## CAP. SECUNDUM.—OF THE HARE AND OF HURE NATURE

THE hare is a common beest I-now,[1] and þerfore md nedeþ not to telle of here makyng, for þer be fewe men that ne han seye some of hem. þei lyuen of corn and wiþ wedis growyng of londes,[2] of leves, of herbis, of berkes of trees of grapes and of mony oþere froytes. The hare is a good lityl beest, and moch good spoort and lykyng is the huntyng of hure, more than in eny oþere beest that *eny man knowe*þ, ȝif he[3] were not so litell, And þat for v. resons þat oon is for here huntynk dureth al þe year, as with rennyng houndis without eny sparyng, and so is noon of alle other bestis. And also men may hunte at here bothe in mornyng and in evenyng,. In the euentyde whane þei byn releued,[4] In the morowtyde whan þei sytte in fourme and of all oþer beestis is not so for ȝif it reyne in the mornyng ȝour iourne is lost and of the hare is not so. That oþere is for to seche hure, þe hare is a wel fayre þing specially who so hunteþ hure ryghfully,[5] for houndes most nede fynde hure by maistry and good poynt by poynt,[6] and vndo al þat she haþ doo of alle þe nyght, of here walkyng, and of here pasture, into the tyme þat þhei stert hure. And it is a fayre þing whan þe houndes be good and kunne wel fynde hure. And an hare shal goo somtyme from here sittyng to hure pasture half a myle or more specially in playn contre. And whan she is stert it is a faire þing,[7] And þan is a fayre þing for to slee hure wiþ streyngth of houndis for she renneþ long and gynnously. An hare shal dure wel iiii myle or more or lasse and she be an olde hare mascle. And þerfore þe huntyng for þe hare is good for it lasteþ al þe yere as y haue saide, and þe sechyng is a wel faire þing, and þe enchasyng of the hare is a wel faire þing, and

## CHAP. 2.—OF THE HARE AND OF HER NATURE

THE hare is a common beast enough,[1] 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 man knoweth, if he[3] 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 any other beast. And also men may hunt at her both in the morning and in the evening. In the eventide, when they have arisen to go to their feeding. 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,[5] for hounds must need find her by mastery and quest point by point,[6] 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.[7] And then it is a fair thing to slay her with strength of hounds, for she runneth strong and 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

[1] Six game animals our author declares are "common beasts enough," and as an instance of the variety of spelling to be found in one and the same MS. it may be mentioned that on none of the six occasions are these three simple words spelt alike. Thus: *common beest I now; commoun beest I nowe; common best ynowe; comon beest inowe; commun best inowe; comoun beest inow.* In G. d. F. there are but two variations—*asses commune*, and *assez commune.*

[2] A wild untilled or bushy plain, waste land. Littré: from Gothic *land*, an open country; Ital. and Span. *landa*, a heath. *Landes* is uncultivated ground with a poor soil in contradistinction to *Triches*, which also signifies waste ground, but the soil of which may be good. Diez: from Bret. *laun*, a bushy shrub. Modern *lawn* comes from *laund*, which spelling was still in use in the eighteenth century.

[3] 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.

[4] Means here: when the hare has arisen from her form to go to her feeding. Fr. *relever*. G. d. 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."

[5] G. d. F. added: "as I do," p. 41.

[6] The Shirley MS. has "grede," cry out or challenge, but "quest" is evidently the right word, although it is also used in our MS. in a second sense, *i.e.*, to denote the baying of a hound on the scent.

[7] G. d. F. adds: "for she will get away peradventure from twenty to thirty greyhounds, for she goeth very fast," p. 42.