

Chapter 19 WHAT MANNER AND CONDITION A GOOD...

Thou, Sir, whatever you be, great or little, that would teach a man to be a good hunter, first he must be a child past seven or eight years of age or little older, and if any man would say that I take a child in too tender age for to put him to work, I answer that all nature shortens and descends. For every man knoweth well that a child of seven years of age is more capable in these times of such things that he liketh to learn than was a child of twelve years of age (in times that I have seen). And therefore I put him so young thereto, for a craft requires all a man's life ere he be perfect thereof. And also men say that which a man learns in youth he will hold best in his age. And furthermore from this child many things are required, first that he love his master, and that his heart and his business be with the hounds, and he must take¹⁷⁰ him, and beat him when he will not do what his master commands him, until the time that the child dreads to fail. And first I shall take and teach him for to take in writing all the names of the hounds and of the hues of the hounds, until the time that the child knoweth them both by the hue and by the name. After I will teach him to make clean every day in the morning the hounds' kennel of all foul things. After I will learn him to put before them twice a day fresh water and clean, from a well, in a vessel there where the hound drinks, or fair running water, in the morning and the evening. After I will teach him that once in the day he empty the kennel and make all clean, and renew their straw, and put again fresh new straw a great deal and right thick. And there where he layeth it the hounds should lie, and the place where they should lie should be made of trees a foot high from the earth, and then straw should be laid thereupon, because the moisture of the earth should not make them morfounder nor engender other sicknesses by the which they might be worse for hunting. Also that he be both at field and at wood delivered (active) and well eyed and well advised of his speech and of his terms, and ever glad to learn and that he be no boaster nor jangler.

¹⁷⁰ "Take" is probably the scribe's mistake for "tache," teach.
