OF THE HART AND HIS NATURE

CAPITULUM TERCIUM.—OF THE HERT AND OF HIS NATURE

louethe paramoure.4 The sleen houndes and horses and men in the same tyme and turneh home to be abay as a boor specially when bei be wery. And 3it haue men 5 seyn at the partyng of liggyng 6 pat he hathe hurt pat folowyn aftere and also be grey houndes 7 and ferbermore a courser. And 3it whan they be in Rutte, whiche is to say hure loue, in a Forest where be fewe hyndes and many hertes or male dere, pan pei sleen hurten and fighten eche with other, for eueryche wil be maistere of be hyndes, and comonly be grettest herte and the most strong holdeb be Rutte and is maister perof. And whan he is wel pured and hab belonge as be Rutte, alle other hertes bat he hab chased and flemed a way fro be Rutte bei rennen vppon hym and sleen hym and bat is sothe, and in parkes it may be preuyd for per shal be no seson bat be greet hert ne shal be slayne with be obere, nat while bat he is at the Rutte but whan dyuerse Ruttes in be forest and in be parke 8 may

CHAP. 3.—OF THE HART AND HIS NATURE

HERT is a commoun beast I-nowe, and perfore THE hart is a common beast enough and therefore me nedeb not to telle of his makyng, for ther ben me needeth not to tell of his making, for there be fewe folk pat ne han seye some. The hertes bene few folk that have not seen some. The harts are the lightest beestes and stronge and mervelously of the lightest beasts and strongest, and of marvellous grete connyng; bei be in hure loue whiche men great cunning. They are in their love, which men clepen Rutte aboute pe tyme of the holy roode 2 call rut, about the time of the Holy Rood 2 in Sepin Septembre, and bene in hure hote loue a tember and remain in their hot love a whole month monythe al hole, or bei be fullich out berof bei and ere they be fully out thereof they abide (in abiden ny ii monethes, and þan þei ben hardye rut) nigh two months. And then they are bold, and rennen vppon men as a wylde boor wold do and run upon men as a wild boar would do if he were and he were hunted. And bei be wondere perilous hunted. And they be wonderfully perilous beasts, beestis for with grete payne a man shall rekeuere for with great pain shall a man recover that is hurt pat is hurt wip an herte, and perfore men seyn in by a hart, and therefore men say in old saws: olde sawes, aftir pe boor pe leche and aftere pe "after the boar the leech and after the hart the hert be boor, for he smyteth as a stroke of a bier." For he smiteth as the stroke of the springole,3 spryngol 3 for he hab grete strength in be hede for he has great strength in the head and the body. and be body. They slene, fightene hurtethe eche They slay, fight and hurt each other, when they with oper whan bei be in Rutte, that is to say in are in rut, that is to say in their love, and they hure love, and bei syngen in hure langage bat in sing in their language that in England hunters Engelond hunters callen Belowyng as man that call bellowing as man that loveth paramour.4 They slay hounds and horses and men at that time and turn to bay as a boar does especially when they be weary. And yet have men 5 seen them as they start from their lair 6 that they have hurt him that followeth after, and also the greyhounds 7 and furthermore a courser. And yet when they are in rut, which is to say in 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 strongest holdeth the rut and is master thereof. And when he is well purged and hath been long at rut all the other harts that he hath chased and put to flight from the rut then run upon him and slay him, and that is the truth. 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 rut, but when he has withdrawn and is he is withdraw and is poor of loue. In the poor of love. In the woods they do not so often woodes may bei not so oft slee eche othere as bei slay each other as they do in the plains. And done in be playne cuntre. And also ther is also there are divers ruts in the forest, but in the parks there are none but that are within the park.8

² September 14. See Appendix: Hart, Seasons.

¹ Swiftest.

³ An engine of war used for throwing stones.

⁴ G. d. F., p. 12. "Ainsi que fet un homme bien amoureus" ("As does a man much in love").

⁵ G. d. F., p. 12, has "I have seen." ⁶ 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.

⁷ G. d. F., p. 12, has "limer" instead of "greyhound." 8 This passage is confusing. In G. d. 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 trans-