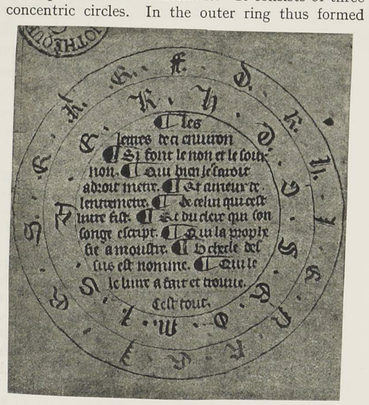
LE LIVRE DU ROY MODUS—*continued*

An de nostre Seigneur iiic xxxviii. apres ce que jay eu la copie du livre des deduis si comme ils sont escrips en cest livre et comment je l'avoie veu et trouvé eu ung livre bien anchien sy comme li roy Modus les avoit ordonnez. En celluy an le quart jour davril advint que iestoie en grant pensee de trouver matere plaisant de la quelle Je pensoie a emplir mon livre Et aloie tout seul parmy une forest une heure avant et l'aultre arriere triste et doulant que je ne povoye advenir a la matiere que je desiroye Sy me assis au pye dun arbre et mendormy en celle pensee et en songnant mestoit advis que je veoye le roy Modus et la royne Ratio, &c.

Thus we see that the first and only part of the book which interests us as sporting literature was written before 1338, and copied from some more ancient text.

Having written down his vision the clerk found that he still had some leaves of parchment to spare and the book finishes with an account of the events of Charles v.'s reign, the persons who figured in the chief events not being mentioned by name, but under allegorical pseudonyms. As MS. X., the only dated MS., was written in the year 1379 and includes the whole of the above matter, the book must have been completed before that date.

About the authorship of this important work there has waged quite as much controversy as about the date of its composition, and numerous bibliophiles have studied and written upon this question. A brief summary of the facts bearing upon this point will be in place here. Two of the MSS. (Nr. III. and X.) contain the rosace or anagram of which our reproduction is a facsimile. It consists of three concentric circles. In the outer ring thus formed



The "rosace" in MS. X. written in 1379.

are written fifteen gothic letters at equal intervals. They are: ff, D, R, H, I, E, N, R, E, I, E, S, E, R, E. In the inner ring there are twelve: H, D, O, S, E, D, M, I, S, N, E, R, and inside the circular space formed by these two rings is written:

"Les lettres de ci enuiron
Si font le non et le sournon.
Qui bien les saroit a droit metre.
Et curieux de lentremetre.
De celui qui cest liure fist.
Et du clerc qui son songe escript.
Qui la prophesie a monstre.
Il checle dessus est nomme.
Qui le le liure a fait et trouue.
Cest tout."

In these words was clothed the direction that the surrounding letters form the name and surname, if properly put together, of him who wrote this book and of the clerk by whose pains this transcript was made. Five modern authors have published reproductions of this "rosace," Blaze (1839), Lavallée (1854), Souhart (1886), Bouton (1888) and Harting in his *Bibliotheca Accipitraria* (1891). As I am writing these lines (in the *Bibliothèque Nationale*) I have before me the two originals and the five reproductions, and the following brief remarks may assist the reader who is desirous of solving the puzzle.

Only one of the two originals can be said to be complete, for it has the two concluding words "*cest tout*," which the other "rosace" does not contain, and as Lavallée's and Souhart's "rosaces" lack these two words, it is certain that they were copied from the incomplete "rosace." The other three were evidently taken from MS. X., but all vary, curiously enough, the spelling, by altering letters, putting in accents, and making contractions as a comparison with our accompanying photographic reproduction will show.

Blaze in his Preface to his edition of *Modus* attributes the whole of the work to one author, remarking at the same time, that he must have lived a long time to have seen Charles IV. hunting, and to become the historian of Charles V. who died in 1380. But Blaze does not venture on the problem of this author's name, leaving that to others, but infers he was from the North of France, as the book contains many phrases still peculiar to Hainault, Picardy and Artois, but as was shown later on by M. Chassant these peculiarities were common to the old Norman speech (Petit, p. 50); and that as these peculiarities vary with the MSS. the idiosyncrasies in patois and orthography probably changed according to the person for whom it was being written, or to the nationality of the scrivener. A more conclusive proof of the nationality of the compiler can be derived from the examination of the text. At the end of the chapter: "*Cy devise comme on doit deffaire le sanglier*," finishes with the words: "*Ainsi est le sanglier deffaict à la guise normande; et à la guise de France on liève la queue comme d'un cerf*" (*Roy Modus*, xxxvii. r.). All the MSS. contain this, and the author would naturally speak of the custom of his own province in the first place. When G. de F. copies this chapter he changes the ending: "*Einsi se deffet senglier en Gascoinhe et en Lenguedoc;*" that is to say, in his country (G. de F. p. 166). Also the forest of Breteuil in which the author says he had hunted is situated in Normandy, and allusions to the apple-trees, ivy and mistletoe, which are plentiful in that province, point to the same conclusion.

Lavallée, taking the letters of the outer circle of the rosace, obtained the name of *Henri, sire de*

LE LIVRE DU ROY MODUS—*continued*

Fére, and after much research published the reasons why he considered that there was proof presumptive that the authors were *Henri de Vergis* (Vergys) and his ward *Gui de Chastillon*, seigneur de Fére (*Chasse à C.*, Pref. xxvi.–xxvii.).

About the same time (1869) M. A. Chassant, head of the Museum of Evreux, endeavoured to solve the puzzle, and came to the conclusion that the name in the outer circle should read: *Henri de Ferrières* and the one in the inner circle: *Denis d'Hormes*. The manor of Ferrières is in Normandy in the bailiwick of Evreux, in the near neighbourhood of the forest of Breteuil where he who "made the book" says he saw King Charles hunting. Also at the time the book was written, there lived at Orme a pupil of Denis Mutel, employed as a copyist by one Jean Grison. The manor of Orme is also situated in the bailiwick of Evreux and not far from Ferrières; this coincidence of the two names being found in the same *rosace* as well as in the same locality was so convincing that Lavallée gave up his theory and acknowledged that of M. Chassant to be the most probable (*Bull. du Bouquiniste*, Paris, Aubry, 1–15, Juin '69; *Journ. des Chasseurs*, 33, an. p. 213, p. 302).

In 1888 M. Victor Bouton, a paleographer and authority on heraldry, published an essay entitled: *Quel est l'auteur du Roy Modus?* (Paris, rue le Peletier 51) in which he disagrees with the former solutions and tries to prove that *Jean de Melun*, Sieur de Tancarville, wrote it and considers the existence of a *Henri de Ferrières* at the period when *Roy Modus* was written as too problematic.

As far as the Norman records show, there was no such *Sire de Ferrières* between 1300 and 1379, one is mentioned by Froissart, but as late as 1385, and there was a *Henri Sire de Ferrières* in Normandy about 1400.

It is on the authority of Hardouin de Fontaines Guerin that M. Bouton rests his claim on Tancarville's behalf. When speaking in his rhymes of various celebrities in venery Hardouin adds:

"Et après je je m'en vueil retraire,
Car je le doy bien par droit faire,
A mes deux acteurs et seigneurs
Qui és sains cieulx aient honeurs
. . . . .
L'un des deux qui tant y fu duit
Fu de Foix et de Béart Conte
Li autre fu Conte et Vyconte
De Tencarville et de Mulum
Mais maistre Jehan de Méum
Ne scéut onc d'estronomie
Tant non, ce croy, la part demie
Com ce bon Comte sceut de chasse."

M. Bouton takes *acteurs* to mean authors although it may just as well mean acters, *i.e.*, those who took an active part in sport. *Jean de Meum* or *Meung* whom Bouton thinks was the clerk who wrote the "Songe" could not possibly have done so, as he died in 1315. To do away with the difficulty that the compiler asserts that he is taking his matter from an ancient work, Bouton suggests that he had some MSS. from the Comte de Tancarville's library before him; as the Count only died in 1347 a MS. of his composition would scarcely have been alluded to as a very old work!

Mr. Harting in his *Bibliotheca Accipitraria* says that he saw a letter from M. Grasset d'Orcet addressed to M. Pierre A. Pichot, Directeur de la *Revue Britannique* criticising M. Bouton's views. M. Grasset d'Orcet reads the inscription in the outer circle of the "rosace":

"Fit DuRHeIEN REIESERE," that is, *fit de régént regisseur*, a term which he admits is applicable to *Jean de Melun, Vicomte de Tancarville*, and adds that in his opinion the letters of the inner circle, *HDOSEDMISNER*, indicate *Théodose de Misner*, or *Seigneur du Mai*. Mr. Harting further summarises the reasons that seem to him to make it justifiable to attribute the authorship to the Comte de Tancarville:

"(1) His identity is sufficiently indicated by the letters in the *rosace*.

"(2) He was living at the dates referred to by the author, and died in 1382.

"(3) He is especially mentioned as an authority on Falconry by his contemporary, *Pero Lopez de Ayala* (the Spanish Ambassador to the Court of Charles v.) in his book '*Libro de ta Caza de las Aves*,'[1] written in 1386, and

"(4) He is mentioned several times by name in the *Jugement des Chiens et des Oyseaulx* with which the *Livre de Roy Modus* concludes[2] (*see* ff. cxiv. recto and verso and cxvii.–cxviii. ed. Blaze). The *Jugement* ends thus: 'Explicit le Jugement que fist le Comte de Tancarville.' The third point seems to have been overlooked by all my predecessors in this inquiry, and the fourth by all except M. Bouton" (Harting, *Bib. Acc.* p. 63–4).

Jean de Melun, Vicomte de Tancarville, was Grand Chamberlain of France and *Grand maitre des eaux et forets et souverain maitre de l'hotel du Roi* under King John and his successors (Philo. Soc. vol. ii. p. 15, D'Aumale; de Noir. i. p. 95), and a personal friend of King John with whom he was taken prisoner at the battle of Poitiers in company with his son, and his brother the Archbishop of Sens. He was also one of the hostages left in England after the peace of Bretigny (1360). This Comte de Tancarville's son, Guillaume, was killed at the battle of Agincourt, and the title passed to the house of Harcourt through his daughter, and subsequently to that of D'Orleans-Longueville, and became extinct 1652 (Phil. Soc. ii. D'Aumale, p. 15).

The book is, as has already been indicated, divided into three parts. The first part relating to sport, treats of:

A. Hunting or venery.

B. Falconry.

C. The discussion on the comparative merits of venery and Falconry. (This part is in verses giving the decision of the Comte de Tancarville who has

[1] The Count de Tancarville is mentioned by many of his contemporaries besides Lopez de Ayala as the great authority on venery and falconry, but none mention the fact of his having written a book, unless one construes, as M. Bouton does, the verses of Hardouin to indicate this.

[2] As a matter of fact it does not conclude the book, but is sandwiched in between the falconry and fowling.