CAP. XXXI.—HOW AN HUNTER SHULD GO IN QUEST AMONG CLEER SPEIES AND HIE WODE[1]

Also I wil ȝou telle how þe hunter shuld quest among cleer speies and among hie trees, specially whan it hathe ireyned þe nyght bifore, and in þe mornyg. Eke in þe tyme þat þe hedes of þe hertis byn tendir comonly þei abiden among cleer speies and in hie wodes, for strong contre shuld peradventure do hym harme to her hedis þe whiche byn tendire. And if he mete areyn as I biforesaid, or whan her heuedes[2] is ony þing þat likeþ hem he shuld not folow it wiþ his lymer, for þei abiden in soche contre as I haue said in þe tyme þat is to say in Rayn, and whan her hedes byn tendir, þat he make the deer voide in to som oþer placis of þe questis biforesaid, and whoso mete hym in the wode in sight of oye þan he must sette þe lymer fues of hym. And if it be a deer þat entierchaungeth[3] it is to saie if þe deer sette the hynder feet in þe trace of þe forfett wiþout onpassyng, it is no good tokyn, but if he sette his hyndere fete fer from þe forfete, it is a good tokyn, for whan an hert entiermarcheth it is a tokyn that he is a light deer and wel rennyng and of grete flight. For if he had a side bely and flankes he myght not entremarche hym but bi þe contrarie he shuld.[4] And somtyme whan hertis maken a long strike wiþ þe hynder feet comonly þei may not wel flee and haue be litel hunted. And if he had of þe fumes he shuld putt hem in his horn with grasse or in his lappe[5] with gras for a man shuld not bere hem in his hond for þei shuld al to breke. And whan he shal mete in þe feeldis eny þinge þ^t hym likeþ he shal drawe hym to his couert, for to make hym drawe the sonner to his strength. And whan he fyndeþ þer he goþ inne þan he shal breke a bow toward þat place þer þe hert is goon, and take þe scantelon and folowe hym no ferþer in þe wode. Than he shal make a longe turne and vmbicast about bi som waies or bi pathys, and if he se þat he be not passid out of his turne, he may turne agayne to þe gaderyng and make hem

CHAP. 31.—HOW A HUNTER SHOULD QUEST IN CLEAR SPIRES AND HIGH WOOD[1]

Also I will tell you how a hunter should go in quest among clear spires, and among high trees, and specially when it has rained the night before and in the morning. In the time when the heads of the harts are tender, commonly they abide among clear spires and in high woods, for a thick country peradventure would do harm to their heads which be tender. If he meets rain as I before have said, or when their heads are tender, anything that pleases him he should not follow it with his lymer, for they remain in such a country as I have said in that time, that is to say in rain and when their heads are tender, for he might make the deer void into some other place of the quests as it is before said. And whoso meets him in the wood in sight of his eyes, then he must set his lymer in his fues. And if it be a deer that enter-changeth,[3] that is to say if a deer puts his hind feet in the trace of the fore-feet without passing on, it is no good token, but if he sets his hinder feet far from the fore feet it is a good token, for when a hart entre-marcheth it is a token that he is a light deer and well running and of great flight, for if he had a side belly and great flanks he could not entremarche, but the contrary would he do.[4] And sometimes when the hart makes a long stride with the hind foot, commonly they cannot fly well, and have been little hunted. And if he has of the fumes, he should put them in his horn with grass, or in his lap[5] with grass, for a man should not bear them in his hand, for they would all break. And when he should meet in the fields anything that pleases him, he should draw towards his covert, for to make him draw the sooner to his stronghold, and when he finds where he goeth in, then he should break a bough towards the place where the hart is gone, and take the scantilon, and follow him no further in the wood. Then he should make a long turn and cast round about by some ways or by-paths, and if he sees that he has not passed out of his turn, he may return again to the gather-

[1] In the text of our MS. (the Vespasian) no break occurs here, but in the table of chapters at the beginning of the MS. the chapter as here given is enumerated, and this corresponds also with the Shirley MS. and other MSS.

[2] A mistake of the scribe, who also omitted a word or two. It should read: "or when their heads are tender and he meets anything that he likes."

[3] See Appendix: Hart.

[4] The explanation of this sentence is that a stag which entre-marched or sur-marched, or in other words placed the hind foot on the track or beyond the track made by the front foot, was a thin or light deer, and therefore not a fat stag, which latter was what the hunter would be looking for.

[5] Lappet of his coat.