CAP" 10.—OF THE CAT AND OF HIS NATURE

THE cat is a comoun best inowe it nedeb nat to telle of his makyng for fewe men ben bat ne han seie som of hem. Nabeless ber byn many diuers maners of cattes aftir som maistris opynyons and namely of wylde and specially ber ben some cattes pt byn as moche as leopardes and som men callen hem Guyen loupes corryners1 and ober Cattes wolfes and it is euel saide for bei ben neiber wolfes ne coriners ne cattes wolpes mene mizt calle hem Cattes leopardes pan oper wyse for pei drawe more to a leopardes kynde than to anober best. bei lyuen be suche mete as ober cattes doon saf that bei take hennys in hegges2 and goot and sleep (sic) 3it bei fynde hem allon for þei ben as moche as a wolt and alle moost byn fourmed and made as a libard but hur tayle is nat so longe, a greihound alon myght not take oon of hem to make him abide for a gray hond shuld rather take and hold faster and more stedfastly a wolf pan he shuld oon of hem for he clees as a leoparde and ferbermore ryght bytyng. Men hunten at hym but seeld but 3it it be by auenture whan be houndes fynde by auenture such a Catt he wil not be longe hunted for anoon he putteb hym to his defence or he renneb vpon a tree. And by cause pat he fleep not longe perfore shal I not speke but litel of huntyng for in his huntyng nedeth no grete maystre. And bei beren her kytons, And be in hure loue as othir Cattes sauf þei han but ii kyttons at onys þei dwell in holowe trees and per pei make her liggynge3 and her beddes of ferne and of gras. The Catte helpeb euel to norssh his kyttons as be wolf dob his welpes. As of comoun wylde Cattes me nedes nat to speke myche of hem for every hunter in Ingelond knowethe hem and her felnesse and malice wel inowe. But oone bing dare I wel say that if eny beest hab the deuelis streynt in hym wipout doute it is he Catt and hat boh he wilde and the tame.

CHAP. 10.—OF THE WILD CAT AND ITS NATURE

THE cat is a common beast enough therefore I need not tell of his making, for there are few men that have not seen some of them. Nevertheless there are many and diverse kind of cats, after some masters' opinions, and specially of wild cats. Especially there are some cats as big as leopards and some men call them Guyenne loup cerviers and other cat-wolves, and this is wrong for they are neither wolves nor cerviers nor cat-wolves, they might better call them cat-leopards than otherwise, for they draw more to the leopard kind than to any other beast. They live on such meat as other cats do save that they take hens in hedges2 and goats and sheep, if they find them alone, for they are as big as a wolf, and almost the form and make of a leopard, but their tail is not quite so long. A greyhound alone could not take one of them to make him stop, for a greyhound could sooner take and hold fast and more steadfastly a wolf than he could one of them. For he claws as a leopard and furthermore bites hard. Men hunt them but seldom, but if peradventure they do, such a cat would not be long hunted for soon he putteth him to his defence or he runneth up a tree. And because he flieth not long therefore shall I speak but little of his hunting for in hunting him there is no need of great mastery. They bear their kittens and are in their love as other cats save that they have but two kittens at once. They dwell in hollow trees and there they make their ligging3 and their beds of ferns and of grass. The cat helps as badly to nourish his kittens as the wolf does his whelps. Of common wild cats I need not to speak much, for every hunter in England knows them, and their falseness and malice are well known. But one thing I dare well say that if any beast has the devil's spirit in him without doubt it is the cat, both the wild and the tame.

<sup>3</sup> See Appendix: Ligging.

According to the Shirley MS. this passage runs, "Men calleth him in Guyene loupeceruyers." See Appendix: <sup>2</sup> Shirley MS. has "and egges," instead of in hedges, which is the rendering G. de F. gives.