GACE DE LA BUIGNE—*continued*

But there is one old proverb that the *seigneur* must remember :

> "Homme, cheval, oysel, ne chien
> Sil ne traveille il ne vaut rien."

Gace enumerates all the hawks—Falcon, Tiercel, Hobby, Goshawk, and Sparrowhawk—and the quarry they are to be flown at. He treats the Goshawkers with great contempt, and says if one wishes to mock any one, one calls him a Goshawk :

> "Quand on se veult de luy mocquer
> On dit : esgard, quel autrucier."

To return to the Virtues and Vices as falconers, a compact is made by the former to make war on the latter, and Honour is elected as their leader, as he has always been accompanied by Courage—this allusion is to Philip the Bold. A Herald arrives to announce that the Vices are camped between the Louvre and Corbuiel, and declare war. The challenge accepted, Honour goes forth carrying a banner on which is a device of *fleurs de lys*, to reconnoitre the battlefield, and finds that Luxury Gluttony have reinforced the army of the Vices from every monastic order except that of the *billetés*, who seem to be alone distinguished for abstinence. The *billetés* were a religious order, so called from wearing a small skull-cap. Gace, in one of the MSS., is represented in a miniature as wearing a purple gown with a black skull-cap on his head, and probably it was the order he belonged to that he thus exempts from such a stigma. A battle ensues ; victory is secured by the Virtues, as they had so many good falconers in their ranks. The victors take Luxury prisoner just as she was about to take refuge in Paris, where she was always sure of a good reception. The victorious Virtues repair to the court of the French King, and are there regaled with a great feast, which event closes the first part of the treatise. At the court arrives a knight called *Deduit des Chiens*, who comes to ask justice of *Deduit des Oiseaux*. Each claim the name *Deduit* as belonging to their form of sport alone. Then follows a long discussion on the merits of hunting and hawking. Seven arguments are advanced in favour of hounds and hunting, which are answered by another seven in the favour of hawking. A *chasse royale*, or stag-hunt, is minutely described to show the pleasure to be derived therefrom. The huntsman goes out early in the morning to harbour a warrantable deer ; he is told to look frequently on the ground so as not to miss the traces of the deer, to take note of slot, fraying-post, entry, and rack, and the feeding, and not to omit taking the fewmets with him to the assembly or meet.

The harbourer then returns to the assembly, where the king is seated under a leafy oak looking at his hounds, some of which are staunch hounds from Germany, others from Brittany, as well as from other countries. The harbourer is told how he is to make his report ; he is never to say he is sure that the stag he has harboured is a large one, but *Je m'ecrois*, or I believe, or judge him to be so from all the signs I have found. Having listened to all he has to say, those of the king's company that understand such things must give their opinion as to which stag that has been harboured is the one they wish to hunt, but it often happens, says Gace, that those who know least speak most on such occasions. Then those who wish should drink lightly, and the oat-fed coursers are led round, and the pages, the *berners* and *chacechiens* as they were called in Old English, must come all dressed in green. The king mounts his horse, which is a good courser *de Pouille*, strong, sure, fast, and with good mouth. The stag is unharboured by the man with his limer, and the chief huntsman or *Maitre Veneur*, wishes to uncouple thirty-eight or forty hounds, but the king insists on fifty being laid on at once. The huntsman then blows three long notes on his horn to bring up the hounds ; these uncoupled, soon pick up the scent, for the stag is unaccompanied, or, as Gace says, has no squire with him ("Le cerf n'a poit d'escuyer"). The hounds give tongue, and the chaplain declares that never has man heard melody to equal this. For, he exclaims in ecstasy, no *Alleluia* has ever been sung in the chapel of the king that is so beautiful and gives so much pleasure as the music of hunting-hounds. He goes on to liken the notes of the hounds to the various voices in the choir, and ends with saying that never yet was there a man who heard them that hated this pleasure. It is about July 22, the week of the feast of St. Madeleine, in the heart of the stag season, that the hunt is taking place. The hart is a large stag of twenty-eight points and is in "high grease," fat and heavy, so the king hopes to take him without giving any of the relays, and when the chief huntsman asks if he should not slip one relay of greyhounds the king will not hear of it. The stag gets tired, and tries to shake off the hounds by seeking the change, and takes refuge in a herd of deer. The hounds hunt up to the place where he has joined the deer, and are puzzled and silent for awhile. But one old staunch hound soon picks up the right line again and makes such music on his discovery that many think he has been hit. The hounds hunt through the thicket where their quarry has been with other deer, and at last separate him from them, and before long hold him at bay. The stag has already frayed and burnished his head, so it is dangerous to approach him, but at last one of the *veneurs* gives him a *coup de grace* with his sword. Now the prise is blown, and again, cries Gace, no man who hears such melody would wish for any other paradise. After the hounds have had the *curée*, with all ceremony appertaining thereunto, the hunt-supper is described. The king admires the head of the stag, the burr, the heavy beam, and the points, and then asks who has harboured this stag. The chief huntsman tells him it is one of his best *veneurs*, who served his predecessors, and he claims an arpent of wood (half a hectar, Lit.) as his reward ; the king answers, he shall have three. The hunt-supper, with the special tit-bits of the stag reserved for the king, is then described, after which one and all recount the adventures of the day. The king, who has joined them after dinner, cannot help smiling at some of the tales he hears :

GACE DE LA BUIGNE—*continued*

> "Mys le Roy de ce qu'il ot dire
> Un peu s'en est pris soubzrire."

Nevertheless, everything that is told on these occasions, adds Gace, need not be considered untrue, for such strange adventures happen in the chase that he who knows nothing of such things would not credit them, and here he again quotes an old proverb :

> "De chiens, d'oiseaulx, d'armes, d'amours
> Pour une joie cent douleurs."

After the *chasse royale*, boar- and wolf-hunting are described, and hare-coursing with greyhounds. It is here that Gace gives the well-known description of the points of a good greyhound (*see* Appendix : Greyhound), a description which has been continually quoted and re-copied with but slight alterations, and is to be found in almost every work, ancient and modern, that treats of this breed of hounds. Hare-hunting is praised as being a sport which men of any estate may enjoy. Peasants assemble after the harvest, each bringing their own dogs with them, to hunt the hare—fifty or sixty of them would bring some forty dogs between them :

> "Les ung grands, les aultres petiz
> L'ung est matin, L'autre metiz."

With these they would account for some twenty or thirty hares. The fox is treated with the scant courtesy usually accorded to him in the early days of venery. The chief sport seemed to consist in drawing him out of his earth with terriers :

> "On le va querir dedans terre
> Avec ses bons chiens *terriers*
> Que on mect dans les terriers."

Having related all the delights of hunting, *Deduit des Chiens* asks for a decision in his favour. Then the *Deduit des Oiseaux*, or Knight of Hawking, asks to be heard, and speaks in favour of falconry, and advances many things against the keeping of hounds and hunting. Among others he urges the expense of hunting with hounds, as a large retinue is required, and says the king never takes a stag that does not cost him "100 livres de bons Parisis." Hunting is also full of danger, many nobles lose their lives by accidents that happen in the field, for instance, when a boar at bay is attacked by three dogs and a man, how often is not the man killed and two of the dogs, whilst the third is wounded ? Many more *pros* and *cons* are argued on either side.

Gace tells of a flight at the crane with two falcons brought from Barbary and given to Charles V. by Bertrand du Guesclin, Constable of France, and says that the king had at this time thirty hawks in his mews. After the royal hawking-party has been described, Gace tells of another hawking-party that lasted for a week, where there were no princes or barons present, but simply knights, priests, burghers, and squires, who had between them some twenty hawks. The falconer does not require the retinue that a hunter does, but only wants a couple of good *roussins* (road horses, not hunters or war horses), and four good spaniels who can range well and bring the game to him ("Quatre chiens et biens doubtans d'Espagne et bien retournans qu'il soient au commandement"). It is pointed out that one of the great advantages of falconry over hunting is that ladies could take part in hawking and carry their own sparrowhawks without creating any scandal, but that no great lady who wished to keep her reputation unsullied could spur her horse over hedges and through wood and thicket :

> "Or il est voir que une grant dame
> Qui veult garder sa bonne fame
> Ne ferroit pas des esperons
> Par hayes, par bois et par buissons
> Ne s'en yroit pas volentiers
> Tuer cerfz, ne loups, ne sangliers."

At last Reason declares that the king has heard enough from both sides. The king holds a council which is guided by Prudence and Reason, many knights in favour of hounds or hawking advising him ; among them is the Count of Tancarville, who knows as much of one as he does of the other, and is passionately attached to both pastimes. The king inclines to give falconry the palm, but after Justice and Right have spoken, he is still undecided what judgment to pronounce ; at last he appeals to Truth. Truth declares she knows little about either side as both falconers and huntsmen seek her company so seldom. At last Reason and Truth declare that although hawks are nobler than hounds, hounds are more useful than hawks, so that neither can lay sole claim to the word *Deduit*, but they may both use it if they add hounds or hawks to it, and say *Deduit des Chiens*, or *Deduit des Oiseaux*. The king orders the door of the council room to be opened, and summons the falconers and huntsmen before him, he tells them the result of the judgment and says they must soon leave his court as they are wanted in many courts in other countries, and especially at the court of Edward III. of England, who knows no master in the science of hunting, and cedes the place of honour to no one in valour on the battlefield. (Was it the return of your lost falcon, Messire Gace, that made you speak in praise of the king of the hated English, or was it that sympathy for so great a sportsman overcame the feeling of national animosity and induced you to pay him this tribute ?) Before leaving they appoint one to teach all the laws of falconry and hunting to those at the French Court. It is Count Tancarville as master in both branches of sport who is to remain and is requested by the others to thank the king on their behalf for his judgment.

Gace ends his poem with these verses :

> "Gasses a fait ceste Besoigne
> Pour Phé, Duc de Bourgoigne
> Son très cher redoubté Seigneur ;"

and begs those that read his book that they will ask God to pardon his faults as his love for hounds and hawks was great.

> "Que Dieu li pardoint ses defauts
> Car moult ama chiens et oiseaulx."

The above is merely a very sketchy account of Gace's work, but it is hoped sufficient to show that it merits more attention than it has generally