hindered until the last end of August. And then they begin to look, and to think and to bolne and to bellow and to stir from the haunt in which they have (been) all the season, for to go seek the hinds. They recover their horns and are summed of their tines as many as they shall have all the year between March when they mewed them to the middle of June; and then be they recovered of their new hair that *men call polished* and their horns be recovered with a soft hair *that hunters call velvet* at the beginning, and under that skin and that hair the horn waxes hard and sharp, and about

Mary Magdalene day (July 22) they fray their horns against the trees, and have (rubbed) away that skin from their horns and then wax they hard and strong, and then they go to burnish and make them sharp in the colliers places (charcoal pits) that men make sometimes in the great groves. And if they can find none they go against the corners of rocks *or to crabbe tree or to hawthorn or other trees*.³⁴

They be half in grease or thereabouts by the middle of June when their head is summed, and they be highest in grease during all August. Commonly they be calved in May, and the hind beareth her calf nine months or thereabout as a sow,³⁵ and sometimes she has three³⁶ calves at a calving time. And I say not that they do not calve sometime sooner and sometime later, much according to causes and reasons. The calves are calved with hair red and white, which lasteth them that colour into the end of August, and then they turn red of hair, as the hart and the hind. And at that time they run so fast that a hare³⁷ should have enough to do to overtake him within the shot of an haronblast (cross-bow). Many men judge the deer of many colours of hair and especially of three colours. Some be called brown, some

³⁴ G. de F., p. 14, says the harts go to gravel-pits and bogs to fray.

³⁵ The MS. transcriber's mistake. It should be "cow."

³⁶ G. de F. has "2 calves" as it should be.

³⁷ G. de F. has "greyhound," as it should be (p. 15): "Et dès lors vont ils jà si tost que un levrier a assés à fere de l'ateindre, ainsi comme un trait d'arcbaleste" ("And from that time they go so quickly that a greyhound has as much to do to catch him as he would the bolt from a crossbow)."

dun and some yellow haired. And also their heads be of divers manners, the one is called a head well-grown, and the other is called well affeted,³⁸ and well affeted is when the head has waxed by ordinance according to the neck and shape, when the tines be well grown in the beam by good measure, one near the other, then it is called well affeted. Well grown is when the head is of great beam and is well affeted and thick tined, well high and well opened (spread). That other head is called counterfeit (abnormal) when it is different and is otherwise turned behind or wayward in other manner than other common deer be accustomed to bear. That other high head is open, evil affeted with long tines and few. That other is low and great and well affeted with small tines. And the first tine that is next the head is called antler, and the second Royal and the third above, the Sur-royal, and the tines³⁹ which be called fourth if they be two, and if they be three or four or more be called troching. And when their heads be burnished at the colliers' pits commonly they be always black, and also commonly when they be burnished at the colliers' pits they be black on account of the earth which is black of its kind. And when they are burnished against *rock* they abide all white, but some have their heads naturally white and some black. And when they be about to burnish they smite the ground with their feet and welter like a horse. And then they burnish their heads, and when they be burnished which they do all the month of July they abide in

³⁸ Well proportioned. See Appendix: Antler.

³⁹ Shirley MS. has the addition here: "Which be on top."

that manner till the feast of the Holy (Cross) in September 14th and then they go to rut as I have said.

And the first year that they be calved they be called a Calf, the second year a bullock; and that year they go forth to rut; the third year a brocket; the fourth year a staggar, the fifth a stag, the sixth year a hart of ten ⁴⁰ *and then first is he chaseable, for always before shall he be called but rascal or folly.* Then it is fair to hunt the hart, for it is a fair thing to seek well a hart, and a fair thing well to harbour him, and a fair thing to move him, and a fair thing to hunt him, and a fair thing to retrieve him, and a fair thing to be at the abbay, whether it be on water or on land. A fair thing is the curée,⁴¹ and a fair thing to undo him well, and for to raise the rights. And a well fair thing and good is the devision⁴² it be a good deer. In so much that considering all things I hold that it is the fairest hunting, that any man may hunt after. They crotey their fumes (cast their excrements) in divers manners according to the time and season and according to the pasture that they find, now black or dry either in flat forms or engleyed (glutinous) or pressed, and in many other divers manners the which I shall more plainly devise when I shall declare how the hunter shall judge, for sometimes they misjudge by the fumes and so they do by the foot. When they crotey their fumes flat and not thick, it is in April or in May, into the middle of June, when they have fed on

⁴⁰ In modern sporting terms, a warrantable deer.

⁴¹ See Appendix: Curée.

⁴² Should be: venison.

tender corn, for yet their fumes be not formed, and also they have not recovered their grease. But yet have men seen sometimes a great deer and an old and high in grease, which about mid-season crotey their fumes black and dry. And therefore by this and many other things many men may be beguiled by deer, for some goeth better and are better running and fly better than some, as other beasts do, and some be more cunning and more wily than others, as it is with men, for some be wiser than others. And it cometh to them of the good kind of their father and mother, and of good getting (breeding) and of good nurture and from being born in good constellations, and in good signs of heaven, and that (is the case) with men and all other beasts. Men take them with hounds, with greyhounds and with nets and with cords, and with other harness,⁴³ with pits and with shot⁴⁴ and with other gins (traps) and with strength, as I shall say hereafter. *But in England they are not slain except with hounds or with shot or with strength of running hounds.*

An old deer is wonder wise and felle (cunning) for to save his life, and to keep his advantage when he is hunted and is uncoupled to, as the lymer moveth him or other hounds findeth him without lymers, and if he have a deer (with him) that be his fellow he leaveth him to the hounds, so that he may warrant (save) himself, and let the hounds enchase after that other deer. And he will abide still, and if he be alone and the hounds find him, he

⁴³ Harness, appurtenances. See Appendix: Harness.

⁴⁴ Means from a cross-bow or long-bow.

shall go about his haunt wilily and wisely and seek the change of other deer, for to make the hounds envoie,⁴⁵ and to look where he may abide. And if he cannot abide he taketh leave of his haunt and beginneth to fly there where he wots of other change and then when he has come thither he herdeth among them and sometimes he goeth away with them. And then he maketh a ruse on some side, and there he stalleth or squatteth until the hounds be forth after the other (deer) the which be fresh, and thus he changeth so that he may abide. And if there be any wise hounds, the which can bodily enchase him from the change, and he seeth that all can not avail, then he beginneth to show his wiles and ruseth to and fro. And all this he doth so that the hounds should not find his fues (tracks) in intent that he may be freed from them and that he may save himself.

Sometimes he fleeth forth with the wind and that for three causes, for when he fleeth against the wind it runneth into his mouth and dryeth him and doth him great harm. Therefore he fleeth oft forth with the wind so that he may always hear the hounds come after him. And also that the hounds should not scent nor find him, for his tail is in the wind and not his nose.⁴⁶ Also, that when the hounds be nigh him he may wind them and hye him well from them. *But nevertheless his nature is for the most*

⁴⁵ Go off the scent.

⁴⁶ This should read as G. de F. has it (p. 20): "Et aussi affin que les chiens ne puissent bien assentir de luy, quar ilz auront la Cueue au vent et non pas le nez" ("And also that the hounds shall not be able to wind him, as they will have their tails in the wind and not their noses").

part to flee ever on the wind till he be nigh overcome, or at the last sideways to the wind so that it be aye (ever) in his nostrils. And when he shall hear that they be far from him, he hieth him not too fast. And when he is weary, and hot, then he goeth to yield, and soileth to some great river. And some time he foils down in the water half a mile or more ere he comes to land on any side. And that he doeth for two reasons, the one is to make himself cold, and for to refresh himself of the great heat that he hath, the other is that the hounds and the hunter may not come after him nor see his fues in the water, as they do on the land. And if in the country (there) is no great river he goeth then to the little (one) and shall beat up the water or foil down the water as he liketh best for the maintenance (extent) of a mile or more ere he come to land, and he shall keep himself from touching any of the brinks or branches but always (keep) in the middle of the water, so that the hounds should not scent of him. And all that doth he for two reasons before said.

And when he can find no rivers then he draweth to great stanks⁴⁷ and meres or to great marshes. And he fleeth then mightily and far from the hounds, that is to say that he hath gone a great way from them,⁴⁸ then he will go into the stank, and will soil therein once or twice in all the stank and then he will come out again by the same way that he went in, and then he shall ruse

⁴⁷ Ponds, pools. See Appendix: Stankes.

⁴⁸ G. de F., p. 21: "Et s'il fuit de fort longe aux chiens, c'est à dire que il les ait bien esloinhés." See Appendix: "Forlonge."

again the same way that he came (the length of) a bow shot or more, and then he shall ruse out of the way, for to stall or squatt to rest him, and that he doeth for he knoweth well that the hounds shall come by the fues into the stank where he was. And when they should find that he has gone no further they will seek him no further, for they will well know that they have been there at other times.

An hart liveth longest of any beast for he may well live an hundred years⁴⁹ and the older he is the fairer he is of body and of head, and more lecherous, but he is not so swift, nor so light, nor so mighty. And many men say, but I make no affirmation upon that, when he is right old he beateth a serpent with his foot till she be wrath, and then he eateth her and then goeth to drink, and then runneth hither and thither to the water till the venom be mingled together and make him cast all his evil humours that he had in his body, and maketh his flesh come all new.⁵⁰ The head of the hart beareth medicine against the hardness of the sinews and is good to take away all aches, especially when these come from cold: and so is the marrow. They have a bone within the heart which hath great medicine, for it comforteth the heart, *and helpeth for the cardiac*, and many other things which were too long to write, the which bear medicine and be profitable in many diverse manners. The hart is more wise in two things than is any

⁴⁹ Most old writers on the natural history of deer repeat this fable. See Appendix: Hart.

⁵⁰ See Appendix: Hart.

man or other beast, the one is in tasting of herbs, for he hath better taste and better savour and smelleth the good herbs and leaves and other pastures and meating the which be profitable to him, better than any man or beast. The other is that he hath more wit and malice (cunning) to save himself than any other beast or man, for there is not such a good hunter in the world that can think of the great malice and gynnes (tricks or ruses) that a hart can do, and there is no such good hunter nor such good hounds, but that many times fail to slay the hart, and that is by his wit and his malice and by his gins.

As of the hinds some be barren and some bear calves, of those that be barren their season beginneth when the season of the hart faileth and lasteth till Lent. And they which bear calves, in the morning when she shall go to her lair she will not remain with her calf, but she will hold (keep) him and leave him a great way from her, and smiteth him with the foot and maketh him to lie down, and there the calf shall remain always while the hind goeth to feed. And then she shall call her calf in her language and he shall come to her. And that she doeth so that if she were hunted her calf might be saved and that he should not be found near her. The harts have more power to run well from the entry of May into St. John's tide⁵¹ than any other time, for then they have put on new flesh and new hair and new heads, for the new herbs and the new coming out (shoots) of trees and of fruits and be not too heavy,

⁵¹ Nativity of St. John the Baptist, June 24.

for as yet they have not recovered their grease,⁵² neither within nor without, nor their heads, wherefore they be much lighter and swifter. But from St. John's into the month of August they wax always more heavy. Their skin is right good for to do many things with when it is well tawed and taken in good season. Harts that be in great hills, when it cometh to rut, sometimes they come down into the great forests and heaths and to the launds (uncultivated country) and there they abide all the winter until the entering of April, and then they take to their haunts for to let their heads wax, near the towns and villages in the plains there where they find good feeding in the new growing lands. And when the grass is high and well waxen they withdraw into the greatest hills that they can find for the fair pastures and feeding and fair herbs that be thereupon. And also because there be no flies nor any other vermin, as there be in the plain country. And also so doth the cattle which come down from the hills in winter time, and in the summer time draw to the hills. And all the time from rutting time into Whitsunday great deer and old will be found in the plains, but from Whitsunday⁵³ to rutting time men shall find but few great deer save upon the hills, if there are any (hills) near or within four or five miles, and this is truth unless it be some young deer calved in the plains, but of those that come from the hills there will be none. *And every day in the heat of the day, and*

⁵² See Appendix: Grease.

⁵³ This sentence reads somewhat confusedly in our MS., so I have taken this rendering straight from G. de F., p. 23.

*he be not hindered, from May to September, he goes to soil though
he be not hunted.*

CHAPTER IV 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.

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."

CHAPTER V OF THE ROE AND OF HIS NATURE

The roebuck is a common beast enough, and therefore I need not to tell of his making, for there be few men that have not seen some of them. It is a good little beast and goodly for to hunt to whoso can do it as I shall devise hereafter, for there be few hunters that can well devise his nature. They go in their love that is called bokeyng in October,⁵⁶ and the bucking of them lasteth but fifteen days or there about. At the bucking of the roebuck he hath to do but with one female for all the season, and a male and a female abide together as the hinds⁵⁷ till the time that the female shall have her kids; and then the female parteth from the male and goeth to kid her kids far from thence, for the male would slay the young if he could find them. And when they be big that they can eat by themselves of the herbs and of the leaves and can run away, then the female cometh again to the male, and they shall ever be together unless they be slain, and if one hunt them and part them asunder one from another, they will come together again as soon as they can and will seek each other

⁵⁶ This is wrong; they rut in the beginning of August. See Appendix: Roe.

⁵⁷ A clerical error. G. de F. (p. 36) says, "as do birds," which makes good sense.

until the time that one of them have found the other. And the cause why the male and the female be evermore together as no otherst in this world, is that commonly the female hath two kids at once, one male and the other female, and because they are kidded together they hold evermore together. And yet if they were not kidded together of one female, yet is the nature of them such that they will always hold together as I have said before. When they withdraw from the bucking, they mew their heads, for men will find but few roebucks that have passed two years that have not mewed their heads by All Hallowtide. And after the heads come again rough as a hart's head, and commonly they burnish their horns in March. The roebuck hath no season to be hunted, for they bear no venison⁵⁸ but men should leave them the females for their kids that would be lost unto the time that they have kidded, and that the kids can feed themselves and live by themselves without their dame. It is good hunting for it lasteth all the year and they run well, and longer than does a great hart in higason time. Roebucks cannot be judged by their fumes, and but little by their track as one can of harts, for a man cannot know the male from the female by her feet or by her fumes.

They have not a great tail and do not gather venison as I have said, the greatest grease that they may have within is when the kidneys be covered all white. When the hounds hunt after the roebuck they turn again into their haunts and sometimes turn

⁵⁸ See Appendix: Grease.

again to the hounds⁵⁹. When they see that they cannot dure⁶⁰ (last) they leave the country and run right long ere they be dead. And they run in and out a long time and beat the brooks in the same way a hart doth. And if the roebuck were as fair a beast as the hart, I hold that it were a fairer hunting than that of the hart, for it lasteth all the year and is good hunting and requires great mastery, for they run right long and gynnously (cunningly). Although they mew their heads they do not reburnish them, nor repair their hair till new grass time. It is a diverse (peculiar) beast, for it doth nothing after the nature of any other beast, and he followeth men into their houses, for when he is hunted and overcome he knoweth never where he goeth. The flesh of the roebuck is the most wholesome to eat of any other wild beast's flesh, they live on good herbs and other woods and vines and on briars and hawthorns⁶¹ with leaves and on all growth of young trees. When the female has her kids she does all in the manner as I have said of a hind. When they be in bucking they sing a right foul song, for it seemeth as if they were bitten by hounds. When they run at their ease they run ever with leaps, but when they be weary or followed by hounds they run naturally and sometimes they trot or go apace, and sometimes they hasten and do not leap, and then men say that the roebuck hath lost his leaps, and they

⁵⁹ "They ring about in their own country, and often bound back to the hounds" would be a better translation.

⁶⁰ From the French *durer*, to last.

⁶¹ G. de F. says "acorns."

say amiss, for he ever leaves off leaping when he is well hasted and also when he is weary.

When he runneth at the beginning, as I have said, he runneth with leaps and with rugged standing hair and the eres⁶² (target) and the tail cropping up all white.

And when he hath run long his hair lyeth sleek down, not standing nor rugged and his eres (target) does not show so white.

And when he can run no longer he cometh and yeldeth himself to some small brook, and when he hath long beaten the brook upward or downward he remaineth in the water under some roots so that there is nothing out of water save his head.

And sometimes the hounds and the hunters shall pass above him and beside him and he will not stir. For although he be a foolish beast he has many ruses and treasons to help himself. He runneth wondrous fast, for when he starts from his lair he will go faster than a brace of good greyhounds. They haunt thick coverts of wood, or thick heathes, and sometimes in carres (marshes) and commonly in high countries or in hills and valleys and sometimes in the plains.

The kids are kidded with pomeled⁶³ (spotted) hair as are the hind calves. And as a hind's calf of the first year beginneth to put out his head, in the same wise does he put out his small brokes⁶⁴

⁶² Middle English *ars*, hinder parts called target of roebuck.

⁶³ From the old French *pomelé*.

⁶⁴ See Appendix: Roe.

(spikes) ere he be a twelvemonth old. He is hardeled⁶⁵ but not undone as a hart, for he has no venison that men should lay in salt. And sometimes he is given all to the hounds, and sometimes only a part. They go to their feeding as other beasts do, in the morning and in the evening, and then they go to their lair. The roebuck remains commonly in the same country both winter and summer if he be not grieved or hunted out thereof.

⁶⁵ See Appendix: Hardel.

CHAPTER VI OF THE WILD BOAR AND OF HIS NATURE

A wild boar is a common beast enough and therefore it needeth not to tell of his making, for there be few gentlemen that have not seen some of them. It is the beast of this world that is strongest armed, and can sooner slay a man than any other. Neither is there any beast that he could not slay if they were alone sooner than that other beast could slay him,⁶⁶ be they lion or leopard, unless they should leap upon his back, so that he could not turn on them with his teeth. And there is neither lion nor leopard that slayeth a man at one stroke as a boar doth, for they mostly kill with the raising of their claws and through biting, but the wild boar slayeth a man with one stroke as with a knife, and therefore he can slay any other beast sooner than they could slay him. It is a proud⁶⁷ beast and fierce and perilous, for many times have men seen much harm that he hath done. For some men have

⁶⁶ In spite of the boar being such a dangerous animal a wound from his tusk was not considered so fatal as one from the antlers of a stag. An old fourteenth-century saying was: "Pour le sanglier faut le mire, mais pour le cerf convient la bière."

⁶⁷ Proud. G. de F., p. 56, *orgueilleuse*. G. de F., p. 57, says after this that he has often himself been thrown to the ground, he with his courser, by a wild boar and the courser killed ("et moy meismes a il porté moult des à terre moy et mon coursier, et mort le coursier").

seen him slit a man from knee up to the breast and slay him all stark dead at one stroke so that he never spake thereafter.

They go in their love to the brimming⁶⁸ as sows do about the feast of St. Andrew⁶⁹, and are in their brimming love three weeks, and when the sows are cool the boar does not leave them⁷⁰.

He stays with them till the twelfth day after Christmas, and then the boar leaves the sows and goeth to take his covert, and to seek his livelihood alone, and thus he stays unthe next year when he goeth again to the sows. They abide not in one place one night as they do in another, but tfind their pasture for (till) all pastures fail them as hawthorns⁷¹ and other things. Sometimes a great boar has another with him but this happens but seldom. They farrow⁷² in March, and once in the year they go in their love. And there are few wild sows that farrow more than once in the year, nevertheless men have seen them farrow twice in the year.

Sometimes they go far to their feeding between night and day, and return to their covert and den ere it be day. But if the day overtakes them on the way ere they can get to their covert they will abide in some little thicket all that day until it be night. They

⁶⁸ Brimming. From Middle English *brime*, burning heat. It was also used in the sense of valiant-spirited (Stratmann).

⁶⁹ November 30.

⁷⁰ G. de F., p. 57, adds: "comme fait l'ours."

⁷¹ A badly worded phrase, the meaning of which is not quite clear. G. de F. has "acorns and beachmast" instead of hawthorns.

⁷² Farrow. See Appendix: Wild Boar.

wind a man⁷³ as far as any other beast or farther. They live on herbs and flowers especially in May, which maketh them renew⁷⁴ their hair and t flesh. And some good hunters *of beyond the sea* say that in that time they bear medicine on account of the good herbs and the good flowers that they eat, but thereupon I make no affirmation. They eat all manner of fruits and all manner of corn, and when these fail them they root⁷⁵ in the ground with the rowel of their snouts which is right hard; they root deep in the ground till they find the roots of the ferns and of the spurge and other roots of which they have the savour (scent) in the earth. And therefore have I said they wind wonderfully far and marvellously well. And also they eat all the vermin and carrion and other foul things. They have a hard skin and strong flesh, especially upon their shoulders which is called the shield. Their season begins from the Holy Cross day in September⁷⁶ to the feast of St. Andrew⁷⁷ for then they go to the brimming of the sows. For they are in grease when they be withdrawn from the sows. The sows are in season from the brimming time *which is to say the twelfth day after Christmas* till the time when they have farrowed. The boars turn commonly to bay on leaving their dens

⁷³ G. de F., p. 58, saysy wind acorns as well or better than a bear, but nothing about winding a man. See Appendix: Wild Boar.

⁷⁴ From F. *renouveler*.

⁷⁵ See Appendix: Wild Boar.

⁷⁶ September 14.

⁷⁷ November 30.

for the pride that is in them, and they run upon some hounds and at men also. But when the boar is heated, or wrathful, or hurt, then he runneth upon all things that he sees before him. He dwelleth in the strong wood and the thickest that he can find and generally runneth in the most covered and thickest way so that he may not be seen as he trusteth not much in his running, but only in his defence and in his desperate deeds.⁷⁸ He often stops and turns to bay, and *especially when he is at the brimming* and hath a little advantage before the hounds of the first running, and these will never overtake him unless other new hounds be uncoupled to him.

He will well run and fly from the sun rising to the going down of the sun, if he be a young boar of three years old. In the third March counting that in which he was farrowed, he parteth from his mother and may well engender at the year's end.⁷⁹

They have four tusks, two in the jaw above and two in the nether jaw; of small teeth speak not I, the which are like other boar's teeth. The two tusks above serve for nothing except to sharpen his two nether tusks and make them cut well *and men beyond the sea call* the nether tusks of the boar his arms or his files, with these they do great harm, and also they call the tusks

⁷⁸ Despiteful or furious deeds. G. de F., p. 60, says that he only trusts in his defences and his weapons ("en sa défense et en ses armes").

⁷⁹ As this is somewhat confused we have followed G. de F.'s text in the modern rendering.

above gres⁸⁰ (grinders) for they only serve to make the others sharp as I have said, and when they are at bay they keep smiting their tusks together to make them sharp and cut better. When men hunt the boar they commonly go to soil and soil in the dirt and if they be hurt the soil is their medicine. The boar that is in his third year or a little more is more perilous and more swift and doth more harm than an old boar, as a young man more than an old man. An old boar will be sooner dead than a young one for he is proud and heavier and deigneth not to fly, and sooner he will run upon a man than fly, and smiteth great strokes but not so perilously as a young boar.

A boar heareth wonderfully well and clearly, and when he is hunted and cometh out of the forest or bush or when he is so hunted that he is compelled to leave the country, he sorely dreads to take to the open country and to leave the forest,⁸¹ and therefore he puts his head out of the wood before he puts out his body, then he abideth there and harkeneth and looketh about and taketh the wind on every side. And if that time he seeth anything that he thinks might hinder him in the way he would go, then he turneth again into the wood. Then will he never more come out though all the horns and all the holloaing of the world were there. But when he has undertaken the way to go out he will spare for nothing but will hold his way throughout. When he fleeth he maketh but few turnings, but when he turneth to bay, and then he runneth upon

⁸⁰ From the French *grès*, grinding-stone or grinders.

⁸¹ G. de F., p. 60, has "fortress" instead of "forest."

the hounds and upon the man. And for no stroke or wound that men do him will he complain or cry, but when he runneth upon the men he menaceth, strongly groaning. But while he can defend himself he defendeth himself without complaint, and when he can no longer defend himself there be few boars that will not complain or cry out when they are overcome to the death.⁸²

They drop their lesses (excrements) as other swine do, according to their pasture being hard or soft.

But men do not take them to the curée nor are they judged as of the hart or other beasts of venery.

A boar can with great pain live twenty years; he never casts his teeth nor his tusks nor loses them unless by a stroke.⁸³ The boar's grease is good as that of other tame swine, and their flesh also. Some men say that by the foreleg of a boar one can know how old he is, for he will have as many small pits in the forelegs as he has years, but of this I make no affirmation. The sows lead about their pigs with them till they have farrowed twice and no longer, and then they chase their first pigs away from them for by that time they be two years old and three Marches counting the March in which they were farrowed.⁸⁴ In short they are like tame sows, excepting that they farrow but once in a year and the tame

⁸² After the word "death" a full stop should occur, for in this MS. and, singularly enough, also in the Shirley MS. the following words have been omitted: "They drop their lesses," continuing "as other swine do."

⁸³ At this point G. de F., p. 61, adds: "One says of all biting beasts the trace, and of red beasts foot or view, and one can call both one or the other the paths or the fues."

⁸⁴ See Appendix: Wild Boar.

sows farrow twice. When they be wroth they run at both men and hounds and other beasts as (does) the wild boar and if they cast down a man they abide longer upon him than doeth a boar, but she cannot slay a man as soon as a boar for she has not such tusks as the boar, but sometimes they do much harm by biting. Boars and sows go to soil gladly when they go to their pasture, all day and when they return they sharpen their tusks and cut against trees when they rub themselves on coming from the soil. *What men call a trip of tame swine is called of wild swine a sounder, that is to say if there be passed a five or six together.*

CHAPTER VII OF THE WOLF AND OF HIS NATURE

A wolf is a common beast enough and therefore I need not tell of his make, for there are few men *beyond the sea*, that have not seen some of them. They are in their love in February with the females and then be jolly and do in the manner as hounds do, and be in their great heat of love ten or twelve days, and when the bitch is in greatest heat then if there are any wolves in the country they all go after her as hounds do after a bitch when she is jolly. But she will not be lined by any of the wolves save by one. She doth in such a wise that she will lead the wolves for about six or eight days without meat or drink and without sleep for they have so great courage towards her, that they have no wish to eat nor to drink, and when they be full weary she lets them rest until the time that they sleep, and then she claweth him with her foot and waketh him that seemeth to have loved her most, and who hath most laboured for her love, and then they go a great way thence and there he lines her. And therefore men say *beyond the seas in some countries* when any woman doth amiss, that she is like to the wolf bitch for she taketh to her the worst and the foulest and the most wretched and it is truth that the bitch of the wolf taketh to her the foulest and most wretched, for he hath most laboured and

fasted⁸⁵ for her and is most poor, most lean and most wretched. And this is the cause why men say that the wolf saw never his father and it is truth sometimes but not always, for it happeneth that when she has brought the wolf that she loveth most as I have said, and when the other wolves awaken they follow anon in her track, and if they can find the wolf and the bitch holding together then will all the other wolves run upon him and slay him, and all this is truth in this case. But when in all the country there is but one wolf and one bitch of his kind then this rule cannot be truth.

And sometimes peradventure the other wolves may be awake so late that if the wolf is not fast with the bitch or peradventure he hath left her then he fleeth away from the other wolves, so they slay him not so in this case the first opinion is not true.

They may get young whelps at the year's end, and then they leave their father and their mother. And sometimes before they are twelve months old if so be that their teeth are fully grown after their other small teeth which they had first, for they teethe twice in the year when they are whelps. The first teeth they cast when they are half a year old *and also their hooks*. Then other teeth come to them which they bear all their life-time and never cast. When these are full grown again then they leave their father and mother and go on their adventures, but notwithstanding that they go far they do not bide long away from each other and if it happens that they meet with their father and with their mother the which hath nourished them they will make them joy and

⁸⁵ G. de F., p. 63, has: "Pource qu'il a plus travaillé et plus jeuné que n'ont les autres."

great reverence alway. And also I would have you know that when a bitch and a wolf of her kind hath fellowship together they generally stay evermore together, and though they sometimes go to seek their feeding the one far from the other they will be together at night if they can or at the farthest at the end of three days. And such wolves in fellowship together get meat for their whelps the father as well as the mother, save only that the wolf eateth first his fill and then bears the remnant to his whelps. The bitch does not do so for she beareth all her meat to her whelps and eateth with them. And if the wolf is with the whelps when the mother cometh and she bringeth anything and the wolf has not enough he taketh the feeding from her and her whelps, and eateth his fill first, and then he leaveth them the remnant, if there be any, and if there be not any left they die of hunger, if they will, for he recketh but little so that his belly be full. And when the mother seeth that, and has been far to seek her meat she leaveth her meat a great way thence for her whelps, and then she cometh to see if the wolf is with them, and if he be there she stayeth till he be gone and then she bringeth them her meat. But also the wolf is so malicious that when he seeth her come without food he goeth and windeth her muzzle and if he windeth she hath brought anything he taketh her by the teeth and biteth her so that she must show him where she hath left her food. And when the bitch perceiveth that the wolf doth this when she returneth to her whelps she keepeth in the covert and doth not show herself if she perceiveth that the wolf is with them, and if he be there she

hideth herself until the time he hath gone to his prey on account of his great hunger, and when he is gone she brings her whelps her food for to eat. And this is truth.

Some men say that she bathes her body and her head so that the wolf should wind nothing of her feeding when she cometh to them, but of this I make no affirmation.

There be other heavy wolves of this nature, the which be not so in fellowship, they do not help the bitch to nourish the whelps but when a wolf and a bitch are in fellowship and there are no wolves in that country by very natural smelling he knoweth well that the whelps are his and therefore he helpeth to nourish them but not well. At the time that she hath whelps the wolf is fattest in all the year, for he eateth and taketh all that the bitch and whelps should eat. The bitch beareth her whelps nine weeks and sometimes three or four days more. Once in the year they are in their love and are jolly. Some men say that the bitches bear no whelps while their mother liveth, but thereof I make no affirmation. The bitches of them have their whelps as other tame bitches, sometimes more, sometimes less. They have great strength especially before (fore-quarters), and evil⁸⁶ they be and strong, for sometimes a wolf will slay a cow or a mare and he hath great strength in his mouth. Sometime he will bear in his mouth a goat or a sheep or a young hog and not touch the ground (with it), and shall run so fast with it that unless mastiffs or men on horseback happen to run before him neither the shepherds

⁸⁶ G. de F., p. 66, has "evil biting."

nor no other man on foot will ever overtake him. They live on all manner of flesh and on all carrion and all kinds of vermin. And they live not long for they live not more than thirteen or fourteen years. Their biting is evil and venomous on account of the toads and other vermin that they eat. They go so fast when they be void (are empty) that men have let run four leashes of greyhounds, one after the other and they could not overtake him, for he runs as fast as any beast in the world, and he lasts long running, for he has a long breath. When he is long hunted with running hounds he fleeth but little from them, but if the greyhounds or other hounds press him, he fleeth all the covert⁸⁷ as a boar does and commonly he runs by the high ways. And commonly he goeth to get his livelihood by night, but sometimes by day, when he is sore ahungered. And there be some (wolves) that hunt at the hart, at the wild boar and at the roebuck, and windeth as far as a mastiff, and taketh hounds when they can. There are some that eat children and men and eat no other flesh from the time that they be acherned⁸⁸ (blooded) by men's flesh, for they would rather be dead. They are called wer-wolves, for men should beware of them, and they be so cautious that when they assail a man they have a holding upon him before the man can see them, and yet if men see them they will come upon them so gynnously (cunningly) that with great difficulty a man will escape being taken and slain, for they can wonder well keep from

⁸⁷ He keeps to the coverts.

⁸⁸ Acherned, from O. Fr. *acharné*, to blood, from *chair*, flesh.

any harness (arms) that a man beareth. There are two principal causes why they attack men; one is when they are old and lose their teeth and their strength, and cannot carry their prey as they were wont to do, then they mostly go for children, which are not difficult to take for they need not carry them about but only eat them. And the child's flesh is more tender than is the skin or flesh of a beast. The other reason is that when they have been acharned (blooded) in a country of war, where battles have been, they eat dead men. Or if men have been hanged or have been hanged so low that they may reach thereto, or when they fall from the gallows. And man's flesh is so savoury and so pleasant that when they have taken to man's flesh they will never eat the flesh of other beasts, though they should die of hunger. For many men have seen them leave the sheep they have taken and eat the shepherd. It is a wonderfully wily and gynnous (cunning) beast, and more false than any other beast to take all advantage, for he will never fly but a little save when he has need, for he will always abide in his strength (stronghold), and he hath good breath, for every day it is needful to him, for every man that seeth him chaseth him away and crieth after him. When he is hunted he will fly all day unless he is overset by greyhounds. He will gladly go to some village or in a brook, he will be little at bay except when he can go no further. Sometimes wolves go mad and when they bite a man he will scarcely get well, for their biting is wonderfully venomous on account of the toads they have eaten as I have said before, and also on account of their madness. And when they

are full or sick they feed on grasses as a hound does in order to purge themselves. They stay long without meat for a wolf can well remain without meat six days or more. And when the wolf's bitch has her whelps commonly she will do no harm near where she has them, for fear she hath to lose them. And if a wolf come to a fold of sheep if he may abide any while he will slay them all before he begins to eat any of them. Men take them *beyond the sea* with hounds and greyhounds with nets and with cords, but when he is taken in nets or cords he cutteth them wonderfully fast with his teeth unless men get quickly to him to slay him. Also men take them within pits and with needles⁸⁹ and with *haussepieds*⁹⁰ or with venomous powders that men give them in flesh, and in many other manners. When the cattle come down from the hills the wolves come down also to get their livelihood. They follow commonly after men of arms for the carrion of the beasts or dead horses or other things. They howl like hounds and if there be but two they will make such a noise as if there were a route of seven or eight if it is by night, when the weather is clear and bright, or when there are young wolves that have not yet passed their first year. When men lay trains to *acharne* (with flesh) so as to take them, they will rarely come again to the place where men have put the flesh, especially old wolves, leastways not the first time that they should eat. But if they have eaten two or three times, and

⁸⁹ Needles. See Appendix: Snares.

⁹⁰ *Aucepis* (Shirley MS.). G. de F., p. 69: *haussepiez*, a snare by which they were jerked from the ground by a noose.

they are assured that no one will do them harm, then sometimes they will abide. But some wolves be so malicious that they will eat in the night and in the day they will go a great way thence, two miles or more, especially if they have been aggrieved in that place, or if they feel that men have made any train with flesh for to hunt at them. They do not complain (cry out) when men slay them as hounds do, otherwise they be most like them. When men let run greyhounds at a wolf he turns to look at them, and when he seeth them he knoweth which will take him, and then he hasteneth to go while he can, and if they be greyhounds which dare not take him, the wolf knows at once, and then he will not hasten at his first going. And if men let run at him from the side, or before more greyhounds which will seize him, when the wolf seeth them, and he be full, he voideth both before and behind all in his running so as to be more light and more swift. Men cannot nurture a wolf, though he be taken ever so young and chastised and beaten and held under discipline, for he will always do harm, if he hath time and place for to do it, he will never be so tame, but that when men leave him out he will look hither and thither to see if he may do any harm, or he looks to see if any man will do him any harm. For he knoweth well and woteth well that he doth evil, and therefore men ascrieth (cry at) and hunteth and slayeth him. And yet for all that he may not leave his evil nature.

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