

Chapter 33 HOW THE ASSEMBLY THAT MEN CALL...

The assembly that men call gathering should be made in this manner: the night before that the Lord or the Master of the Game will go to the wood, he must cause to come before him all the hunters and the helps, the grooms and the pages, and shall assign to each one of them their quests in a certain place, and separate the one from the other, and the one should not come into the quest of the other, nor do him annoyance or hinder him. And every one should quest in his best wise, in the manner that I have said; and should assign them the place where the gathering shall be made, at most ease for them all, and the nearest to their quests. And the place where the gathering shall be made should be in a fair mead well green, where fair trees grow all about, the one far from the other, and a clear well or beside some running brook. And it is called gathering because all the men and the hounds for hunting gather thither, for all they that go to the quest should all come again in a certain place that I have spoken of. And also they that come from home, and all the officers that come from home should bring thither all that they need, every one in his office, well and plenteously, and should lay the towels and board clothes all about upon the green grass, and set divers meats upon a great platter²⁰⁵ after the lord's power. And some should eat sitting, and some standing, and some leaning upon their elbows, some should drink, some laugh, some jangle, some joke and some play-in short do all manner of disports of gladness, and when men be set at tables ere they eat then should come the lymers and their grooms with their lymers the which have been questing, and every one shall say his report to the lord of what they have done and found and lay the fumes before the lord he that hath any found, and then the Lord or the Master of the hunting by the counsel of them all shall choose which they will move and run to and which shall be the greatest hart and the highest deer. And when they shall have eaten, the lord shall devise where the relays shall go and other things which I shall say more plainly, and then shall every man speed him to his place, and all haste them to go to the finding.

²⁰⁵ G. de F. (p. 151) says "in great plenty," not "upon a great platter."

HOW TO QUEST FOR THE HART IN COVERTS

(From MS. f. fr. 616, Bib. Nat., Paris)



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