CAP^M. xxiii.—HOW AN HUNTER SHULD LEDE HIS GROME IN QUEST TO KNOW AN HERT BY THE TRACE

THANE shuld his grome lede his lymer in quest after hym in þe mornyng and teche hym to knowe what difference is by twyn an hertis trace[2] and an hendis as *I haue said bifore. This woord quest is a terme of hert hunters by younde þe see and is as mooch to say as whan an hunter goþ to fynde of an hert and to herborowe hym.* And to know a greet hert trace fro a yonge as for to knowe þe trace of a yong deere of auntelere from an hyndes and how many juggementȝ and knowleche þer be, and for to make more certayn þerof he shuld haue an olde hertis foot and a yonge hertis and an heyndes foot also, and he shuld putt it in hard erthe and in neyssh and onys put it fast in þe erþe as þei þe herte were huntyd and anoþer tyme soft as þof þe hert went a pase, and þerbi he may avise hym to know þe difference of þe hertis feet. And þer shal wel fynde þat þer nys no dere so yong ȝif he be from a broket vpward þat is taloun[3] nys more large and bettir and more greet Argus[4] þan hath an hynde and comonly lenger traces. Naþerlees þer byn some hyndes wel tracid þe which hauyn þe sool of þe foot as a staggard or a smal stagge but þe talon ne þe argus ben not so greet ne so large. And also a grete hert and an olde haþ a better sool of his foote and a bettir taloun, and bettir boonys and more grete and more large þane hath a grete dere or an hynde, and somtyme in puttyng in þe erþe þe hertis foot and þe hyndes foot as I haue saide he shal mowe know the difference better þan I can deuyse. And also an hynde comonly haþ her traces more holowe þan a staggard or a stagge and more vpon þe clee[5] bifore þan an herte of x for of þe othire reche I neuer. The juggement is in þe taloun. Whan he is grete and brood and þe poynt of þe foot brode, and men have I say a greet hert and an olde þe which had holow tracis and þat may not greue so þat he haue þe oþer signez bifore said, for an holow trace, and a sharpe clee bitokeneth noon oþer þing þan þ^t contre þer þe hert hath hauntid nessh contre or hard, and where beþ but fewe stones or þ^t he haþ be hunted but a litel. And

CHAP. 23.—HOW A MAN SHOULD LEAD HIS GROOM IN QUEST FOR TO KNOW A HART BY HIS TRACE

THEN should his groom lead his lymer[1] in quest after him in the morning, and teach him to know what difference is between a hart's trace[2] and a hind's. As I have said before, this word quest is a term of hart hunters beyond the sea, and is as much for to say as when the hunter goeth to find of a hart and to harbour him. For to know a great hart's trace from a young, and to know the trace of a young deer of antler from a hind's, and how many judgments and what knowledge there be, and for to make more certain thereof, he should have an old hart's foot and a young hart's and a hind's foot also, and should put it in hard earth and in soft, and once put it fast in the earth as though the hart were hunted and another time soft, as if the hart went slowly, thereby he may advise him to know the differences of a hart's foot, and he shall find that there is no deer so young if he be from a brocket upwards, that his talon[3] is not larger and better and has greater ergots[4] than has a hind, and usually longer traces. Nevertheless there are some hinds well traced, which have the sole of the foot as a staggard or a small stag, but the talon and the ergots are not so great nor so large. Also a great hart and an old one has a better sole to his foot, and a better talon and better bones and greater and larger than has a young deer or hind. And so in putting in the earth the hart's foot and the hind's foot as I have said, he shall know the difference and better than I can devise. And also the hinds commonly have their traces more hollow than a staggard or a stag, and more open the cleeves[5] in front than a hart of ten, for of the others reck I never. The judgment is in the talon (when it is great and large, and in the sole of the foot)[6] when it is great and broad, and the point of the foot broad. And men have seen a great hart and an old one, the which had hollow traces, and that cannot matter so that he hath the other signs before said. For a hollow trace and sharp cleeves betoken no other thing than that the country the hart haunts is a soft country or hard, and where there be but few stones, or that he has been hunted but little. And also if

[1] Tracking hound. The old form of spelling is retained in the modern text, but the modern *limer* is used in the notes.
[2] See Appendix: Slot, and Trace.
[3] Heel.
[4] Dew claws.
[5] Cleeves, the toes of a deer.
[6] The words in brackets have been omitted in our MS. but are in the Shirley MS. and G. de F. p. 129; they have been thus inserted to complete the sense.