CAPIT. XXVII.—HOW AN HUNTER SHULD GO IN QUEST BY THE SYGHT[1]

Aftir I shalle yow shewe how a man shuld go in quest for þe hert with his lymere al bi hem self. *This word quest for þe hert is a terme of hunters of biyonde the see, and it is to mene whan a man gooþ to fynde of a deere and to harborow hym, and it is a faire terme and a shorter saide þan oure terme of Ingelond to my semyng.* And þan shal þe grome quest in þe cuntre þat shal be deuysed to hym þe nyȝt bifore, and he shal ryse in þe dawnyng, and þan he must go to þe metyngis of dere for to loke if he may se eny þing in his likyng, and leue his lymer in a certayn place þer as he may make noon affray, and þane he shal goo to þe yong woode now yhewe of þe forest in oþer places where he hopeþ best for to se an hert, and kepe hym alle way þat he ne comme not in þe wynd of þe hert. He shuld also clymbe vp on tree bi cause þt þe hert shuld wynde no þing of hym, and þat he myȝt se hym the ferþer. And if he se an hert stondyng stably he must loke wel what contre he shal goo to his leire, eiþer priuyli drawe hym to some place where he may best see hym, and þere breke a bowe for to make a marke,[2] but he must abide a grete while for sumtyme an hert wil stalle[3] and loke about a greet while or he wil go to his leire, and namly whan a greete dewe is falle, or ellis sumtyme he comeþ out agayn for to loke about and for to herken and for to drye hym, and þerfore he shal abide longe þat he affray hym not. And þan he shuld fetch his lymer and vmbicast *as is biforesaid in the Chapiter of harbouryng of the hert*, and kepe wel ay þat he ne his hounde make but a litel noyse as þei may, for drede lest he voide.

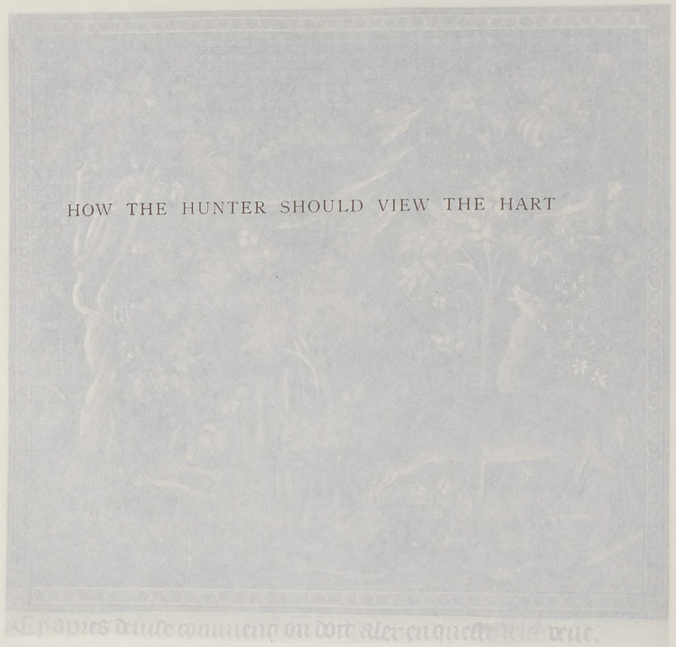
CHAP. 27.—HOW A HUNTER SHOULD GO IN QUEST BY THE SIGHT[1]

Afterwards I shall show you how a man should go in quest for the hart with his lymer or by himself. This word quest for the hart is a term of hunters beyond the sea and means when a man goeth to find a deer and to harbour him, and it is a fair term and shorter said than our term of England to my seeming. And then shall the groom quest in the country that shall be devised to him the night before, and he shall rise in the dawning, and then he must go to the pasturing of the deer to look if he may see anything to his liking, and leave his lymer in a certain place where he may not alarm them. And thence he should go to the newly hewn wood of the forest or other places where he hopes best to see a hart, and keep always from coming into the wind of the hart, he should also climb upon a tree so that the hart shall wind nothing of him, and that he can see him further. And if he sees a hart standing stably he must look well in what country he shall go to his lair, and privily repair to some place where he can best see him and there break a bough for a mark.[2] But he must remain a great while after, for some time a hart will stall[3] and look about a great while before he will go to his lair, and specially when a great dew is falling, or else sometimes he cometh out again to look about, and to listen and to dry himself, and therefore he should stay long, so as not to frighten him. Then he should fetch his lymer and cast round as it is before said in the chapter of the harbouring of a hart, and take care that neither he nor his hounds make but little noise for dread lest he void.

[1] Another clerical mistake of the scribe who wrote the Vespasian B XII. MS., for instead of this, the proper title, he put: "How an hunter shuld go in quest bytwyne the playnnes and the woode," which is the heading of another chapter.

[2] See Appendix: Branches.

[3] Stand still, take up a position.



HOW THE HUNTER SHOULD VIEW THE HART