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### **The History Of English Poetry**

From The Close of the Eleventh To The Commencement of the Eighteenth  
Century

**Warton, Thomas**

**London, 1774**

Of The Origin Of Romantic Fiction in Europe. Dissertation I.

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DISSERTATION I.

OF THE  
O R I G I N  
O F  
ROMANTIC FICTION in EUROPE.

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**T**HAT peculiar and arbitrary species of Fiction which we commonly call Romantic, was entirely unknown to the writers of Greece and Rome. It appears to have been imported into Europe by a people, whose modes of thinking, and habits of invention, are not natural to that country. It is generally supposed to have been borrowed from the Arabians. But this origin has not been hitherto perhaps examined or ascertained with a sufficient degree of accuracy. It is my present design, by a more distinct and extended inquiry than has yet been applied to the subject, to trace the manner and the period of its introduction into the popular belief, the oral poetry, and the literature, of the Europeans.

It is an established maxim of modern criticism, that the fictions of Arabian imagination were communicated to the  
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western world by means of the crusades. Undoubtedly those expeditions greatly contributed to propagate this mode of fabling in Europe. But it is evident, although a circumstance which certainly makes no material difference as to the principles here established, that these fancies were introduced at a much earlier period. The Saracens, or Arabians, having been for some time seated on the northern coasts of Africa, entered Spain about the beginning of the eighth century<sup>a</sup>. Of this country they soon effected a complete conquest: and imposing their religion, language, and customs, upon the inhabitants, erected a royal seat in the capital city of Cordoua.

That by means of this establishment they first revived the sciences of Greece in Europe, will be proved at large in another place<sup>b</sup>: and it is obvious to conclude, that at the same time they disseminated those extravagant inventions which were so peculiar to their romantic and creative genius. A manuscript cited by Du Cange acquaints us, that the Spaniards, soon after the irruption of the Saracens, entirely neglected the study of the Latin language; and captivated with the novelty of the oriental books imported by these strangers, suddenly adopted an unusual pomp of style, and an affected elevation of diction<sup>c</sup>. The ideal tales of these eastern invaders, recommended by a brilliancy of description, a variety of imagery, and an exuberance of invention, hitherto unknown and unfamiliar to the cold and barren conceptions of a western climate, were eagerly caught up, and universally diffused. From Spain, by the communications of a constant commercial intercourse through the ports of Toulon and Marseilles, they soon passed into France and Italy.

<sup>a</sup> See ALMAKIN, edit. Pocock. p. 72.

<sup>b</sup> See the second Dissertation.

<sup>c</sup> "Arabico eloquio *sublimati*, &c. Du

Cang. Gloss. Med. Inf. Latinitat. tom. i.  
Præf. p. xxvii. §. 31.

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In France, no province, or district, seems to have given these fictions of the Arabians a more welcome or a more early reception, than the inhabitants of Armorica or Basse Bretagne, now Britany; for no part of France can boast so great a number of antient romances<sup>c</sup>. Many poems of high antiquity, composed by the Armorican bards, still remain<sup>d</sup>, and are frequently cited by father Lobineau in his learned history of Basse Bretagne<sup>e</sup>. This territory was as it were newly peopled in the fourth century by a colony or army of the Welsh, who migrated thither under the conduct of Maximus a Roman general in Britain<sup>f</sup>, and Conau

<sup>c</sup> The reason on which this conclusion is founded will appear hereafter.

<sup>d</sup> In the British Museum is a set of old French tales of chivalry in verse, written, as it seems, by the bards of Bretagne. MSS. Harl. 978. 107.

"TRISTRAM a WALES" is mentioned, f. 171. b.

Tristram ki bien saveit HARPEIR.

In the adventure of the knight ELIDUC. f. 172. b.

En Bretagne un chevalier  
Pruz, e curteis, hardi, e fier.

Again, under the same champion, f. 173.

Il tient sun chemin tut avant  
A la mer vient si est passez  
En Toteneis est arrivez  
Plufurs reis ot en la tere  
Entre eus eurent e strif e guere  
Vers Excestre en cil pais.

TOTENEIS is Totness in Devonshire.—

Under the knight MILUN. f. 166.

Milun fu de Suthwales nez.

He is celebrated for his exploits in Ireland, Norway, Gothland, Lotharingia, Albany, &c.

Under LAUNVAL, f. 154. b.

En Bretais lapelent Launval.

Under GUIGEMAR. f. 141.

La chambre est peint tut entour  
Venus de deveffe damur

Futres bien en la paintur  
Le traiz multres e la natur  
Coment hume deit amur tenir  
E lealment e bien servir  
Le livre Ovide ou il enseine, &c.

This description of a chamber painted with Venus and the three mysteries of nature, and the allusion to Ovid, prove the tales before us to be of no very high antiquity. But they are undoubtedly taken from others much older, of the same country. At the end of ELIDUC's tale we have these lines. f. 181.

Del aventure de ces traiz  
Li aancien BRITUN curteis  
Frent le lai pour remember  
Q'hum nel deust pas oublier.

And under the tale of FRESNE, f. 148.

Li BRITUN enfrent un lai.

At the conclusion of most of the tales it is said that these LAIS were made by the poets of Bretagne. Another of the tales is thus closed. f. 146.

Que cest kunte ke oi avez  
Fu Guigemar le LAI trouvez  
Q'hum fait en harpe en rote  
Bone est a oir la note.

<sup>e</sup> HISTOIRE DE BRETAGNE, ii. tom. fol.

<sup>f</sup> Maximus appears to have set up a separate interest in Britain, and to have engaged an army of the provincial Britons on his side, against the Romans. Not succeeding

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lord of Meiriadoc or Denbigh-land<sup>a</sup>. The Armoric language now spoken in Britany is a dialect of the Welsh: and so strong a resemblance still subsists between the two languages, that in our late conquest of Belleisle, such of our soldiers as were natives of Wales were understood by the peasantry. Milton, whose imagination was much struck with the old British story, more than once alludes to the Welsh colony planted in Armorica by Maximus and the prince of Meiriadoc.

Et tandem ARMORICOS Britonum sub lege colonos<sup>b</sup>.

And in the PARADISE LOST he mentions indiscriminately the knights of Wales and Armorica as the customary retinue of king Arthur.

—————What refounds  
In fable or romance, of Uther's son  
Begirt with BRITISH and ARMORIC knights<sup>c</sup>.

This migration of the Welsh into Britany or Armorica, which during the distractions of the empire, in consequence of the numerous armies of barbarians with which Rome was surrounded on every side, had thrown off its dependence on the Romans, seems to have occasioned a close connection between the two countries for many centuries<sup>d</sup>. Nor will

succeeding in his designs, he was obliged to retire with his British troops to the continent, as in the text. He had a considerable interest in Wales, having married Ellena daughter of Eudda a powerful chieftain of North-wales. She was born at Caernarvon, where her chapel is still shewn. Mon. Antiq. p. 166. seq.

<sup>e</sup> See Hist. de Bretagne, par d'Argentre, p. 2. Powel's WALES, p. 1. 2. seq. and p. 6. edit. 1584. Lhuyd's Etymol. p. 32. col. 3. And Galfrid. Mon. HIST. BRIT. Lib. v. c. 12. vii. 3. ix. 2. Compare Borlase, Antiq. Cornwall, B. i. ch. 10. p. 40.

<sup>f</sup> MANSUS.

<sup>g</sup> Parad. L. i. 579. Compare Pelloutier, Mém. sur la Langue Celt. fol. tom. i. 19.

<sup>k</sup> This secession of the Welsh, at so critical a period, was extremely natural, into a neighbouring maritime country, with which they had constantly trafficked, and which, like themselves, had disclaimed the Roman yoke. It is not related in any Greek or Roman historian. But their silence is by no means a sufficient warrant for us to reject the numerous testimonies of the old British writers concerning this event. It is mentioned, in particular, by Llywarchen, a famous bard, who lived only one hundred and fifty years afterwards. Many of his poems are still extant, in which he celebrates his twenty-four sons who wore gold chains, and were all killed in battles against the Saxons.

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it prove less necessary to our purpose to observe, that the Cornish Britons, whose language was another dialect of the antient British, from the fourth or fifth century downwards, maintained a no less intimate correspondence with the natives of Armorica: intermarrying with them, and perpetually resorting thither for the education of their children, for advice, for procuring troops against the Saxons, for the purposes of traffick, and various other occasions. This connection was so strongly kept up, that an ingenious French antiquary supposes, that the communications of the Armoricans with the Cornish had chiefly contributed to give a roughness or rather hardness to the romance or French language in some of the provinces, towards the eleventh century, which was not before discernible<sup>1</sup>. And this intercourse will appear more natural, if we consider, that not only Armorica, a maritime province of Gaul, never much frequented by the Romans, and now totally deserted by them, was still in some measure a Celtic nation; but that also the inhabitants of Cornwall, together with those of Devonshire and of the adjoining parts of Somersetshire, intermixing in a very slight degree with the Romans, and having suffered fewer important alterations in their original constitution and customs from the imperial laws and police than any other province of this island, long preserved their genuine manners and British character: and forming a sort of separate principality under the government of a succession of powerful chieftains, usually denominated princes or dukes of Cornwall, remained partly in a state of independence during the Saxon heptarchy, and were not entirely reduced till the Norman conquest. Cornwall, in particular, retained its old Celtic dialect till the reign of Elizabeth<sup>m</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> M. l'Abbé Lebeuf. RECHERCHES, &c. Mem. de Litt. tom. xvii. p. 718. edit. 4to.  
 " Je pense que cela dura jusqu'à ce que le  
 " commerce de ces provinces avec les peuples  
 " du Nord, et de l'Allemagne, et sur

" TOUT celui des HABITANS DE L'ARMORIQUE  
 " AVEC L'ANGLAIS, vers l'onzième siècle, &c."  
<sup>m</sup> See Camd. Brit. i. 44. edit. 1723.  
 Lhuyd's Arch. p. 253.

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And here I digress a moment to remark, that in the circumstance just mentioned about Wales, of its connection with Armorica, we perceive the solution of a difficulty which at first sight appears extremely problematical: I mean, not only that Wales should have been so constantly made the theatre of the old British chivalry, but that so many of the favorite fictions which occur in the early French romances, should also be literally found in the tales and chronicles of the elder Welsh bards<sup>o</sup>. It was owing to the perpetual communication kept up between the Welsh, and the people of Armorica who abounded in these fictions, and who naturally took occasion to interweave them into the history of their friends and allies. Nor are we now at a loss to give the reason why Cornwall, in the same French romances, is made the scene and the subject of so many romantic adventures<sup>o</sup>. In the meantime we may observe, what indeed has been already implied, that a strict intercourse was upheld between Cornwall and Wales. Their languages, customs, and alliances, as I have hinted, were the same; and they were separated only by a strait of inconsiderable breadth. Cornwall is frequently styled West-Wales by the British writers. At the invasion of the Saxons, both countries became indiscriminately the receptacle of the fugitive Britons. We find the Welsh and Cornish, as one people, often uniting themselves as in a national cause against the Saxons. They were frequently subject to the same prince<sup>p</sup>, who some-

<sup>o</sup> The story of LE COURT MANTEL, or the BOY AND THE MANTLE, told by an old French troubadour cited by M. de Sainte Palaye, is recorded in many manuscript Welsh chronicles, as I learn from original letters of Lhuyd in the Ashmolean Museum. See Mem. Anc. Chev. i. 119. And Obs. Spenser, i. §. ii. p. 54, 55. And from the same authority I am informed, that the fiction of the giant's coat composed of the beards of the kings whom he had conquered, is related in the legends of the bards of both countries. See Obs. Spens.

ut sup. p. 24. seq. But instances are innumerable.

<sup>o</sup> Hence in the Armorican tales just quoted, mention is made of Totnes and Exeter, anciently included in Cornwall. In Chaucer's ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE we have "Hornpipis of Cornewaile," among a great variety of musical instruments. v. 4250. This is literally from the French original, v. 3991.

<sup>p</sup> Who was sometimes chosen from Wales and Cornwall, and sometimes from ARMORICA. Borlase, ubi sup. p. 403. See also

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times resided in Wales, and sometimes in Cornwall; and the kings or dukes of Cornwall were perpetually sung by the Welsh bards. Llygad Gwr, a Welsh bard, in his sublime and spirited ode to Llwellyn, son of Grunfludd, the last prince of Wales of the British line, has a wish, "May the prints of the hoofs of my prince's steed be seen as far as CORNWALL". Traditions about king Arthur, to mention no more instances, are as popular in Cornwall as in Wales: and most of the romantic castles, rocks, rivers, and caves, of both nations, are alike at this day distinguished by some noble achievement, at least by the name, of that celebrated champion. But to return.

About the year 1100, Gualter, archdeacon of Oxford, a learned man, and a diligent collector of histories, travelling through France, procured in Armorica an antient chronicle written in the British or Armorican language, entitled, BRUTY-BREHINED, OR THE HISTORY OF THE KINGS OF BRITAIN'. This book he brought into England, and communicated it to Geoffrey of Monmouth, a Welsh Benedictine monk, an elegant writer of Latin, and admirably skilled in the British tongue. Geoffrey, at the request and recommendation of Gualter the archdeacon, translated this British chronicle into Latin, executing the translation with a tolerable degree of purity and great fidelity, yet not without

also p. 375; 377; 393. And Concil. Spelman. tom. i. p. 112. edit. 1639. fol. Stillingfleet's Orig. Brit. ch. 5. p. 344. seq. edit. 1688. fol. From CORNUWALLIA, used by the Latin monkish historians, came the present name Cornwall. Borlase, *ibid.* p. 325.

<sup>9</sup> Evans, p. 43.

<sup>7</sup> In the curious library of the family of Davies at Llanerk in Denbighshire, there is a copy of this chronicle in the handwriting of Guttyn Owen, a celebrated

Welsh bard and antiquarian about the year 1470, who ascribes it to Tyffilio a bishop, and the son of Brockmael-Yfeythroce prince of Powis. Tyffilio indeed wrote a HISTORY OF BRITAIN; but that work, as we are assured by Lhuyd in the ARCHÆOLOGIA, was entirely ecclesiastical, and has been long since lost.

<sup>8</sup> See Galfr. Mon. L. i. c. 1. xii. l. 20. ix. 2. Bale, ii. 65. Thompson's Pref. to Geoffrey's Hist. Transl. edit. Lond. 1718. p. xxx. xvi.

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some interpolations'. It was probably finished after the year 1138<sup>1</sup>.

\* Geoffrey confesses, that he took some part of his account of king Arthur's achievements from the mouth of his friend Gualter, the archdeacon; who probably related to the translator some of the traditions on this subject which he had heard in Armorica, or which at that time might have been popular in Wales. Hist. Brit. Galfr. Mon. lib. xi. c. i. He also owns that Merlin's prophecies were not in the Armorican original. Ib. vii. 2. Compare Thompson's Pref. ut supr. p. xxv. xxvii. The speeches and letters were forged by Geoffrey; and in the description of battles, our translator has not scrupled frequent variations and additions.

I am obliged to an ingenious antiquarian in British literature, Mr. Morris of Penbryn, for the following curious remarks concerning Geoffrey's original and his translation. "Geoffrey's SYLVIVS, in the British original, is SILIVS, which in Latin would make JULIVS. This illustrates and confirms Lambarde's, BRVTVS JULIVS. Peramb. Kent, p. 12. So also in the British bards. And hence Milton's objection is removed. Hist. Engl. p. 12. There are no FLAMINES or ARCHFLAMINES in the British book. See Usher's Primord. p. 57. Dubl. edit. There are very few speeches in the original, and those very short. Geoffrey's FVLGENIVS is in the British copy SVLIEN, which by analogy in Latin would be JULIANVS. See Milton's Hist. Eng. p. 100. There is no LELL in the British; that king's name was LLEON. Geoffrey's CAERLISLE is in the British CAERLLEON, or West-Chester. In the British, LLAW AP CYNFARCH, should have been translated LEO, which is now rendered LOTH. This has brought much confusion into the old Scotch history. I find no BELIVS in the British copy; the name is BELI, which should have been in Latin BELIVS, or BELGIUS. Geoffrey's BRENNVS in the original is BRAN, a common name among the Britons; as BRAN AP DYFNWAL, &c.

" See Suidas's B<sup>gr</sup>. It appears by the original, that the British name of CARAVIVS was CARAWN; hence TREGARAUN, i. e. TREGARON, and the river CARAUN, which gives name to ABERCORN. In the British there is no division into books and chapters, a mark of antiquity. Those whom the translator calls CONSULS of Rome, when Brennus took it, are in the original TWYSGION, i. e. princes or generals. The Gwalenses, GWALO, or GWALAS, are added by Geoffrey, B. xii. c. 19." To what is here observed about SILIVS, I will add, that abbot Whethamsted, in his MS. GRANARIUM, mentions SILOIVS the father of Brutus. "Quomodo Brutus SILOII filius ad litora Angliæ venit," &c. GRANAR. Part. i. Lit. A. MSS. Cotton. NERO, C. vi. Brit. Mus. This gentleman has in his possession a very ancient manuscript of the original, and has been many years preparing materials for giving an accurate and faithful translation of it into English. The manuscript in Jesus college library at Oxford, which Wynne pretends to be the same which Geoffrey himself made use of, is evidently not older than the sixteenth century. Mr. Price, the Bodleian librarian, to whose friendship this work is much indebted, has two copies lately given him by Mr. Banks, much more ancient and perfect. But there is reason to suspect, that most of the British manuscripts of this history are translations from Geoffrey's Latin: for *Britannia* they have BRYTTAEN, which in the original would have been PRYDAIN. Geoffrey's translation, and for obvious reasons, is a very common manuscript. Compare Lhuyd's Arch. p. 265.

<sup>1</sup> Thompson says, 1128. ubi supr. p. xxx. Geoffrey's age is ascertained beyond a doubt, even if other proofs were wanting, from the cotemporaries whom he mentions. Such as Robert earl of Gloucester, natural son of Henry the first, and Alexander bishop of Lincoln, his patrons: he mentions also William of Malmesbury, and Henry of Huntington.

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It is difficult to ascertain exactly the period at which our translator's original romance may probably be supposed to have been compiled. Yet this is a curious speculation, and will illustrate our argument. I am inclined to think that the work consists of fables thrown out by different rhapsodists at different times, which afterwards were collected and digested into an entire history, and perhaps with new decorations of fancy added by the compiler, who most probably was one of the professed bards, or rather a poetical historian, of Armorica or Basse Bretagne. In this state, and under this form, I suppose it to have fallen into the hands of Geoffrey of Monmouth. If the hypothesis hereafter advanced concerning the particular species of fiction on which this narrative is founded, should be granted, it cannot, from what I have already proved, be more antient than the eighth century: and we may reasonably conclude, that it was composed much later, as some considerable length of time must have been necessary for the propagation and establishment of that species of fiction. The simple subject of this chronicle, divested of its romantic embellishments, is a deduction of the Welsh princes from the Trojan Brutus to Cadwallader, who reigned in the seventh century". It must

Huntingdon. Wharton places Geoffrey's death in the year 1154. *Episc. Assav.* p. 306. Robert de Monte, who continued Sigebert's chronicle down to the year 1183, in the preface to that work expressly says, that he took some of the materials of his supplement from the *HISTORIA BRITONUM*, lately translated out of British into Latin. This was manifestly Geoffrey's book. Alfred of Beverly, who evidently wrote his *ANNALES*, published by Hearne, between the years 1148 and 1150, borrowed his account of the British kings from Geoffrey's *HISTORIA*, whose words he sometimes literally transcribes. For instance, Alfred, in speaking of Arthur's keeping Whitstunde at Caerleon, says, that the *HISTORIA BRITONUM* enumerated all the kings who came thither on

Arthur's invitation: and then adds, "Præter hos non remansit princeps alicujus pretii citra Hispaniam qui ad istud edictum non venerit." *Alured. Bev. Annal.* p. 63. edit. Hearne. These are Geoffrey's own words; and so much his own, that they are one of his additions to the British original. But the curious reader, who desires a complete and critical discussion of this point, may consult an original letter of bishop Lloyd, preserved among Tanner's manuscripts at Oxford, num. 94.

"This notion of their extraction from the Trojans had so infatuated the Welsh, that even so late as the year 1284, archbishop Peckham, in his injunctions to the diocese of St. Asaph, orders the people to abstain from giving credit to idle dreams and visions, a superstition which they had  
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be acknowledged, that many European nations were antiently fond of tracing their descent from Troy. Hunnibaldus Francus, in his Latin history of France, written in the sixth century, beginning with the Trojan war, and ending with Clovis the first, ascribes the origin of the French nation to Francio a son of Priam \*. So universal was this humour, and carried to such an absurd excess of extravagance, that under the reign of Justinian, even the Greeks were ambitious of being thought to be descended from the Trojans, their antient and notorious enemies. Unless we adopt the idea of those antiquaries, who contend that Europe was peopled from Phrygia, it will be hard to discover at what period, or from what source, so strange and improbable a notion could take its rise, especially among nations unacquainted with history, and overwhelmed in ignorance. The most rational mode of accounting for it, is to suppose, that the revival of Virgil's *Eneid* about the sixth or seventh century, which represented the Trojans as the founders of Rome, the capital of the supreme pontiff, and a city on various other accounts in the early ages of christianity highly revered and distinguished, occasioned an emulation in many other European nations of claiming an alliance to the same respectable original. The monks and other ecclesiastics, the only readers and writers of the age, were likely to broach, and were interested in propagating, such an opinion. As the more barbarous countries of Europe began to be tinged with literature, there was hardly one of them but fell into the fashion of deducing its original from some of the nations most celebrated in the antient books. Those who did not aspire so

contracted from their belief in the dream of their founder Brutus, in the temple of Diana, concerning his arrival in Britain. The archbishop very seriously advises them to boast no more of their relation to the conquered and fugitive Trojans, but to glory in the victorious cross of Christ. Con-

cil. Wilkins, tom. ii. p. 106. edit. 1737. fol.

\* It is among the *SCRIPTORES RER. GERMAN.* Sim. Schard. tom. i. p. 301. edit. Basil. 1574. fol. It consists of eighteen books.

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high as king Priam, or who found that claim preoccupied, boasted to be descended from some of the generals of Alexander the Great, from Prusias king of Bithynia, from the Greeks or the Egyptians. It is not in the mean time quite improbable, that as most of the European nations were provincial to the Romans, those who fancied themselves to be of Trojan extraction might have imbibed this notion, at least have acquired a general knowledge of the Trojan story, from their conquerors: more especially the Britons, who continued so long under the yoke of Rome\*. But as to the story of Brutus in particular, Geoffrey's hero, it may be presumed that his legend was not contrived, nor the history of his successors invented, till after the ninth century: for Nennius, who lived about the middle of that century, not only speaks of Brutus with great obscurity and inconsistency, but seems totally uninformed as to every circumstance of the British affairs which preceded Cæsar's invasion. There are other proofs that this piece could not have existed before the ninth century. Alfred's Saxon translation of the Mercian law is mentioned †. Charlemagne's Twelve Peers, and by an anachronism not uncommon in romance, are said to be present at king Arthur's magnificent coronation in the city of Caerleon ‡. It were easy to produce instances, that this chronicle was undoubtedly framed after the legend of saint Ursula, the acts of saint Lucius, and the historical writings of the venerable Bede, had undergone some degree of circulation in the world. At the same time it contains many passages which incline us to determine, that some parts of it at least were written after or about the eleventh century. I will not insist on that passage, in which the title of legate of the apostolic see is attributed to Dubricius in the character of primate of Britain; as it appears for obvious reasons to have been an artful interpolation of the translator, who was an ecclesiastic. But I will select other arguments. Canute's forest, or Can-

\* See *infra*. Sect. iii. p. 127, 128.

† L. iii. c. 13.

‡ L. ix. c. 12.

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nock-wood in Staffordshire occurs; and Canute died in the year 1036<sup>a</sup>. At the ideal coronation of king Arthur, just mentioned, a tournament is described as exhibited in its highest splendor. "Many knights, says our Armoric fabler, famous for feats of chivalry, were present, with apparel and arms of the same colour and fashion. They formed a species of diversion, in imitation of a fight on horseback, and the ladies being placed on the walls of the castles, darted amorous glances on the combatants. None of these ladies esteemed any knight worthy of her love, but such as had given proof of his gallantry in three several encounters. Thus the valour of the men encouraged chastity in the women, and the attention of the women proved an incentive to the soldier's bravery<sup>b</sup>." Here is the practice of chivalry under the combined ideas of love and military prowess, as they seem to have subsisted after the feudal constitution had acquired greater degrees not only of stability but of splendor and refinement<sup>c</sup>. And although a species of tournament was exhibited in France at the reconciliation of the sons of Lewis the feeble, in the close of the ninth century, and at the beginning of the tenth, the coronation of the emperor Henry was solemnized with martial entertainments, in which many parties were introduced fighting on horseback; yet it was long afterwards that these games were accompanied with the peculiar formalities, and ceremonious usages, here described<sup>c</sup>. In the mean time, we

<sup>a</sup> L. vii. c. 4.

<sup>b</sup> L. ix. c. 12.

<sup>c</sup> Pitts mentions an anonymous writer under the name of BREMIA BRITANNUS, who studied history and astronomy, and flourished about the year 720. He wrote, besides a book in an unknown language, entitled, *Sanctem Graal, De Rege Arturo et rebus gestis ejus*. Lib. i. *De Mensa rotunda et SRENVIS EQUITIBUS*, lib. i. See Pitts. p. 122. Bale, x. 21. Usser. Primord. p. 17. This subject could not have been treated by so early a writer.

<sup>c</sup> See infr. SECT. iii. p. 109. xii. p. 347, 348. I will here produce, from that learned orientalist M. D'Herbelot, some curious traits of Arabian knight-errantry, which the reader may apply to the principles of this Dissertation as he pleases.

"BATHALL.—Une homme hardi et vaillant, qui cherchà des aventures tels qu'etoient les chevaliers errans de nos anciens Romans." He adds, that Bathall, an Arabian, who lived about the year of Christ 740, was a warrior of this class, concerning whom many marvellous feats of arms,

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cannot answer for the innovations of a translator in such a description. The burial of Hengist, the Saxon chief, who is said to have been interred not after the *pagan* fashion, as Geoffrey renders the words of the original, but after the *manner of the SOLDANS*, is partly an argument that our romance was composed about the time of the crusades. It was not till those memorable campaigns of mistaken devotion had infatuated the western world, that the soldans or sultans of Babylon, of Egypt, of Iconium, and other eastern kingdoms, became familiar in Europe. Not that the notion of this piece being written so late as the crusades in the least invalidates the doctrine delivered in this discourse. Not even if we suppose that Geoffrey of Monmouth was its original composer. That notion rather tends to confirm and establish my system. On the whole we may venture to affirm, that this chronicle, supposed to contain the ideas of the Welsh bards, entirely consists of Arabian inventions. And, in this view, no difference is made whether it was compiled about the tenth century, at which time, if not before, the Arabians from their settlement in Spain must have communicated their romantic fables to other parts of Europe, especially to the French; or whether it first appeared in the eleventh century, after the crusades had multiplied these fables to an excessive degree, and made them universally popular. And although the general cast of the inventions contained in this romance is alone sufficient to point out the source from whence they were derived, yet I chuse to prove to a demonstration what is here advanced, by producing and examining some particular passages.

The books of the Arabians and Persians abound with extravagant traditions about the giants Gog and Magog. These they call Jagiougé and Magiougé; and the Caucasian wall,

arms are reported; that his life was written in a large volume, "mais qu'elle est toute remplie d'exaggerations et de meneries." *Bibl. Oriental.* p. 193. a. b. In the royal

library at Paris, there is an Arabian book entitled, "Scirat al Mogiah-edir," i. e. "The Lives of the most valiant Champions. Num. 1079.

said

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said to be built by Alexander the Great from the Caspian to the Black Sea, in order to cover the frontiers of his dominion, and to prevent the incursions of the Sythians<sup>d</sup>, is called by the orientals the WALL of GOG and MAGOG<sup>e</sup>. One of the most formidable giants, according to our Armorican ro-

<sup>d</sup> Compare M. Petis de la Croix, Hist. Genghizcan, l. iv. c. 9.

<sup>e</sup> Herbelot. Bibl. Oriental. p. 157. 291. 318. 438. 470. 528. 795. 796. 811, &c. They call Tartary the land of Gajouge and Majiouge. This wall, some few fragments of which still remain, they pretend to have been built with all sorts of metals. See Abulfaraj Hist. Dynast. edit. Pococke, p. 62. A. D. 1673. It was an old tradition among the Tartars, that the people of Jajouge and Majiouge were perpetually endeavouring to make a passage through this fortress; but that they would not succeed in their attempt till the day of judgment. See Hist. General. des Tartars, d'Abulgazi Bahadut Khân. p. 43. About the year 808, the caliph Al Amin having heard wonderful reports concerning this wall or barrier, sent his interpreter Salam, with a guard of fifty men, to view it. After a dangerous journey of near two months, Salam and his party arrived in a desolated country, where they beheld the ruins of many cities destroyed by the people of Jajouge and Majiouge. In six days more they reached the castles near the mountain Kokaiya or Caucasus. This mountain is inaccessiblely steep, perpetually covered with snows and thick clouds, and encompasses the country of Jajouge and Magiouge, which is full of cultivated fields and cities. At an opening of this mountain the fortress appears: and travelling forwards, at the distance of two stages, they found another mountain, with a ditch cut through it one hundred and fifty cubits wide; and within the aperture an iron gate fifty cubits high, supported by vast buttresses, having an iron bulwark crowned with iron turrets, reaching to the summit of the mountain itself, which is too high to be seen. The valves, lintels, threshold, bolts, lock and key, are all represented of proportionable magnitude. The governor of the castle above-

mentioned, once in every week mounted on horseback with ten others on horseback, comes to this gate, and striking it three times with a hammer weighing five pounds, and then listening, hears a murmuring noise from within. This noise is supposed to proceed from the Jajouge and Magiouge confined there. Salam was told that they often appeared on the battlements of the bulwark. He returned after passing twenty-eight months in this extraordinary expedition. See Mod. Univ. Hist. vol. iv. B. i. § 2. pag. 15. 16. 17. And Anc. vol. xx. pag. 23. Pliny, speaking of the PORTÆ CAUCASIÆ, mentions, "ingens nature opus, montibus interruptis repente, ubi fores obditæ ferratis trabibus," &c. Nat. Hist. lib. vi. c. 2. Czar Peter the first, in his expedition into Persia, had the curiosity to survey the ruins of this wall: and some leagues within the mountain he found a skirt of it which seemed entire, and was about fifteen feet high. In some other parts it is still six or seven feet in height. It seems at first sight to be built of stone: but it consists of petrified earth, sand, and shells, which compose a substance of great solidity. It has been chiefly destroyed by the neighbouring inhabitants, for the sake of its materials: and most of the adjacent towns and villages are built out of its ruins. Bentinck's Notes on Abulgazi, p. 722. Eng. edit. See Chardin's Travels. p. 176. And Struys's Voyage, B. iii. c. 20. p. 226. Olearius's Travels of the Holstein Ambassador. B. vii. p. 403. Geograph. Nubiens. vi. c. 9. And Act. Petropolit. vol. i. p. 405. By the way, this work probably preceded the time of Alexander: it does not appear, from the course of his victories, that he ever came near the Caspian gates. The first and fabulous history of the eastern nations, will perhaps be found to begin with the exploits of this Grecian hero.

mance

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mance, which opposed the landing of Brutus in Britain, was Goemagot. He was twelve cubits high, and would unroot an oak as easily as an hazel wand: but after a most obstinate encounter with Corineus, he was tumbled into the sea from the summit of a steep cliff on the rocky shores of Cornwall, and dashed in pieces against the huge crags of the declivity. The place where he fell, adds our historian, taking its name from the giant's fall, is called LAM-GOEMAGOT, or GOEMAGOT'S LEAP, to this day <sup>f</sup>. A no less monstrous giant, whom king Arthur slew on Saint Michael's Mount in Cornwall, is said by this fabler to have come from Spain. Here the origin of these stories is evidently betrayed <sup>g</sup>. The Arabians, or Saracens, as I have hinted above, had conquered Spain, and were settled there. Arthur having killed this redoubted giant, declares, that he had combated with none of equal strength and prowess, since he overcame the mighty giant Ritho, on the mountain Arabius, who had made himself a robe of the beards of the kings whom he had killed. This tale is in Spenser's Faerie Queene. A magician brought from Spain is called to the assistance of Edwin, a prince of Northumberland <sup>h</sup>, educated under Solomon king of the Armoricans <sup>i</sup>. In the prophecy of Merlin, delivered to Vortigern after the battle of the dragons, forged perhaps by the translator Geoffrey, yet apparently in the spirit and manner of the rest, we have the Arabians named, and their situations in Spain and Africa. "From Conau shall come forth  
" a wild boar, whose tusks shall destroy the oaks of the forests of France. The ARABIANS and AFRICANS shall  
" dread him; and he shall continue his rapid course into  
" the most distant parts of Spain <sup>k</sup>." This is king Arthur. In the same prophecy, mention is made of the " Woods of

<sup>f</sup> Lib. i. c. 16.

<sup>g</sup> L. X. c. 3.

<sup>h</sup> The Cumbrian and Northumbrian Britons, as powerful opponents of the Saxons,

were strongly allied to the Welsh and Cornish.

<sup>i</sup> Lib. xii. c. 1, 4, 5, 6.

<sup>k</sup> Lib. vii. c. 3.

" Africa."



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“Africa.” In another place Gormund king of the Africans occurs <sup>1</sup>. In a battle which Arthur fights against the Romans, some of the principal leaders in the Roman army are Alifantinam king of Spain, Pandrafus king of Egypt, Boccus king of the Medes, Evander king of Syria, Micipsa king of Babylon, and a duke of Phrygia<sup>2</sup>. It is obvious to suppose how these countries became so familiar to the bard of our chronicle. The old fictions about Stonehenge were derived from the same inexhaustible source of extravagant imagination. We are told in this romance, that the giants conveyed the stones which compose this miraculous monument from the farthest coasts of Africa. Every one of these stones is supposed to be mystical, and to contain a medicinal virtue: an idea drawn from the medical skill of the Arabians<sup>3</sup>, and more particularly from the Arabian doctrine of attributing healing qualities, and other occult properties, to stones<sup>4</sup>. Merlin’s transformation of Uther into Gorlois, and of Ulfen into Bricel, by the power of some medical preparation, is a species of Arabian magic, which professed to work the most wonderful deceptions of this kind, and is mentioned at large hereafter, in tracing the inventions of Chaucer’s poetry. The attribution of prophetic language to birds was common among the orientals: and an eagle is supposed to speak at building the walls of the city of Paladur, now Shaftesbury<sup>5</sup>. The Arabians cultivated the study of philo-

<sup>1</sup> Lib. xii. 2. xi. 8. 10.

<sup>2</sup> Lib. x. c. 5. 8. 10.

<sup>3</sup> See infr. SECT. i. p. 10. And SECT. xiii. p. 378. infr.

<sup>4</sup> This chronicle was evidently compiled to do honour to the Britons and their affairs, and especially in opposition to the Saxons. Now the importance with which these romancers seem to speak of Stonehenge, and the many beautiful fictions with which they have been so studious to embellish its origin, and to aggrandise its history, appear to me strongly to favour the

hypothesis, that Stonehenge is a British monument; and indeed to prove, that it was really erected in memory of the three hundred British nobles massacred by the Saxon Hengist. See SECT. ii. infr. p. 52. No DRUIDICAL monument, of which so many remains were common, engaged their attention or interested them so much, as this NATIONAL memorial appears to have done.

<sup>5</sup> Lib. ii. c. 9. See SECT. inf. xv. p. 413.

sophy

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fophy, particularly astronomy, with amazing ardour\*. Hence arose the tradition, reported by our historian, that in king Arthur's reign, there subsisted at Caer-leon in Glamorgan-shire a college of two hundred philosophers, who studied astronomy and other sciences; and who were particularly employed in watching the courses of the stars, and predicting events to the king from their observations<sup>†</sup>. Edwin's Spanish magician above-mentioned, by his knowledge of the flight of birds, and the courses of the stars, is said to foretell future disasters. In the same strain Merlin, prognosticates Uther's success in battle by the appearance of a comet<sup>‡</sup>. The same enchanter's *wonderful skill in mechanical powers*, by which he removes the giant's Dance, or Stonehenge, from Ireland into England, and the notion that this stupendous structure was raised by a PROFOUND PHILOSOPHICAL KNOWLEDGE OF THE MECHANICAL ARTS, are founded on the Arabic literature<sup>§</sup>. To which we may add king Bladud's magical operations<sup>¶</sup>. Dragons are a sure mark of orientalism. One of these in our romance is a "terrible dragon flying from the west, breathing fire, and illuminating all the country with the brightness of his eyes". In another place we have a giant mounted on a winged dragon: the dragon erects his scaly tail, and wafts his rider to the clouds with great rapidity<sup>||</sup>.

Arthur and Charlemagne are the first and original heroes of romance. And as Geoffrey's history is the grand repository of the acts of Arthur, so a fabulous history ascribed to Turpin is the ground work of all the chimerical legends which have been related concerning the conquests of Charlemagne and his twelve peers. Its subject is the expulsion of the Sara-

\* See Diss. ii. And Sect. xv. inf. p. 402.

† L. viii. c. 15.

‡ Lib. ix. c. 12.

§ L. viii. c. 10. See infr. Sect. xv. passim.

¶ L. ii. 10.

|| L. x. c. 2.

|| L. vii. c. 4.

## DISSERTATION II

cens from Spain: and it is filled with fictions evidently congenial with those which characterise Geoffrey's history \*.

Some suppose, as I have hinted above, this romance to have been written by Turpin, a monk of the eighth century; who, for his knowledge of the Latin language, his sanctity, and gallant exploits against the Spanish Saracens, was preferred to the archbishoprick of Rheims by Charlemagne. Others believe it to have been forged under archbishop Turpin's name about that time. Others very soon afterwards, in the reign of Charles the Bald<sup>x</sup>. That is, about the year 870<sup>y</sup>.

Voltaire, a writer of much deeper research than is imagined, and the first who has displayed the literature and customs of the dark ages with any degree of penetration and comprehension, speaking of the fictitious tales concerning Charlemagne, has remarked, "Ces fables qu'un moine <sup>z</sup> *écrivit au onzième siècle, sous le nom de l'archevêque "Turpin."* And it might easily be shewn that just before the commencement of the thirteenth century, romantic stories about Charlemagne were more fashionable than ever among the French minstrels. That is, on the recent publication of this fabulous history of Charlemagne. Historical evidence concurs with numerous internal arguments to prove, that it must have been compiled after the crusades. In the twentieth chapter, a pretended pilgrimage of Charlemagne to the holy sepulchre at Jerusalem is recorded: a forgery

\* I will mention only one among many others. The christians under Charlemagne are said to have found in Spain a golden idol, or image of Mahomet, as high as a bird can fly. It was framed by Mahomet himself of the purest metal, who by his knowledge in necromancy had sealed up within it a legion of diabolical spirits. It held in its hand a prodigious club; and the Saracens had a prophetic tradition, that this club should fall from the hand of the

image in that year when a certain king should be born in France, &c. J. Turpini Hist. de Vit. Carol. Magn. et Rolandi, cap. iv. f. 2. a.

<sup>x</sup> See Hist. Acad. des Inscript. &c. vii. 293. edit. 4to.

<sup>y</sup> See Catel, Mem. de l'Hist. du Languedoc, pag. 545.

<sup>z</sup> "Hist. Gen. ch. viii. Oeuvr. tom. i. p. 84. edit. Genev. 1756.

seemingly

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seemingly contrived with a design to give an importance to those wild expeditions, and which would easily be believed when thus authenticated by an archbishop<sup>a</sup>.

There is another strong internal proof that this romance was written long after the time of Charlemagne. Our historian is speaking of the numerous chiefs and kings who came with their armies to assist his hero: among the rest he mentions earl Oell, and adds, "Of this man there is a song commonly sung among the minstrels *even to this day*." Nor will I believe, that the European art of war, in the eighth century, could bring into the field such a prodigious parade of battering rams and wooden castles, as those with which Charlemagne is said to have besieged the city Agennum<sup>c</sup>: the crusades seem to have made these huge military machines common in the European armies. However we may suspect it appeared before, yet not long before, Geoffrey's romance; who mentions Charlemagne's TWELVE PEERS, so lavishly celebrated in Turpin's book, as present at king Arthur's imaginary coronation at Caer-leon. Although the twelve peers of France occur in chronicles of the tenth century<sup>d</sup>; and they might besides have been suggested to Geoffrey's original author, from popular traditions and songs of minstrels. We are sure it was extant before the year 1122, for Calixtus the second in that year, by papal

<sup>a</sup> See *infr.* SECT. iii. p. 124.

<sup>b</sup> "De hoc canitur in Cantilena usque ad *hodiernum diem*." cap. xi. f. 4. b. edit. Schard. Francof. 1566. fol. Chronograph. Quat.

<sup>c</sup> *Ibid.* cap. ix. f. 3. b. The writer adds, "Cæterisque artificii ad capiendum, &c." See also cap. x. *ibid.* Compare SECT. iv. *infr.* p. 160. In one of Charlemagne's battles, the Saracens advance with horrible visors bearded and horned, and with drums or cymbals. "Tenentque singuli *TRUM-PANA*, quæ manibus fortiter percuti-

"bant." The unusual spectacle and sound terrified the horses of the christian army, and threw them into confusion. In a second engagement, Charlemagne commanded the eyes of the horses to be covered, and their ears to be stopped. Turpin. cap. xviii. f. 7. b. The latter expedient is copied in the Romance of RICHARD THE FIRST, written about the eleventh century. See SECT. iv. *infr.* p. 165. See also what is said of the Saracen drums. *ibid.* p. 167.

<sup>d</sup> Flodoard of Rheims first mentions them, whose chronicle comes down to 966.

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authority, pronounced this history to be genuine<sup>e</sup>. Monsieur Allard affirms, that it was written, and in the eleventh century, at Vienna by a monk of Saint Andrew's<sup>f</sup>. This monk was probably nothing more than some Latin translator: but a learned French antiquary is of opinion, that it was originally composed in Latin; and moreover, that the most antient romances, even those of the Round Table, were originally written in that language<sup>g</sup>. Oienhart, and with the greatest probability, supposes it to be the work of a Spaniard. He quotes an authentic manuscript to prove, that it was brought out of Spain into France before the close of the twelfth century<sup>h</sup>; and that the miraculous exploits performed in Spain by Charlemagne and earl Roland, recorded in this romantic history, were unknown among the French before that period: except only that some few of them were obscurely and imperfectly sketched in the metrical tales of those who sung heroic adventures<sup>i</sup>. Oienhart's supposition that this history was compiled in Spain, the centre of oriental fabling in Europe, at once accounts for the nature and extravagance of its fictions, and immediately points to their Arabian origin<sup>k</sup>. As to the French manuscript of

<sup>e</sup> Magn. Chron. Belgic. pag. 150. sub ann. Compare J. Long. Bibl. Hist. Gall. num. 6671. And Lambec. ii. p. 333.

<sup>f</sup> Bibl. de Dauphiné. p. 224.

<sup>g</sup> See infr. SECT. viii. p. 464.

<sup>h</sup> See infr. SECT. iii. p. 135.

<sup>i</sup> Arnoldi Oienharti Notit. utriusque Vasconia, edit. Paris. 1638. 4to. pag. 397. lib. iii. c. 3. Such was Roland's song, sung at the battle of Hastings. But see this romance, cap. xx. f. 8. b. Where Turpin seems to refer to some other fabulous materials or history concerning Charlemagne. Particularly about Galafar and Braiamant, which make such a figure in Boyardo and Ariosto.

<sup>k</sup> Innumerable romantic stories, of Arabian growth, are to this day current among the common people of Spain, which they call CUENTOS DE VIEJAS. I will re-

late one from that lively picture of the Spaniards, RELATION DU VOYAGE D'ESPAGNE, by Mademoiselle Danois. Within the antient castle of Toledo, they say, there was a vast cavern whose entrance was strongly barricadoed. It was universally believed, that if any person entered this cavern, the most fatal disasters would happen to the Spaniards. Thus it remained closely shut and unentered for many ages. At length king Roderigo, having less credulity, but more courage and curiosity than his ancestors, commanded this formidable recess to be opened. At entering, he began to suspect the traditions of the people to be true: a terrible tempest arose, and all the elements seemed united to embarrass him. Nevertheless, he ventured forwards into the cave, where he discerned by the light of his torches certain figures or sta-

tures.

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this history, it is a translation from Turpin's Latin, made by Michel de Harnes in the year 1207<sup>1</sup>. And, by the way, from the translator's declaration, that there was a great impropriety in translating Latin prose into verse, we may conclude, that at the commencement of the thirteenth century the French generally made their translations into verse.

In these two fabulous chronicles the foundations of romance seem to be laid. The principal characters, the leading subjects, and the fundamental fictions, which have supplied such ample matter to this singular species of composition, are here first displayed. And although the long continuance of the crusades imported innumerable inventions of a similar complexion, and substituted the achievements of new champions and the wonders of other countries, yet the tales of Arthur and of Charlemagne, diversified indeed, or enlarged with additional embellishments, still continued to prevail, and to be the favourite topics: and this, partly from their early popularity, partly from the quantity and the beauty of the fictions with which they were at first supported, and especially because the design of the crusades had made those subjects so fashionable in which christians fought with infidels. In a word, these volumes are the first specimens

tues of men, whose habiliments and arms were strange and uncouth. One of them had a sword of shining brass, on which it was written in Arabic characters, that the time approached when the Spanish nation should be destroyed, and that it would not be long before the warriors, whose images were placed there, should arrive in Spain. The writer adds, "Je n'ai jamais été en aucun endroit, où l'on fasse PLUS DE CAS des CONTES FABULEUX qu'en Espagne." Edit. à la Haye, 1691. tom. iii. p. 158. 159. 12mo. See *infr.* *SECT.* iii. p. 112. And the *LIFE* of CERVANTES, by Don Gregorio Mayans. §. 27. §. 47. §. 48. §. 49.

<sup>1</sup> See Du Chesne, tom. v. p. 60. And

*Mem. Lit.* xvii. 737. seq. It is in the royal library at Paris, Num. 8190. Probably the French Turpin in the British Museum is the same, Cod. MSS. Harl. 273. 23. f. 86. See *infr.* *SECT.* iii. p. 135. See instances of the English translating prose Latin books into English, and sometimes French, verse. *SECT.* ii. *infr.* *passim.*

In the king's library at Paris, there is a translation of Dares Phrygius into French rhymes by Godfrey of Waterford an Irish Jacobin, a writer not mentioned by Tanner, in the thirteenth century. *Mem. Litt.* tom. xvii. p. 736. Compare *SECT.* iii. *infr.* p. 125. In the Notes.

extant.

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extant in this mode of writing. No European history before these has mentioned giants, enchanters, dragons, and the like monstrous and arbitrary fictions. And the reason is obvious: they were written at a time when a new and unnatural mode of thinking took place in Europe, introduced by our communication with the east.

Hitherto I have considered the Saracens either at their immigration into Spain about the ninth century, or at the time of the crusades, as the first authors of romantic fabling among the Europeans. But a late ingenious critic has advanced an hypothesis, which assigns a new source, and a much earlier date, to these fictions. I will cite his opinion of this matter in his own words. "Our old romances of chivalry may be derived in a LINEAL DESCENT from the antient historical songs of the Gothic bards and scalds.—Many of those songs are still preserved in the north, which exhibit all the seeds of chivalry before it became a solemn institution.—Even the common arbitrary fictions of romance were most of them familiar to the antient scalds of the north, long before the time of the crusades. They believed the existence of giants and dwarfs, they had some notion of fairies, they were strongly possessed with the belief of spells and incantment, and were fond of inventing combats with dragons and monsters." Monsieur Mallet, a very able and elegant inquirer into the genius and antiquities of the northern nations, maintains the same doctrine. He seems to think, that many of the opinions and practices of the Goths, however obsolete, still obscurely subsist. He adds, "May we not rank among these, for example, that love and admiration for the profession of arms which prevailed among our ancestors even to fanaticism, mad as it were through system, and brave from a point of honour?—

<sup>m</sup> Percy, on *ANTIEN T METR. ROM.* i. p. 3. 4. edit. 1767.

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“ Can we not explain from the Gothic religion, how judi-  
 “ ciary combats, and proofs by the ordeal, to the astonish-  
 “ ment of posterity, were admitted by the legislature of all  
 “ Europe : and how, even to the present age, the people  
 “ are still infatuated with a belief of the power of magi-  
 “ cians, witches, spirits, and genii, concealed under the earth  
 “ or in the waters ?---Do we not discover in these religious  
 “ opinions, that source of the marvellous with which our  
 “ ancestors filled their romances; in which we see dwarfs  
 “ and giants, fairies and demons,” &c °. And in another  
 place. “ The fortresses of the Goths were only rude castles  
 “ situated on the summits of rocks, and rendered inaccessible  
 “ by thick misshapen walls. As these walls ran winding  
 “ round the castles, they often called them by a name which  
 “ signified SERPENTS OR DRAGONS; and in these they usually  
 “ secured the women and young virgins of distinction, who  
 “ were seldom safe at a time when so many enterprising  
 “ heroes were rambling up and down in search of adven-  
 “ tures. It was this custom which gave occasion to antient  
 “ romancers, who knew not how to describe any thing  
 “ simply, to invent so many fables concerning princesses of  
 “ great beauty guarded by dragons, and afterwards delivered  
 “ by invincible champions ”.

° For the judiciary combats, as also for common athletic exercises, they formed an amphitheatrical circus of rude stones. “Quædam [saxa] CIRCOS claudabant, in quibus gigantes et pugiles DUELLO strenue decertabant.” Worm. p. 62. And again, “Nec mora, CIRCVATUR campus, milite CIRCUS slipatur, concurrunt pugiles.” p. 65. It is remarkable, that circs of the same sort are still to be seen in Cornwall, so famous at this day for the athletic art: in which also they sometimes exhibited their scriptural interludes. See *infr.* *SECT.* vi. p. 237. Frotho the Great, king of Denmark, in the first century, is said to have been the first who commanded all controversies to be decided by the sword.

Worm. p. 68. In favour of this barbarous institution it ought to be remembered, that the practice of thus marking out the place of battle must have prevented much bloodshed, and saved many innocent lives: for if either combatant was by any accident forced out of the circus, he was to lose his cause, or to pay three marks of pure silver as a redemption for his life. Worm. p. 68, 69. In the year 987, the ordeal was substituted in Denmark instead of the duel; a mode of decision, at least in a political sense, less absurd, as it promoted military skill.

° Mallet; Introduction a l'Histoire de Danemarck, &c. tom. ii. p. 9.

¶ *lb.* ch. ix. p. 243. tom. ii.



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I do not mean entirely to reject this hypothesis: but I will endeavour to shew how far I think it is true, and in what manner or degree it may be reconciled with the system delivered above.

A few years before the birth of Christ, soon after Mithridates had been overthrown by Pompey, a nation of Asiatic Goths, who possessed that region of Asia which is now called Georgia, and is connected on the south with Persia, alarmed at the progressive encroachments of the Roman armies, retired in vast multitudes under the conduct of their leader Odin, or Woden, into the northern parts of Europe, not subject to the Roman government, and settled in Denmark, Norway, Sweden, and other districts of the Scandinavian territory<sup>9</sup>. As they brought with them many useful arts, particularly the knowledge of letters, which Odin is said to have invented<sup>10</sup>, they were hospitably received by the natives,

<sup>9</sup> "Unicam gentium Asiaticarum Immigrationem, in orbem Arcticum factam, nostræ antiquitates commemorant. Sed eam tamen non primam. Verum circa annum tandem vicesimum quartum ante natum Christum, Romanis exercitibus auspiciis Pompeii Magni in Asiæ parte, Phrygia Minore, grassantibus. Illa enim epocha ad hanc rem chronologi nostri utuntur. In cujus (GYLVI SUECIÆ regis) tempora incidit Odinus, Asiaticæ immigrationis, factæ anno 24 ante natum Christum, antesignanus." Crymogæa, Arngrim. Jon. lib. i. cap. 4. p. 30. 31. edit. Hamburg. 1609. See also Bartholin. Antiquitat. Dan. Lib. ii. cap. 8. p. 407. iii. c. 2. p. 652. edit. 1689. Lazius, de Gent. Migrat. L. x. fol. 573. 30. edit. fol. 1600. Compare Ol. Rudbeck. cap. v. sect. 2. p. 95. xiv. sect. 2. p. 67. There is a memoir on this subject lately published in the Petersburg Transactions, but I chuse to refer to original authorities. See tom v. p. 297. edit. 1738. 40.

<sup>10</sup> "Odino etiam et aliis, qui ex Asia huc devenere, tribuunt multi antiquitatum

"Islandicarum periti; unde et Odinus RUNHOFDI seu Runarum (i. e. *Literarum*) auctor vocatur." Ol. Worm. *Liter. Runic.* cap. 20. edit. Hafn. 1651. Some writers refer the origin of the Grecian language, sciences, and religion to the Scythians, who were connected towards the south with Odin's Goths. I cannot bring a greater authority than that of Salmastius, "Satis certum ex his colligi potest linguam, ut gentem, HELLENICAM, a septentrione et SCYTHIA originem traxisse, non a meridie. Inde *ETERÆ GRÆCORUM*, inde *MUSÆ PIRIDES*, inde sacrorum initia." Salmast. de Hellenist. p. 400. As a further proof I shall observe, that the antient poet Thamyris was so much esteemed by the Scythians, on account of his poetry, *ἡσθευμένη*, that they chose him their king. Conon. *Narrat. Poet.* cap. vii. edit. Gal. But Thamyris was a Thracian: and a late ingenious antiquarian endeavours to prove, that the Goths were descended from the Thracians, and that the Greeks and Thracians were only different clans of the same people. Clarke's *Connexion*, &c. ch. ii. p. 65.

and

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and by degrees acquired a safe and peaceable establishment in the new country, which seems to have adopted their language, laws, and religion. Odin is said to have been stiled a god by the Scandinavians; an appellation which the superior address and specious abilities of this Asiatic chief easily extorted from a more savage and uncivilised people.

This migration is confirmed by the concurrent testimonies of various historians: but there is no better evidence of it, than that conspicuous similarity subsisting at this day between several customs of the Georgians, as described by Chardin, and those of certain cantons of Norway and Sweden, which have preserved their antient manners in the purest degree<sup>6</sup>. Not that other striking implicit and internal proofs, which often carry more conviction than direct historical assertions, are wanting to point out this migration. The antient inhabitants of Denmark and Norway inscribed the exploits of their kings and heroes on rocks, in characters called Runic; and of this practice many marks are said still to remain in those countries<sup>7</sup>. This art or custom of writing on rocks is Asiatic<sup>8</sup>. Modern travellers report, that there are Runic inscriptions now existing in the deserts of Tartary<sup>9</sup>. The WRITTEN MOUNTAINS of the Jews are an instance that this fashion was oriental. Antiently, when one of these northern chiefs fell honourably in battle, his weapons, his war-horse, and his wife, were consumed with himself on the same funeral pile<sup>7</sup>. I need

<sup>6</sup> See Pontoppidan. Nat. Hist. Norway, tom. ii. c. 10. §. 1. 2. 3.

<sup>7</sup> See Saxo Grammat. Præf. ad Hist. Dan. And Hist. lib. vii. See also Ol. Worm. Monum. Dan. lib. iii.

<sup>8</sup> Paulus Jovius, a writer indeed not of the best credit, says, that Annibal engraved characters on the Alpine rocks, as a testimony of his passage over them, and that they were remaining there two centuries ago. Hist. lib. xv. p. 163.

<sup>9</sup> See Voyage par Strahlemberg, &c. A Description of the northern and eastern Parts of Europe and Asia. Schroder says, from Olaus Rudbeckius, that RUNES, or letters, were invented by Magog the Scythian, and communicated to Tuisco the celebrated German chieftain, in the year of the world 1799. Præf. ad Lexicon Latino-Scandic.

<sup>7</sup> See Keyfler, p. 147. Two funeral ceremonies, one of BURNING, the other  
d of

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not remind my readers how religiously this horrible ceremony of sacrificing the wife to the dead husband is at present observed in the east. There is a very remarkable correspondence, in numberless important and fundamental points, between the Druidical and the Persian superstitions: and notwithstanding the evidence of Cesar, who speaks only from popular report, and without precision, on a subject which he cared little about, it is the opinion of the learned Banier, that the Druids were formed on the model of the Magi<sup>a</sup>. In this hypothesis he is seconded by a modern antiquary; who further supposes, that Odin's followers imported this establishment into Scandinavia, from the confines of Persia<sup>b</sup>. The Scandinavians attributed divine virtue to mistletoe; it is mentioned in their EDDA, or system of religious doctrines, where it is said to grow on the west side of Val-hall, or Odin's elyrium<sup>c</sup>. That Druidical rites existed among the Scandinavians we are informed from many antient Erse poems, which say that the British Druids, in the extremity of their affairs, solicited and obtained aid from Scandinavia<sup>d</sup>. The Gothic hell exactly resembles that which we find in the religious systems of the Persians, the most abounding in superstition of all the eastern nations. One of the circumstances is, and an oriental idea, that it is full of scorpions and serpents<sup>e</sup>. The doctrines of Zeno, who borrowed most of his opinions from the Persian philosophers, are not uncommon in the EDDA. Lok, the evil

of BURYING their dead, at different times prevailed in the north; and have distinguished two eras in the old northern history. The first was called the AGE OF FIRE, the second the AGE OF HILLS.

<sup>a</sup> Mytholog. Expliq. ii. p. 628. 4to.

<sup>b</sup> M. Mallet. Hist. Danem. i. p. 56. See also Keyser, p. 152.

<sup>c</sup> EDD. ISL. fab. xxviii. Compare Keyser, Antiquit. Sel. Sept. p. 304. seq. The Germans, a Teutonic tribe, call it to this

day "the Branch of Spectres." But see Dr. Percy's ingenious note on this passage in the EDDA. NORTHERN ANTIQUITIES, vol. ii. p. 143.

<sup>d</sup> Ossian's Works. CATHLIN, ii. p. 216. Not. edit. 1765. vol. ii. They add, that among the auxiliaries came many magicians.

<sup>e</sup> See Hyde, Relig. Vet. Perf. p. 399. 404. But compare what is said of the EDDA, towards the close of this Discourse.

deity

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deity of the Goths, is probably the Arimanius of the Persians. In some of the most antient Islandic chronicles, the Turks are mentioned as belonging to the jurisdiction of the Scandinavians. Mahomet, not so great an inventor as is imagined, adopted into his religion many favourite notions and superstitions from the bordering nations which were the offspring of the Scythians, and especially from the Turks. Accordingly, we find the Alcoran agreeing with the Runic theology in various instances. I will mention only one. It is one of the beatitudes of the Mahometan paradise, that blooming virgins shall administer the most luscious wines. Thus in Odin's Val-hall, or the Gothic elysium, the departed heroes received cups of the strongest mead and ale from the hands of the virgin-goddeses called Valkyres<sup>c</sup>. Alfred, in his Saxon account of the northern seas, taken from the mouth of Ohther, a Norwegian, who had been sent by that monarch to discover a north-east passage into the Indies, constantly calls these nations the ORIENTALS<sup>d</sup>. And as these eastern tribes brought with them into the north a certain degree of refinement, of luxury and splendor, which appeared singular and prodigious among barbarians; one of their early historians describes a person better dressed than usual, by saying, "he was so well cloathed, that you might have taken him for one of the Asiatics<sup>e</sup>." Wormius mentions a Runic incantation, in which an Asiatic inchantress is invoked<sup>f</sup>. Various other instances might here

<sup>c</sup> Odin only, drank wine in Valhall. EDD. Myth. xxxiv. See Keyser, p. 152.

<sup>d</sup> See Preface to Alfred's Saxon Orosius, published by Spelman. VIT. ÆLFREDI. Spelm. Append. vi.

<sup>e</sup> LANDNAMA-SAGA. See Mallet. Hist. Dannem. c. ii.

<sup>f</sup> Lit. Run. p. 209, edit. 1651. The Goths came from the neighbourhood of Colchis, the region of Witchcraft, and the country of Medea, famous for her incantations. The eastern pagans from the very earliest ages, have had their enchanters.

*Now the magicians of Egypt, they also did in like manner with their enchantments.* Exod. vii. 11. See also vii. 18, 19. ix. 11, &c. When the people of Israel had over-run the country of Balak, he invites Baalam a neighbouring prince to curse them, or destroy them by magic, which he seems to have professed. *And the elders of Meab departed with the rewards of DIVINATION in their hand.* Num. xxii. 7. *Surely there is no ENCHANTMENT against Israel.* xxiii. 23. *And he went out, as at other times, to seek for ENCHANTMENTS.* xxiv. 1. &c.

Odin

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be added, some of which will occasionally arise in the future course of our inquiries.

It is notorious, that many traces of oriental usages are found amongst all the European nations during their pagan state; and this phenomenon is rationally resolved, on the supposition that all Europe was originally peopled from the east. But as the resemblance which the pagan Scandinavians bore to the eastern nations in manners, monuments, opinions, and practices, is so very perceptible and apparent, an inference arises, that their migration from the east must have happened at a period by many ages more recent, and therefore most probably about the time specified by their historians. In the mean time we must remember, that a distinction is to be made between this expedition of Odin's Goths, who formed a settlement in Scandinavia, and those innumerable armies of barbarous adventurers, who some centuries afterwards, distinguished by the same name, at different periods overwhelmed Europe, and at length extinguished the Roman empire.

When we consider the rapid conquests of the nations which may be comprehended under the common name of Scythians, and not only those conducted by Odin, but by Attila, Theodoric, and Genseric, we cannot ascribe such successes to brutal courage only. To say that some of these irresistible conquerors made war on a luxurious, effeminate, and enervated people, is a plausible and easy mode of accounting for their conquests: but this reason will not operate with equal force in the histories of Genghizcan and

Odin himself was not only a warrior, but a magician, and his Asiatics were called *Incantationum auctores*. Chron. Norweg. apud Bartholin. L. iii. c. 2. p. 657. Crumog. Arngim. L. i. cap. vii. p. 511. From this source, those who adopt the principles just mentioned in this discourse, may be inclined to think, that the notion of spells got into the ritual of chivalry. In all legal single combats, each champion attested upon

oath, that he did not carry about him any herb, SPELL, or ENCHANTMENT. Dugdal. Orig. Juridic. p. 82. See Hicke's account of the silver Dano-Saxon shield, dug up in the isle of Ely, having a magical Runic inscription, supposed to render those who bore it in battle invulnerable. Apud Hickef. Thesaur. Dissertat. Epistol. p. 187.

Tamerlane,

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Tamerlane, who destroyed mighty empires founded on arms and military discipline, and who baffled the efforts of the ablest leaders. Their science and genius in war, such as it then was, cannot therefore be doubted: that they were not deficient in the arts of peace, I have already hinted, and now proceed to produce more particular proofs. Innumerable and very fundamental errors have crept into our reasonings and systems about savage life, resulting merely from those strong and undistinguishing notions of barbarism, which our prejudices have hastily formed concerning the character of all rude nations <sup>1</sup>.

Among other arts which Odin's Goths planted in Scandinavia, their skill in poetry, to which they were addicted in a peculiar manner, and which they cultivated with a wonderful enthusiasm, seems to be most worthy our regard, and especially in our present inquiry.

As the principal heroes of their expedition into the north were honourably distinguished from the Europeans, or original Scandinavians, under the name of *Asæ*, or *Afiatics*, so the verses, or language, of this people, were denominated *ASAMAL*, or *ASIATIC* speech <sup>2</sup>. Their poetry contained not only the praises of their heroes, but their popular traditions and their religious rites; and was filled with those fictions which the most exaggerated pagan superstition would naturally implant in the wild imaginations of an *Afiatic* people. And from this principle alone, I mean of their *Afiatic* origin, some critics would at once account for a certain capricious spirit of extravagance, and those bold eccentric conceptions, which so strongly distinguish the old northern poetry <sup>3</sup>. Nor

<sup>1</sup> See this argument pursued in the following DISSERTATION.

<sup>2</sup> "Linguam Danicam antiquam, cujus in rhythmis usus fuit, veteres appellarunt ASAMAL, id est Afiaticam, vel ASARUM SERMONEM; quod eum ex Asia Odinus secum in Daniam, Norwegiam, Sueciam, aliasque regiones septentrionales, invex-

"crit." Steph. Stephan. Prefat. ad Saxon. Grammat. Hist.

<sup>3</sup> A most ingenious critic observes, that what we have been long accustomed to call the ORIENTAL VEIN of poetry, because some of the EARLIEST poetical productions have come to us from the east, is probably no more ORIENTAL than

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is this fantastick imagery, the only mark of Asiaticism which appears in the Runic odes. They have a certain sublime and figurative cast of diction, which is indeed one of their predominant characteristics<sup>m</sup>. I am very sensible that all rude nations are naturally apt to cloath their sentiments in this style. A propensity to this mode of expression is necessarily occasioned by the poverty of their language, which obliges them frequently to substitute similitudes and circumlocutions: it arises in great measure from feelings undisguised and unrestrained by custom or art, and from the genuine efforts of nature working more at large in uncultivated minds. In the infancy of society, the passions and the imagination are alike uncontrouled. But another cause seems to have concurred in producing the effect here mentioned. When obvious terms and phrases evidently occurred, the Runic poets are fond of departing from the common and established diction. They appear to use circumlocution and comparisons not as a matter of necessity, but of choice and skill: nor are these metaphorical colourings so much the result of want of words, as of warmth of fancy<sup>n</sup>.

<sup>m</sup> "than OCCIDENTAL." Blair's Crit. Diff. on Ossian. vol. ii. p. 317. But all the LATTER oriental writers through all ages have been particularly distinguished for this vein. Hence it is here characteristic of a country not of an age. I will allow, on this writer's very just and penetrating principles, that an early northern ode shall be as sublime as an eastern one. Yet the sublimity of the latter shall have a different character; it will be more inflated and gigantic.

<sup>n</sup> Thus, a Rainbow is called, *the bridge of the gods*. Poetry, *the mead of Odin*. The earth, *the vessel that floats on ages*. A ship, *the horse of the waves*. Ice, *the vast bridge*. Herbs, *the fleece of the earth*. A Battle, *a bath of blood*, *the hail of Odin*, *the flock of bucklers*. A Tongue, *the sword of words*. Night, *the veil of cares*. Rocks, *the bones of the earth*. Arrows, *the hailstones of helmets*, &c. &c.

<sup>n</sup> In a strict geographical sense, the original country of these Asiatic Goths might not be so situated as physically to have produced these effects. Yet it is to be observed, that intercourse and vicinity are in this case sometimes equivalent to climate. The Persian traditions and superstitions were current even in the northern parts of Tartary. Georgia, however, may be fairly considered as a part of Persia. It is equal in fertility to any of the eastern Turkish provinces in Asia. It affords the richest wines, and other luxuries of life, in the greatest abundance. The most beautiful virgins for the seraglio are fetched from this province. In the mean time, thus much at least may be said of a warm climate, exclusive of its supposed immediate physical influence on the human mind and temperament. It exhibits all the productions of nature in their highest perfection and beauty:

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Their warmth of fancy, however, if supposed to have proceeded from the principles above suggested, in a few generations after this migration into Scandinavia, must have lost much of its natural heat and genuine force. Yet ideas and sentiments, especially of this sort, once imbibed, are long remembered and retained, in savage life. Their religion, among other causes, might have contributed to keep this spirit alive; and to preserve their original stock of images, and native mode of expression, unchanged and unabated by climate or country. In the mean time we may suppose, that the new situation of these people in Scandinavia, might have added a darker shade and a more savage complexion to their former fictions and superstitions; and that the formidable objects of nature to which they became familiarised in those northern solitudes, the piny precipices, the frozen mountains, and the gloomy forests, acted on their imaginations, and gave a tincture of horror to their imagery.

A skill in poetry seems in some measure to have been a national science among the Scandinavians, and to have been familiar to almost every order and degree. Their kings and warriors partook of this epidemic enthusiasm, and on frequent occasions are represented as breaking forth into spontaneous songs and verses. But the exercise of the poetical

beauty: while the excessive heat of the sun, and the fewer incitements to labour and industry, dispose the inhabitants to indolence, and to living much abroad in scenes of nature. These circumstances are favourable to the operations of fancy.

Harold Hardraade, king of Norway, composed sixteen songs of his expedition into Africa. Asbiorn Pruda, a Danish champion, described his past life in nine strophes, while his enemy Bruce, a giant, was tearing out his bowels. "i. *Tell my mother Swanbitta in Denmark, that she will not this summer comb the hair of her son. I had promised her to return, but now my side shall feel the edge of the sword.* ii. It was far otherwise, when we sat at home in

*mirth, chearing ourselves with the drink of ale; and coming from Hordeland passed the gulf in our ships; when we quaffed mead, and conversed of liberty. Now I alone am fallen into the narrow prisons of the giants.* iii. It was far otherwise, &c." Every stanza is introduced with the same choral burden. Bartholin. *Antiquit. Danic.* L. i. cap. 10. p. 158. edit. 1689. The noble epicidium of Regner Lodbrog is more commonly known. The champion Orvarodd, after his expeditions into various countries, sung, on his death-bed, the most memorable events of his life in metre. Hallmund, being mortally wounded, commanded his daughter to listen to a poem which he was about to deliver, containing histories of his victories,



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talent was properly confined to a stated profession: and with their poetry the Goths imported into Europe a species of poets or fingers, whom they called SCALDS or POLISHERS of LANGUAGE. This order of men, as we shall see more distinctly below, was held in the highest honour and veneration: they received the most liberal rewards for their verses, attended the festivals of heroic chiefs, accompanied them in battle, and celebrated their victories<sup>p</sup>.

These Scandinavian bards appear to have been esteemed and entertained in other countries besides their own, and by that means to have probably communicated their fictions to various parts of Europe. I will give my reasons for this supposition.

In the early ages of Europe, before many regular governments took place, revolutions, emigrations, and invasions, were frequent and almost universal. Nations were alter-

victories, and to engrave it on tablets of wood. Bartholin. *ibid.* p. 162. Saxo Grammaticus gives us a regular ode, uttered by the son of a king of Norway, who by mistake had been buried alive, and was discovered and awakened by a party of soldiers digging for treasure. Sax. Grammat. L. 5. p. 50. There are instances recorded of their speaking in metre on the most common occurrences.

<sup>p</sup> The Sogdians were a people who lived eastward of the Caspian sea, not far from the country of Odin's Goths. Quintus Curtius relates, that when some of that people were condemned to death by Alexander on account of a revolt, they rejoiced greatly, and testified their joy by SINGING VERSES and dancing. When the king enquired the reason of their joy, they answered, "that being soon to be RESTORED TO THEIR ANCESTORS by so great a conqueror, they could not help celebrating so honourable a death, which was the wish of all brave men, in their own ACCUSTOMED SONGS." Lib. vii. c. 8. I am obliged to doctor Percy for pointing out this passage. From the correspondence of manners and princi-

ples it holds forth between the Scandinavians and the Sogdians, it contains a striking proof of Odin's migration from the east to the north: first, in the spontaneous exercise of the poetical talent; and secondly, in the opinion, that a glorious or warlike death, which admitted them to the company of their friends and parents in another world, was to be embraced with the most eager alacrity, and the highest sensations of pleasure. This is the doctrine of the Edda. In the same spirit, *RIDENS MORIAR* is the triumphant close of Regner Lodbrog's dying ode. [See Keyser, *ubi infra* p. 127.] I cannot help adding here another stroke from this ode, which seems also to be founded on eastern manners. He speaks with great rapture of drinking, "ex concavis crateribus craniorum." The inhabitants of the island of Ceylon to this day carouse at their feasts, from cups or bowls made of the skulls of their deceased ancestors. Ives's *VOYAGE TO INDIA*, ch. 5. p. 62. Lond. 1773. 4to. This practice these islanders undoubtedly received from the neighbouring continent. Compare Keyser, *Antiquitat. Sel. Septentrional.* p. 362. seq.

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nately destroyed or formed; and the want of political security exposed the inhabitants of every country to a state of eternal fluctuation. That Britain was originally peopled from Gaul, a nation of the Celts, is allowed: but that many colonies from the northern parts of Europe were afterwards successively planted in Britain and the neighbouring islands, is an hypothesis equally rational, and not altogether destitute of historical evidence. Nor was any nation more likely than the Scandinavian Goths, I mean in their early periods, to make descents on Britain. They possessed the spirit of adventure in an eminent degree. They were habituated to dangerous enterprises. They were acquainted with distant coasts, exercised in navigation, and fond of making expeditions, in hopes of conquest, and in search of new acquisitions. As to Scotland and Ireland, there is the highest probability, that the Scutes, who conquered both those countries, and possessed them under the names of Albin Scutes and Irin Scutes, were a people of Norway. The Caledonians are expressly called by many judicious antiquaries a Scandinavian colony. The names of places and persons, over all that part of Scotland which the Picts inhabited, are of Scandinavian extraction. A simple catalogue of them only, would immediately convince us, that they are not of Celtic, or British, origin. Flaherty reports it as a received opinion, and a general doctrine, that the Picts migrated into Britain and Ireland from Scandinavia<sup>9</sup>. I forbear to accumulate a pedantic parade of authorities on this occasion: nor can it be expected that I should enter into a formal and exact examination of this obscure and compli-

<sup>9</sup> It is conjectured by Wormius, that *Ireland* is derived from the Runic *Yr*, a bow, for the use of which the Irish were once famous. Lit. Run. c. xvii. p. 101. The Asiatics near the lake Maeotis, from which Odin led his colony in Europe, were cele-

brated archers. Hence Hercules in Theocritus, Idyll. xiii. 56.

—Μαυδία δαβων εννακρυσσάτορα.  
Compare Salmat. de Hellen. p. 369. And Flaherty. Ogyg. Part. iii. cap. xviii. p. 188. edit. 1685. Stillingfleet's Orig. Brit. Pref. p. xxxviii.

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cated subject in its full extent, which is here only introduced incidentally. I will only add, that Scotland and Ireland, as being situated more to the north, and probably less difficult of access than Britain, might have been objects on which our northern adventurers were invited to try some of their earliest excursions: and that the Orkney-islands remained long under the jurisdiction of the Norwegian potentates.

In these expeditions, the northern emigrants, as we shall prove more particularly below, were undoubtedly attended by their scalds or poets. Yet even in times of peace, and without the supposition of conquest or invasion, the Scandinavian scalds might have been well known in the British islands. Possessed of a specious and pleasing talent, they frequented the courts of the British, Scottish, and Irish chieftains. They were itinerants by their institution, and made voyages, out of curiosity, or in quest of rewards, to those islands or coasts which lay within the circle of their maritime knowledge. By these means, they established an interest, rendered their profession popular, propagated their art, and circulated their fictions, in other countries, and at a distance from home. Torfaeus asserts positively, that various Islandic odes now remain, which were sung by the Scandinavian bards before the kings of England and Ireland, and for which they received liberal gratuities<sup>1</sup>. They were more especially caressed and rewarded at the courts of those princes, who were distinguished for their warlike character, and their passion for military glory.

Olaus Wormius informs us, that great numbers of the northern scalds constantly resided in the courts of the kings of Sweden, Denmark, and England<sup>2</sup>. Hence the tradition in an antient Islandic Saga, or poetical history, may be explained; which says, that Odin's language was originally

<sup>1</sup> Torf. Hist. Orcad. in Prefat.

<sup>2</sup> Lit. Dan. p. 195. ed. 4to.

used,

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used, not only in Denmark, Sweden and Norway, but even in England'. Indeed it may be naturally concluded from these suggestions, that the Scandinavian tongue became familiar in the British islands by the songs of the scalds: unless it be rather presumed, that a previous knowledge of that tongue in Britain was the means of facilitating the admission of those poets, and preparing the way for their reception.

And here it will be much to our present argument to observe, that some of the old Gothic and Scandinavian superstitions are to this day retained in the English language. *MARA*, from whence our Night-mare is derived, was in the Runic theology a spirit or spectre of the night, which seized men in their sleep, and suddenly deprived them of speech and motion". *NICKA* was the Gothic demon who inhabited the element of water, and who strangled persons that were drowning". *BOH* was one of the most fierce and formidable of the Gothic generals<sup>x</sup>, and the son of Odin: the mention of whose name only was sufficient to spread an immediate panic among his enemies<sup>y</sup>.

<sup>c</sup> Bartholin. iii. 2. p. 651. It was a constant old British tradition, that king Arthur conquered Ireland, Gothland, Denmark, and Norway. See Galfrid. Monum. ix. 11. Rob. of Glouc. ed. Hearne, p. 180. 182. What is said in the text must have greatly facilitated the Saxon and Danish conquests in England. The works of the genuine Caedmon are written in the language of the antient Angles, who were nearly connected with the Jutes. Hence that language resembled the antient Danish, as appears from passages of Caedmon cited by Wanley. Hence also it happened, that the later Dano-Saxonic dialect, in which Junius's POETICAL PARAPHRASE OF GENESIS was written, is likewise so very similar to the language of the antient Angles, who settled in the more northern parts of England. And in this dialect, which indeed prevailed in some degree almost over all England, many other poems are composed, mentioned likewise in Wanley's Catalogue. It is the constant doctrine

of the Danish historians, that the Danes and Angles, whose successors gave the name to this island, had the same origin.

<sup>d</sup> See Keyser, Antiquitat. Scel. Septentrional. p. 497. edit. 1720.

<sup>e</sup> See Keyser, ut supr. p. 261. And in APPEND. ibid. p. 588.

<sup>f</sup> See Keyser, ibid. p. 105. p. 130.

<sup>g</sup> See Temple's Essays, part 4. pag. 346. See also instances of conformity between English and Gothic superstitions in Bartholinus, L. ii. cap. 2. p. 262. 266. It may be urged, that these superstitions might be introduced by the Danes; of whom I shall speak below. But this brings us to just the same point. The learned Hickes was of opinion, from a multitude of instances, that our trials by a jury of Twelve, was an early Scandinavian institution, and that it was brought from thence into England. Yet he supposes, at a period later than is necessary, the Norman invasion. See Wootton's Conspectus of Hickes's Thesaur. pag. 46. Lond. 1708.

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The fictions of Odin and of his Scandinavians, must have taken still deeper root in the British islands, at least in England, from the Saxon and Danish invasions.

That the tales of the Scandinavian scalds flourished among the Saxons, who succeeded to the Britons, and became possessors of England in the sixth century, may be justly presumed<sup>a</sup>. The Saxons were originally seated in the Cimbric Chersonese, or those territories which have been since called Jutland, Angelen, and Holstein; and were fond of tracing the descent of their princes from Odin<sup>a</sup>. They were therefore a part of the Scandinavian tribes. They imported with them into England the old Runic language and letters. This appears from inscriptions on coins<sup>b</sup>, stones<sup>c</sup>, and other mo-

And Hickek. *Thefaur. Dissertat. Epistol.* vol. i. p. 38. seq. The number TWELVE was sacred among the Septentrional tribes. Odin's Judges are TWELVE; and have TWELVE seats in Gladheim. *EDD. Isl. fab. vii.* The God of the Edda has TWELVE names, *ibid. fab. i.* An Aristocracy of TWELVE is a well known ancient establishment in the north. In the Dialogue between Hervor and Angantyr, the latter promises to give Hervor TWELVE MENS DEATHS. *Hervarer-Saga, apud Ol. Verel. cap. vii. p. 91.* The Druidical circular monuments of separate stones erect, are more frequently of the number TWELVE, than of any other number. See Borlase, *ANTIQUIT. Cornw. B. iii. ch. vii. edit. 1769. fol.* And Toland, *Hist. Druid. p. 89. 158. 160.* See also Martin's *Hebrid. p. 9.* In Zealand and Sweden, many ancient circular monuments, consisting each of twelve rude stones, still remain, which were the places of judicature. My late very learned, ingenious, and respected friend, doctor Borlase, pointed out to me monuments of the same sort in Cornwall. Compare Keyser, p. 93. And it will illustrate remarks already made, and the principles insinuated in this Dissertation, to observe, that these monuments are found in Persia near Tauris. Geoffrey of

Monmouth affords instances in his *British History.* The knights sent into Wales by Fitzhamon, in 1091, were TWELVE. Powel, p. 124. sub anno. See also an instance in Du Carell, *Anglo-Norman ANTIQ. p. 9.* It is probable that Charlemagne formed his TWELVE PEERS on this principle. From whom Spenser evidently took his TWELVE KNIGHTS.

<sup>a</sup> "Ex vetustioribus poetis Cimbrorum, nempe Scaldis et Theotisca gentis versificatoribus, plane multa, ut par est credere, sumpserunt." Hickek. *Thefaur. i. p. 101.* See p. 117.

<sup>b</sup> See Gibson's *Chron. Saxon. p. 12.* seq. Historians mention WODEN'S BEORTH, i. e. Woden's hill, in Wiltshire. See Milton, *Hist. Engl. An. 588.*

<sup>c</sup> See Sir A. Fountaine's *Pref. Saxon Money. OFFA. REX. SC. BOTRED MONETARIUS, &c.* See also Serenii *Diction. Anglo-Suecico-Latin. Pref. pag. 21.*

<sup>d</sup> See Hickek's *Thefaur. BAPTISTERIUM BRIDEKIRKENSE. PAR. iii. p. 4. Tab. ii. SAXUM REVELLENSE apud Scotos. Ibid. Tab. iv. pag. 5.—CRUX LAPIDEA apud Beaucastrum. Wanley Catal. MSS. Anglo-Sax. pag. 248. ad calc. Hickek. Thefaur. ANNULUS AUREUS. Drake's York, Append. p. 102. Tab. N. 26. And Gordon's *Itin. Septentr. p. 168.**

numents;

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numents; and from some of their manuscripts <sup>d</sup>. It is well known that Runic inscriptions have been discovered in Cumberland and Scotland: and that there is even extant a coin of king Offa, with a Runic legend <sup>e</sup>. But the conversion of the Saxons to christianity, which happened before the seventh century, entirely banished the common use of those characters <sup>f</sup>, which were esteemed unhallowed and necromantic; and with their antient superstitions, which yet prevailed for some time in the popular belief, abolished in some measure their native and original vein of poetic fabling <sup>g</sup>. They suddenly became a mild and polished people, addicted to the arts of peace, and the exercise of devotion; and the poems they have left us are chiefly moral rhapsodies, scriptural histories, or religious invocations <sup>h</sup>. Yet even in these pieces they have frequent allusions to the old scaldic fables and heroes. Thus, in an Anglo-Saxon poem on Judith, Holofernes is

<sup>d</sup> See Hickes's *Theſaur.* Par. i. pag. 135. 136. 142. Par. iii. Tab. 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. It may be conjectured, that these characters were introduced by the Danes. It is certain that they never grew into common use. They were at least inconvenient, as consisting of capitals. We have no remains of Saxon writing so old as the sixth century. Nor are there any of the seventh, except a very few charters. [Bibl. Bodl. NE. D. 11. 19. seq.] See Hickes's *Theſaur.* Par. i. pag. 169. See also *CHARTA ODILFREDI AD MONASTERIUM DE BERKING.* Tab. 1. Casley's *Cat. Bibl. Reg.* In the British Museum.

<sup>e</sup> See *ARCHÆOL.* vol. ii. p. 131. A. D. 1773. 4to.

<sup>f</sup> But see Hickes, *ubi sup.* i. p. 140.

<sup>g</sup> It has been suggested to me by an ingenious friend, that *GUY* and *SIR BEVIS*, the first of which lived in the reign of Athelstan, and the latter, as some suppose, in that of Edgar, both christian champions against the pagan Danes, were originally subjects of the genuine Saxon bards. But I rather think, they began to be celebrated in or after the crusades; the

nature of which expeditions dictated to the romance-writers, and brought into vogue, stories of christians fighting with infidel heroes. The cause was the same, and the circumstances partly parallel; and this being once the fashion, they consulted their own histories for heroes, and combats were feigned with Danish giants, as well as with the Saracens. See *infr.* *SECT.* iii. p. 142. 143. 145. There is the story of *BEVIS* in *British, YSTORI BOUN O HAMTEN.* Lhuyd's *Arch. Brit.* p. 264.

<sup>h</sup> Except an ode on Athelstan, translated below. See *SECT.* i. p. 2. See also the description of the city of Durham. Hickes, p. 179. It has nothing of the wild strain of poetry. The fairs and relics of Durham church seem to have struck the poet most, in describing that city. I cannot discern the supposed sublimity of those mysterious dithyrambics, which close the *Saxon MANOLOGE*, or poetic calendar, written about the tenth century, printed by Hickes, *Gramm. Anglo-Sax.* p. 207. They seem to be prophecies and proverbs; or rather, splendid fragments from different poems, thrown together without connection.

called

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called BALDER, or *leader and prince of warriors*. And in a poetical paraphrase on Genesis, Abimelech has the same appellation<sup>1</sup>. This Balder was a famous chieftain of the Asiatic Goths, the son of Odin, and supposed to inhabit a magnificent hall in the future place of rewards. The same Anglo-Saxon paraphrast, in his profopoea of Satan addressing his companions plunged in the infernal abyss, adopts many images and expressions used in the very sublime description of the Eddic hell<sup>2</sup>: Henry of Huntingdon complains of certain *extraneous words* and *uncommon figures* of speech, in a Saxon ode on a victory of king Athelstan<sup>3</sup>. These were all scaldic expressions or allusions. But I will give a literal English translation of this poem, which cannot be well understood without premising its occasion. In the year 938, Anlaff, a pagan king of the Hybernians and the adjacent isles, invited by Constantine king of the Scots, entered the river Abi or Humber with a strong fleet. Our Saxon king Athelstan, and his brother Eadmund Clito, met them with a numerous army, near a place called Brunenburgh; and after a most obstinate and bloody resistance, drove them back to their ships. The battle lasted from day-break till the evening. On the side of Anlaff were slain six petty kings, and seven chiefs or generals. “ King Adelstan, “ the glory of leaders, the giver of gold chains to his nobles, “ and his brother Eadmund, both shining with the bright- “ nefs of a long train of ancestors, struck [the adversary] “ in war; at Brunenburgh, with the edge of the sword, “ they clove the wall of shields. The high banners fell. “ The earls of the departed Edward fell; for it was born “ within them, even from the loins of their kindred, to “ defend the treasures and the houses of their country, and

<sup>1</sup> See Hicckes. Thesaur. i. p. 10. Who adds many more instances.

<sup>2</sup> Fab. xlix. See Hicckes, ubi supr. p. 116.

<sup>3</sup> Who has greatly misrepresented the sense by a bad Latin translation. Hist. Lib. v. p. 203.

“ their

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“ their gifts, against the hatred of strangers. The nation  
“ of the Scots, and the fatal inhabitants of ships, fell. The  
“ hills resounded, and the armed men were covered with  
“ sweat. From the time the sun, the king of stars, the  
“ torch of the eternal one, rose cheerful above the hills, till  
“ he returned to his habitation. There lay many of the  
“ northern men, pierced with lances; they lay wounded,  
“ with their shields pierced through: and also the Scots,  
“ the hateful harvest of battle. The chosen bands of the  
“ West-Saxons, going out to battle, pressed on the steps of  
“ the detested nations, and slew their flying rear with sharp  
“ and bloody swords. The soft effeminate men yielded up  
“ their spears. The Mercians did not fear or fly the rough  
“ game of the hand. There was no safety to them, who  
“ sought the land with Anlaff in the bosom of the ship, to  
“ die in fight. Five youthful kings fell in the place of  
“ fight, slain with swords; and seven captains of Anlaff,  
“ with the innumerable army of Scottish mariners: there  
“ the lord of the Normans [Northern-men] was chased;  
“ and their army, now made small, was driven to the prow  
“ of the ship. The ship sounded with the waves; and the  
“ king, marching into the yellow sea, escaped alive. And  
“ so it was, the wise northern king Constantine, a veteran  
“ chief, returning by flight to his own army, bowed down  
“ in the camp, left his own son worn out with wounds in  
“ the place of slaughter; in vain did he lament his earls, in  
“ vain his lost friends. Nor less did Anlaff, the yellow-  
“ haired leader, the battle-ax of slaughter, a youth in war,  
“ but an old man in understanding, boast himself a con-  
“ queror in fight, when the darts flew against Edward’s  
“ earls, and their banners met. Then those northern sol-  
“ diers, covered with shame, the sad refuse of darts in  
“ the resounding whirlpool of Humber, departed in their  
“ ships with rudders, to seek through the deep the Irish  
“ city and their own land. While both the brothers, the  
“ king



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“ king and Clito, lamenting even their own victory, together returned home; leaving behind them the flesh-devouring raven, the dark-blue toad greedy of slaughter, the black crow with horny bill, and the hoarse toad, the eagle a companion of battles with the devouring kite, and that brindled savage beast the wolf of the wood, to be glutted with the white food of the slain. Never was so great a slaughter in this island, since the Angles and Saxons, the fierce beginners of war, coming hither from the east, and seeking Britain through the wide sea, overcame the Britons excelling in honour, and gained possession of their land.”

This piece, and many other Saxon odes and songs now remaining, are written in a metre much resembling that of the scaldic dialogue at the tomb of Angantyr, which has been beautifully translated into English, in the true spirit of the original, and in a genuine strain of poetry, by Gray. The extemporaneous effusions of the glowing bard seem naturally to have fallen into this measure, and it was probably more easily suited to the voice or harp. Their versification for the most part seems to have been that of the Runic poetry.

As literature, the certain attendant, as it is the parent, of true religion and civility, gained ground among the Saxons, poetry no longer remained a separate science, and the profession of bard seems gradually to have declined among them: I mean the bard under those appropriated characteristics, and that peculiar appointment, which he sustained among the Scandinavian pagans. Yet their national love of verse and music still so strongly predominated, that in the place of their old scalders a new rank of poets arose, called GLEEMEN or Harpers. These probably gave

<sup>m</sup> The original was first printed by Whetloc in the Saxon Chronicle, p. 555. Cant. 1644. See Hickel. Thef. Præfat. p. xiv. And ibid. Gramm. Anglo-Sax. p. 181.

<sup>n</sup> GLEEMAN answers to the Latin JO-CULATOR. Fabian, speaking of Blagebride, an ancient British king, famous for his skill in poetry and music, calls him “ a conynge

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rife to the order of English Minftrels, who flourifhed till the fixteenth century.

And here I flop to point out one of the principal reafons, why the Scandinavian bards have transmitted to modern times fo much more of their native poetry, than the reft of their fouthern neighbours. It is true, that the inhabitants of Sweden, Denmark, and Norway, whether or no from their Afatic origin, from their poverty which compelled them to feek their fortunes at foreign courts by the exercife of a popular art, from the fucces of their bards, the nature of their republican government, or their habits of unfettled life, were more given to verfe than any other Gothic, or even Celtic, tribe. But this is not all: they remained pagans, and retained their original manners, much longer than any of their Gothic kindred. They were not completely converted to christianity till the tenth century. Hence, under the concurrence however of fome of the caufes juft mentioned, their faldic profefion acquired greater degrees of ftrength and of maturity: and from an uninterrupted poffeffion through many ages of the moft romantic religious fuperftitions, and the prefervation of thofe rough manners which are fo favourable to the poetical fpirit, was enabled to produce, not only more genuine, but more numerous, compositions. True religion would have checked the impetuofity of their paffions, fuppreffed their wild exertions of fancy, and banifhed that ftriking train of imagery, which their

“ conynge muficyan, called of the Britons god of GLEEMEN.” CHRON. F. xxxii. ed. 1533. This, Fabian translated from Geoffrey of Monmouth’s account of the fame Britifh king, “ ut DEUS JOCUlatorum videretur.” Hift Brit. lib. i. cap. 22. It appears from the injunctions given to the Britifh church in the year 680, that female harpers were not then uncommon. It is decreed that no bifhop, or any ecclefiaftic, fhall keep or have CITHARÆDAS, and it is added QUÆCUMQUE

SYMPHONIACA; nor permit plays or sports, LUDOS VEL JOCOS, undoubtedly mimical and geficulatory entertainments, to be exhibited in his prefence. Malmesb. Gef. Pontif. lib. iii. p. 263. edit. vet. And Concil. Spelman. tom. i. p. 159. edit. 1639. fol.

See bifhop Lloyd’s Hift. Account of Church Government in Great Britain, &c. chap. i. §. 11. pag. 40. Lond. 1684. And Crymog. Angrim. L. i. cap. 10. p. 104.

f

poetry

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poetry derived from a barbarous theology. This circumstance also suggests to our consideration, those superior advantages and opportunities arising from leisure and length of time, which they enjoyed above others, of circulating their poetry far and wide, of giving a general currency to their mode of fabling, of rendering their skill in versification more universally and familiarly known, and a more conspicuous and popular object of admiration or imitation to the neighbouring countries. Hence too it has happened, that modern times have not only attained much fuller information concerning their historical transactions, but are so intimately acquainted with the peculiarities of their character.

It is probable, that the Danish invasions produced a considerable alteration in the manners of our Anglo-Saxon ancestors. Although their connections with England were transient and interrupted, and on the whole scarcely lasted two hundred years, yet many of the Danish customs began to prevail among the inhabitants, which seem to have given a new turn to their temper and genius. The Danish fashion of excessive drinking, for instance, a vice almost natural to the northern nations, became so general among the Anglo-Saxons, that it was found necessary to restrain so pernicious and contagious a practice by a particular statute<sup>p</sup>. Hence it seems likely, that so popular an entertainment as their poetry gained ground; especially if we consider, that in their expeditions against England they were of course attended by many northern scalds, who constantly made a part of their military retinue, and whose language was understood by the Saxons. Rogwald, lord of the Orcades, who was also himself a poet, going on an expedition into Palestine, carried with him two Islandic bards<sup>q</sup>. The noble ode, called

<sup>p</sup> See Lambarde's *Archaionom.* And Bartholin. ii. c. xii. p. 542.

<sup>q</sup> *Ol. Worm. Lit. Run.* p. 195. edit. 1636.

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in the northern chronicles the ELOGIUM OF HACON<sup>r</sup>, king of Norway, was composed on a battle in which that prince, with eight of his brothers fell, by the scald Eyvynnd; who for his superior skill in poetry was called the CROSS OF POETS, and fought in the battle which he celebrated. Hacon earl of Norway was accompanied by five celebrated bards in the battle of Jomsburgh: and we are told, that each of them sung an ode to animate the soldiers before the engagement began<sup>r</sup>. They appear to have been regularly brought into action. Olave, a king of Norway, when his army was prepared for the onset, placed three scalds about

<sup>r</sup> In this ode are these very sublime imageries and profopoeas.

“The goddesses who preside over battles come, sent forth by Odin. They go to chuse among the princes of the illustrious race of Yngvon a man who is to perish, and to go to dwell in the palace of the gods.”

“Gondula leaned on the end of her lance, and thus bespoke her companions. The assembly of the gods is going to be increased: the gods invite Hacon, with his numerous host, to enter the palace of Odin.”

“Thus spake these glorious nymphs of war: who were seated on their horses, who were covered with their shields and helmets, and appeared full of some great thought.”

“Hacon heard their discourse. Why, said he, why hast thou thus disposed of the battle? Were we not worthy to have obtained of the gods a more perfect victory? It is we, she replied, who have given it thee. It is we who have put thine enemies to flight.”

“Now, added she, let us push forward our steeds across those green worlds, which are the residence of the gods. Let us go tell Odin that the king is coming to visit him in his palace.”

“When Odin heard this news, he said, Hermode and Brago, my sons, go to meet the king: a king, admired by

“all men for his valour, approaches to our hall.”

“At length king Hacon approaches; and arriving from the battle is still all besprinkled and running down with blood. At the sight of Odin he cries out, Ah! how severe and terrible does this god appear to me!”

“The hero Brago replies, Come, thou that wast the terror of the bravest warriors: Come hither, and rejoin thine eight brothers: the heroes who reside here shall live with thee in peace: Go, drink Ale in the circle of heroes.”

“But this valiant king exclaims, I will still keep my arms: a warrior ought carefully to preserve his mail and helmet: it is dangerous to be a moment without the spear in one's hand.”—

“The wolf Fenris shall burst his chains and dart with rage upon his enemies, before so brave a king shall again appear upon earth, &c.”

Snorron. Hist. Reg. Sept. i. p. 163. This ode was written so early as the year 960. There is a great variety and boldness in the transitions. An action is carried on by a set of the most awful ideal personages, finely imagined. The goddesses of battle, Odin, his sons Hermode and Brago, and the spectre of the deceased king, are all introduced, speaking and acting as in a drama. The panegyric is nobly conducted, and arises out of the sublimity of the fiction.

<sup>r</sup> Bartholin. p. 172.

f 2

him,

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him, and exclaimed aloud, "You shall not only record in your verses what you have HEARD, but what you have SEEN." They each delivered an ode on the spot<sup>1</sup>. These northern chiefs appear to have so frequently hazarded their lives with such amazing intrepidity, merely in expectation of meriting a panegyric from their poets, the judges, and the spectators of their gallant behaviour. That scalds were common in the Danish armies when they invaded England, appears from a stratagem of Alfred; who, availing himself of his skill in oral poetry and playing<sup>2</sup> on the harp, entered the Danish camp habited in that character, and procured a hospitable reception. This was in the year 878<sup>3</sup>. Anlaff, a Danish king, used the same disguise for reconnoitring the camp of our Saxon monarch Athelstan: taking his station near Athelstan's pavilion, he entertained the king and his chiefs with his verses and music, and was dismissed with an honourable reward<sup>4</sup>. As Anlaff's dialect must have discovered him to have been a Dane; here is a proof, of what I shall bring more, that the Saxons, even in the midst of mutual hostilities, treated the Danish scalds with favour and respect. That the Islandic bards were common in England during the Danish invasions, there are numerous proofs. Egill, a celebrated Islandic poet, having murdered the son and many of the friends of Eric Blodaxe, king of Denmark or Norway, then residing in Northumberland, and which he had just conquered, procured a pardon by singing before the king, at the command of his queen Gunhilde, an extemporaneous ode<sup>5</sup>. Egill compliments the king, who probably was his patron, with the appellation of the

<sup>1</sup> Olaf. Sag. apud Verel. ad HERV. SAG. p. 178. Bartholin. p. 172.

<sup>2</sup> Ingulph. Hist. p. 869. Malmesb. ii. c. 4. p. 43.

<sup>3</sup> Malmesb. ii. 6 I am aware, that the truth of both these anecdotes respecting Alfred and Anlaff has been controverted.

But no sufficient argument has yet been offered for pronouncing them spurious, or even suspicious. See an ingenious Dissertation in the ARCHÆOLOGIA, vol. ii. p. 100. seq. A. D. 1773. 4to.

<sup>5</sup> See Crymogr. Angrim. Jon. Lib. ii. pag. 125. edit. 1609.

English

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English chief. "I offer my freight to the king. I owe a poem for my ransom. I present to the ENGLISH CHIEF the mead of Odin". Afterwards he calls this Danish conqueror the commander of the Scottish fleet. "The commander of the Scottish fleet fattened the ravenous birds. The sister of Nera [Death] trampled on the foe: she trampled on the evening food of the eagle." The Scots usually joined the Danish or Norwegian invaders in their attempts on the northern parts of Britain<sup>2</sup>: and from this circumstance a new argument arises, to shew the close communication and alliance which must have subsisted between Scotland and Scandinavia. Egill, although of the enemy's party, was a singular favourite of king Athelstan. Athelstan once asked Egill how he escaped due punishment from Eric Blodaxe, the king of Northumberland, for the very capital and enormous crime which I have just mentioned. On which Egill immediately related the whole of that transaction to the Saxon king, in a sublime ode still extant<sup>3</sup>. On another occasion Athelstan presented Egill with two rings, and two large cabinets filled with silver; promising at the same time, to grant him any gift or favour which he should chuse to request. Egill, struck with gratitude, immediately composed a panegyric poem in the Norwegian language, then common to both nations, on the virtues of Athelstan, which the latter as generously requited with two marks of pure gold<sup>4</sup>. Here is likewise another argument that the Saxons had no small esteem for the scaldic poetry. It is highly reasonable to conjecture, that our Danish king Canute, a potentate of most extensive jurisdiction, and not only king of

<sup>1</sup> See Ol. Worm. Lit. Run. p. 227. 195. All the chiefs of Eric were also present at the recital of this ode, which is in a noble strain.

<sup>2</sup> See the Saxon epinicion in praise of King Athelstan. *supr.* citat. Hen. Hunting. L. v. p. 203, 204.

<sup>3</sup> Torfaeus Hist. Orcad. Præfat. "Réi statim ordinem metro nunc satis obscuro exposuit." Torfaeus adds, which is much to our purpose, "nequaquam ita narraturus NON INTELLIGENTI."

<sup>4</sup> Crymog. Arn. Jon. p. 129. ut *supr.*

England,

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England, but of Denmark, Sweden, and Norway, was not without the customary retinue of the northern courts, in which the scalds held so distinguished and important a station. Human nature, in a savage state, aspires to some species of merit; and in every stage of society is alike susceptible of flattery, when addressed to the reigning passion. The sole object of these northern princes was military glory. It is certain that Canute delighted in this mode of entertainment, which he patronised and liberally rewarded. It is related in *KNYTLINGA-SAGA*, or Canute's History, that he commanded the scald Loftunga to be put to death, for daring to comprehend his achievements in too concise a poem. "Nemo, said he, ante te, auctus est de me BREVES "CANTILENAS componere." A curious picture of the tyrant, the patron, and the barbarian, united! But the bard extorted a speedy pardon, and with much address, by producing the next day before the king at dinner an ode of more than thirty strophes, for which Canute gave him fifty marks of purified silver<sup>c</sup>. In the mean time, the Danish language began to grow perfectly familiar in England. It was eagerly learned by the Saxon clergy and nobility, from a principle of ingratiating themselves with Canute: and there are many manuscripts now remaining, by which it will appear, that the Danish runes were much studied among our Saxon ancestors, under the reign of that monarch<sup>d</sup>.

The songs of the Irish bards are by some conceived to be strongly marked with the traces of scaldic imagination; and these traces, which will be reconsidered, are believed still to survive among a species of poetical historians, whom they call *TALE-TELLERS*, supposed to be the descendants of the original Irish bards<sup>e</sup>. A writer of equal elegance and vera-

<sup>c</sup> Bartholin. *Antiquit. Danic. Lib. i. cap. 10. p. 169. 170.* See *KNYTLINGA SAGA*, in *Catal. Codd. MSS. Bibl. Holm. Hicel. Thesaur. ii. 312.*

<sup>d</sup> Hicel. *ubi supr. i. 134. 135.*

<sup>e</sup> We are informed by the Irish historians, that saint Patrick, when he converted Ireland to the Christian faith, destroyed three

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city relates, " that a gentleman of the north of Ireland has  
 " often told me of his own experience, that in his wolf-  
 " huntings there, when he used to be abroad in the moun-  
 " tains three or four days together, and laid very ill in the  
 " night, so as he could not well sleep, they would bring  
 " him one of these TALE-TELLERS, that when he lay down  
 " would begin a story of a KING, or a GIANT, a DWARF,  
 " and a DAMSEL." These are topics in which the Runic  
 poetry is said to have been greatly conversant.

Nor is it improbable that the Welsh bards<sup>6</sup> might have  
 been acquainted with the Scandinavian scalds. I mean be-

three hundred volumes of the songs of the Irish bards. Such was their dignity in this country, that they were permitted to wear a robe of the same colour with that of the royal family. They were constantly summoned to a triennial festival: and the most approved songs delivered at this assembly were ordered to be preserved in the custody of the king's historian or antiquary. Many of these compositions are referred to by Keating, as the foundation of his history of Ireland. Ample estates were appropriated to them, that they might live in a condition of independence and ease. The profession was hereditary: but when a bard died, his estate devolved not to his eldest son, but to such of his family as discovered the most distinguished talents for poetry and music. Every principal bard retained thirty of inferior note, as his attendants; and a bard of the secondary class was followed by a retinue of fifteen. They seem to have been at their height in the year 558. See Keating's History of Ireland, p. 127. 132. 370. 380. And Pref. p. 23. None of their poems have been translated.

There is an article in the LAWS of Kenneth king of Scotland, promulged in the year 850, which places the bards of Scotland, who certainly were held in equal esteem with those of the neighbouring countries, in the lowest station. " Fugitivos, BARDOS, otio addictos, scurras et hujusmodi hominum genus, loris et flagris cadunt." Apud Hector. Boeth. Lib. x. p. 201. edit. 1574. But Salma-

sius very justly observes, that for BARDOS we should read VARGOS, or VERGOS, i. e. Vagabonds.

<sup>7</sup> Sir W. Temple's Essays, part iv. p. 349.

<sup>8</sup> The bards of Britain were originally a constitutional appendage of the druidical hierarchy. In the parish of Llanidan in the isle of Anglesey, there are still to be seen the ruins of an arch-druid's mansion, which they call TRER DREW, that is the DRUID'S MANSION. Near it are marks of the habitations of the separate conventual societies, which were under his immediate orders and inspection. Among these is TRER BEIRD, or, as they call it to this day, the HAMLET OF THE BARDS. Rowlands's MONA, p. 83. 88. But so strong was the attachment of the Celtic nations, among which we reckon Britain, to poetry, that, amidst all the changes of government and manners, even long after the order of Druids was extinct, and the national religion altered, the bards, acquiring a sort of civil capacity, and a new establishment, still continued to flourish. And with regard to Britain, the bards flourished most in those parts of it, which most strongly retained their native Celtic character. The Britons living in those countries that were between the Trent or Humber and the Thames, by far the greatest portion of this island, in the midst of the Roman garrisons and colonies, had been so long inured to the customs of the Romans, that they preserved very little of the British; and from  
this



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fore their communications with Armorica, mentioned at large above. The profody of the Welsh bards depended much on alliteration<sup>a</sup>. Hence they seem to have paid an attention to the scaldic verification. The Islandic poets are said to have carried alliteration to the highest pitch of exactness in their earliest periods: whereas the Welsh bards of the sixth century used it but sparingly, and in a very imperfect degree. In this circumstance a proof of imitation, at least of emulation, is implied<sup>b</sup>. There are moreover, strong instances of conformity between the manners of the two nations; which, however, may be accounted for on general principles arising from our comparative observations on rude life. Yet it is remarkable that mead, the northern nectar, or favourite liquor of the Goths<sup>c</sup>, who seem to have stamped it with the character of a poetical drink, was no less celebrated among the Welsh<sup>d</sup>. The songs of both nations abound

this long and habitual intercourse, before the fifth century, they seem to have lost their original language. We cannot discover the slightest trace, in the poems of the bards, the *LIVES* of the British saints, or any other antient monument, that they held any correspondence with the Welsh, the Cornish, the Cumbrian, or the Strathclyd Britons. Among other British institutions grown obsolete among them, they seem to have lost the use of Bards; at least there are no memorials of any they had, nor any of their songs remaining: nor do the Welsh or Cumbrian poets ever touch upon any transactions that passed in those countries, after they were relinquished by the Romans.

And here we see the reason why the Welsh bards flourished so much and so long. But moreover the Welsh, kept in awe as they were by the Romans, harrassed by the Saxons, and eternally jealous of the attacks, the encroachments, and the neighbourhood of aliens, were on this account attached to their Celtic manners: this situation, and these circumstances, inspired them with a pride and an obstinacy for man-

taining a national distinction, and for preserving their antient usages, among which the bardic profession is so eminent.

<sup>a</sup> See *infr.* SECT. x. p. 32.

<sup>b</sup> I am however informed by a very intelligent antiquary in British literature, that there are manifest marks of alliteration in some druidical fragments still remaining, undoubtedly composed before the Britons could have possibly mixed in the smallest degree with any Gothic nation. Rhyme is likewise found in the British poetry at the earliest period, in those druidical triplets called *ENGLYN MILWR*, or the *WARRIOR'S SONG*, in which every verse is closed with a consonant syllable. See a metrical Druid oracle in *Borlase's Antiquit. Cornwall.* B. iii. ch. 5. p. 185. edit. 1769.

<sup>c</sup> And of the antient Franks. Gregory of Tours mentions a Frank drinking this liquor; and adds, that he acquired this habit from the *BARBAROUS* or Frankish nations. *Hist. Franc.* lib. viii. c. 33. p. 404. ed. 1699. Paris. fol.

<sup>d</sup> See *infr.* SECT. xvi. p. 430.

with

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with its praises : and it seems in both to have been alike the delight of the warrior and the bard. Taliessin, as Lhuyd informs us, wrote a panegyric ode on this inspiring beverage of the bee ; or, as he translates it, De Mulsum HYDROMELI<sup>k</sup>. In Hoel Dha's Welsh laws, translated by Wootton, we have, " In omni convivio in quo MULSUM bibitur<sup>l</sup>." From which passage, it seems to have been served up only at high festivals. By the same constitutions, at every feast in the king's castle-hall, the prefect or marshal of the hall is to receive from the queen, by the hands of the steward, a HORN OF MEAD. It is also ordered, among the privileges annexed to the office of prefect of the royal hall, that the king's bard shall sing to him as often as he pleases<sup>m</sup>. One of the stated officers of the king's household is CONFECTOR MULSI : and this officer, together with the master of the horse<sup>n</sup>, the master of the hawks, the smith of the palace<sup>o</sup>, the royal bard<sup>p</sup>, the first

<sup>k</sup> Tanner Bibl. p. 706.

<sup>l</sup> LEG. WALL. L. i. cap. xxiv. p. 45.

<sup>m</sup> Ibid. L. i. cap. xii. p. 17.

<sup>n</sup> When the king makes a present of a horse, this officer is to receive a fee ; but not when the present is made to a bishop, the master of the hawks, or to the Mimus. The latter is exempt, on account of the entertainment he afforded the court at being presented with a horse by the king : the horse is to be led out of the hall with *capistrum testicularis alligatum*. Ibid. L. i. cap. xvii. p. 31. MIMUS seems here to be a MIMIC, or a gesticulator. Carpentier mentions a " JOCUATOR qui sciebat TOMBARE, to tumble." Cang. Lat. Gloss. Suppl. V. TOMBARE. In the Saxon canons given by king Edgar, about the year 960, it is ordered, that no priest shall be a POET, or exercise the MIMICAL or histrionical art in any degree, either in public or private. Can. 58. Concil. Spelman, tom. i. p. 455. edit. 1639. fol. In Edgar's Oration to Dunstan, the MIMI, Minstrels, are said both to sing and dance. Ibid. p. 477. Much the same injunction occurs in the Saxon Laws of the NORTHUMBRIAN PRIESTS, given in 988. Cap. xli. ibid. p. 498. MIMUS seems sometimes to have

signified THE FOOL. As in Gregory of Tours, speaking of the MIMUS of Miro a king of Galicia. " Erat enim MIMUS REGIS, qui ei per VERBA JOCU LARIA LÆTITIAM erat solitus EXCITARE. Sed non cum adjuvit aliquis CACHINNUS, neque præstigiis artis suæ, &c." Gregor. Turonens. MIRACUL. S. Martin. lib. iv. cap. vii. p. 1119. Opp. Paris. 1699. fol. edit. Ruinart.

<sup>o</sup> He is to work free : except for making the king's cauldron, the iron bands, and other furniture for his castle-gate, and the iron-work for his mills. LEG. WALL. L. i. cap. xliv. p. 67.

<sup>p</sup> By these constitutions, given about the year 940, the bard of the Welsh kings is a domestic officer. The king is to allow him a horse and a woollen robe ; and the queen a linen garment. The prefect of the palace, or governor of the castle, is privileged to sit next him in the hall, on the three principal feast days, and to put the harp into his hand. On the three feast days he is to have the steward's robe for a fee. He is to attend, if the queen desires a song in her chamber. An ox or cow is to be given out of the booty or prey (chiefly consisting of cattle) taken from

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musician<sup>3</sup>, with some others, have a right to be seated in the hall. We have already seen, that the Scandinavian scalds were well known in Ireland: and there is sufficient evidence to prove, that the Welsh bards were early connected with the Irish. Even so late as the eleventh century, the practice continued among the Welsh bards, of receiving instructions in the bardic profession from Ireland. The Welsh bards were reformed and regulated by Gryffyth ap Conan, king of Wales, in the year 1078. At the same time he brought over with him from Ireland many Irish bards, for the information and improvement of the Welsh'. Powell acquaints us, that this prince "brought over with him from Ireland " divers cunning musicians into Wales, who devised in a " manner all the instrumental music that is now there used: " as appeareth, as well by the bookes written of the same,

from the English by the king's domestics: and while the prey is dividing, he is to sing the praises of the BRITISH KINGS or KINGDOM. If, when the king's domestics go out to make depredations, he sings or plays before them, he is to receive the best bullock. When the king's army is in array, he is to sing the Song of the BRITISH KINGS. When invested with his office, the king is to give him a harp, (other constitutions say a chess-board,) and the queen a ring of gold: nor is he to give away the harp on any account. When he goes out of the palace to sing with other bards, he is to receive a double portion of the largesse or gratuity. If he ask a gift or favour of the king, he is to be fined by singing an ode or poem: if of a nobleman or chief, three; if of a vassal, he is to sing him to sleep. LEG. WALL. L. i. cap. xix. p. 35. Mention is made of the bard who gains the CHAIR in the hall. Ibid. ARTIC. 5. After a contest of bards in the hall, the bard who gains the chair, is to give the JUDGE OF THE HALL, another officer, a horn, (*cornu bubalinum*) a ring, and the cushion of his chair. Ibid. L. i. cap. xvi. p. 26. When the king rides out of his castle, five bards are to accompany him. Ibid.

L. i. cap. viii. p. 11. The *Cornu Bubalinum* may be explained from a passage in a poem, composed about the year 1160, by Owain Cyveiliog prince of Powis, which he entitled HIRLAS, from a large drinking horn so called, used at feasts in his castle-hall. "Pour out, o cup-bearer, sweet " and pleasant mead (the spear is red in " the time of need) from the horns of " wild oxen, covered with gold, to the souls " of those departed heroes." Evans, p. 12.

By these laws the king's harp is to be worth one hundred and twenty pence: but that of a gentleman, or one not a vassal, sixty pence. The king's chess-board is valued at the same price: and the instrument for fixing or tuning the strings of the king's harp, at twenty-four pence. His drinking-horn, at one pound. Ibid. L. iii. cap. vii. p. 265.

<sup>3</sup> There are two musicians: the *Musicus PRIMARIUS*, who probably was a teacher, and certainly a superintendent over the rest; and the *HALL-MUSICIAN*. LEG. ut supr. L. i. cap. xlv. p. 68.

<sup>4</sup> "Jus cathedrae." Ibid. L. i. cap. x. p. 13.

<sup>5</sup> See Selden, Drayt. POLYOLB. S. ix. pag. 156. S. iv. pag. 67. edit. 1613. fol.

" as

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“ as also by the names of the tunes and measures used among them to this daie.” In Ireland, to kill a bard was highly criminal: and to seize his estate, even for the public service and in time of national distress, was deemed an act of sacrilege. Thus in the old Welsh laws, whoever even slightly injured a bard, was to be fined six cows and one hundred and twenty pence. The murderer of a bard was to be fined one hundred and twenty-six cows. Nor must I pass over, what reflects much light on this reasoning, that the establishment of the household of the old Irish chiefs, exactly resembles that of the Welsh kings. For, besides the bard, the musician, and the smith, they have both a physician, a huntsman, and other corresponding officers. We must also remember, that an intercourse was necessarily produced between the Welsh and Scandinavians, from the piratical irruptions of the latter: their scalds, as I have already remarked, were respected and patronised in the courts of those princes, whose territories were the principal objects of the Danish invasions. Torfaeus expressly affirms this of the Anglo-Saxon and Irish kings; and it is

<sup>c</sup> Hist. of Cambr. p. 191. edit. 1584.

<sup>d</sup> Keating's Hist. Ireland, pag. 132.

<sup>e</sup> LEG. WALL. ut supr. L. i. cap. xix. pag. 35. seq. See also cap. xlv. p. 68. We find the same respect paid to the bard in other constitutions. “ QUI HARPATOREM, &c. whoever shall strike a HARPER who can harp in a public assembly, shall compound with him by a composition of four times more, than for any other man of the same condition.” Legg. Ripuariorum et Wesinorum. Lindenbroch. Cod. LL. Antiq. Wisigoth. etc. A. D. 1613. Tit. 5. §. ult.

The caliphs, and other eastern potentates, had their bards: whom they treated with equal respect. Sir John Maundeville, who travelled in 1340, says, that when the emperor of Cathay, or great Cham of Tartary, is seated at dinner in high pomp with his lords, “ no man is so hardi to speak

“ to him except it be MUSICIANS to solace the emperor.” chap. lxvii. p. 100. Here is another proof of the correspondence between the eastern and northern customs: and this instance might be brought as an argument of the bardic institution being fetched from the east. Leo Afer mentions the *Poeta curia* of the Caliph's court at Bagdad, about the year 990. De Med. et Philos. Arab. cap. iv. These poets were in most repute among the Arabians, who could speak extemporaneous verses to the Caliph. Euseb. Renaudot. apud Fabric. Bibl. Gr. xiii. p. 249. Thomson, in the CASTLE OF INDOLENCE, mentions the BARD IN WAITING being introduced to lull the Caliph asleep. And Maundeville mentions MINSTRELLERS established officers in the court of the emperor of Cathay.

<sup>f</sup> See Temple, ubi supr. p. 346.

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at least probable, that they were entertained with equal regard by the Welsh princes, who so frequently concurred with the Danes in distressing the English. It may be added, that the Welsh, although living in a separate and detached situation, and so strongly prejudiced in favour of their own usages, yet from neighbourhood, and unavoidable communications of various kinds, might have imbibed the ideas of the Scandinavian bards from the Saxons and Danes, after those nations had occupied and overspread all the other parts of our island.

Many pieces of the Scottish bards are still remaining in the high-lands of Scotland. Of these a curious specimen, and which considered in a more extensive and general respect, is a valuable monument of the poetry of a rude period, has lately been given to the world, under the title of the *WORKS OF OSSIAN*. It is indeed very remarkable, that in these poems, the terrible graces, which so naturally characterise, and so generally constitute, the early poetry of a barbarous people, should so frequently give place to a gentler set of manners, to the social sensibilities of polished life, and a more civilised and elegant species of imagination. Nor is this circumstance, which disarranges all our established ideas concerning the savage stages of society, easily to be accounted for, unless we suppose, that the Celtic tribes, who were so strongly addicted to poetical composition, and who made it so much their study from the earliest times, might by degrees have attained a higher vein of poetical refinement, than could at first sight or on common principles be expected among nations, whom we are accustomed to call barbarous; that some few instances of an elevated strain of friendship, of love, and other sentimental feelings, existing in such nations, might lay the foundation for introducing a set of manners among the bards, more refined and exalted than the real manners of the country: and that panegyrics on those virtues, transmitted with improvements  
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from bard to bard, must at length have formed characters of ideal excellence, which might propagate among the people real manners bordering on the poetical. These poems, however, notwithstanding the difference between the Gothic and the Celtic rituals, contain many visible vestiges of Scandinavian superstition. The allusions in the songs of Ossian to spirits, who preside over the different parts and direct the various operations of nature, who send storms over the deep, and rejoice in the shrieks of the shipwrecked mariner, who call down lightning to blast the forest or cleave the rock, and diffuse irresistible pestilence among the people, beautifully conducted indeed, and heightened, under the skilful hand of a master bard, entirely correspond with the Runic system, and breathe the spirit of its poetry. One fiction in particular, the most EXTRAVAGANT in all Ossian's poems, is founded on an essential article of the Runic belief. It is where Fingal fights with the spirit of Loda. Nothing could aggrandise Fingal's heroism more highly than this marvellous encounter. It was esteemed among the antient Danes the most daring act of courage to engage with a ghost<sup>1</sup>. Had Ossian found it convenient, to have introduced religion into his compositions<sup>2</sup>, not only a new source had

<sup>1</sup> Bartholin. De Contemptu Mortis apud Dan. L. ii. c. 2. p. 258. And *ibid.* p. 260. There are many other marks of Gothic customs and superstitions in Ossian. The fashion of marking the sepulchres of their chiefs with circles of stones, corresponds with what Olaus Wormius relates of the Danes. *Monum. Danic. Hafn.* 1634. p. 38. See also *Ol. Magn. Hist.* xvi. 2. In the *HERVARER SAGA*, the sword of Suarfulama is forged by the dwarfs, and called Tiring. *Hickes*, vol. i. p. 193. So Fingal's sword was made by an enchanter, and was called the son of Luno. And, what is more, this Luno was the Vulcan of the north, lived in Juteland, and made complete suits of armour for many of the Scandinavian heroes. See *TEMORA*, B.

vii. p. 159. *OSSIAN*, vol. ii. edit. 1765. Hence the bards of both countries made him a celebrated enchanter. By the way, the names of sword-smiths were thought worthy to be recorded in history. *Hoveden* says, that when Geoffrey of Plantagenet was knighted, they brought him a sword from the royal treasure, where it had been laid up from old times, "being the workmanship of GALAN, the most excellent of all sword-smiths." *Hoved.* f. 444. ii. *SECT.* 50. The mere mechanic, who is only mentioned as a skilful artist in history, becomes a magician or a preternatural being in romance.

<sup>2</sup> This perplexing and extraordinary circumstance, I mean the absence of all religious ideas from the poems of Ossian, is accounted

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been opened to the sublime, in describing the rites of sacrifice, the horrors of incantation, the solemn evocations of infernal beings, and the like dreadful superstitions, but probably many stronger and more characteristical evidences would have appeared, of his knowledge of the imagery of the Scandinavian poets.

Nor must we forget, that the Scandinavians had conquered many countries bordering upon France in the fourth century \*. Hence the Franks must have been in some measure used to their language, well acquainted with their manners, and conversant in their poetry. Charlemagne is said to have delighted in repeating the most antient and barbarous odes, which celebrated the battles of antient kings †.

accounted for by Mr. Macpherson with much address. See DISSERTATION prefixed, vol. i. p. viii. ix. edit. 1765. See also the elegant CRITICAL DISSERTATION of the very judicious Dr. Blair, vol. ii. p. 379.

\* Hickef. Theof. i. part ii. p. 4.

† Eginhart. cap. viii. n. 34. Bartholin. i. c. 10. p. 154. Diodorus Siculus says, that the Gauls, who were Celts, delivered the spoils won in battle, yet reeking with blood, to their attendants: these were carried in triumph, while an epinicial song was chanted, *παραίσιδος ἢ ἀδοῦτος ἔμνος ἱερὸς*. Lib. 5. p. 352. See also p. 308. "The Celts, says Ælian, I hear, are the most enterprising of men: they make those warriors who die bravely in fight the subject of songs, τῶν Ἀγαθῶν." Var. Hist. Lib. xxii. c. 23. Pofidonius gives us a specimen of the manner of a Celtic bard. He reports, that Luernius, a Celtic chief, was accustomed, out of a desire of popularity, to gather crouds of his people together, and to throw them gold and silver from his chariot. Once he was attended at a sumptuous banquet by one of their bards, who received in reward for his song a purse of gold. On this the bard renewed his song, adding, to express his patron's excessive generosity, this hyperbolical pægyric, "The earth over which his chariot-wheels pass, instantly brings forth

"gold and precious gifts to enrich mankind." Athen. vi. 184.

Tacitus says, that Arminius, the conqueror of Varus, "is yet sung among the barbarous nations." That is, probably among the original Germans. Annal. ii. And Mor. Germ. ii. 3. Joannes Aventinus, a Bavarian, who wrote about the year 1520, has a curious passage, "A great number of verses in praise of the virtues of Attila, are still extant among us, *patrio sermone more majorum perscripta*." Annal. Boior. L. ii. p. 130. edit. 1627. He immediately adds, "Nam et adhuc VULGO CANTATUR, et est popularibus nostris, et si LITERARUM RUDIBUS, notissimus." Again, speaking of Alexander the Great, he says, "Boios eodem bellum indixisse ANTIQUIS CANTATUR CARMINEBUS." *ibid.* Lib. i. p. 25. Concerning king Brennus, says the same historian, "Carmina vernaculo sermone facta legi in bibliothecis." *ibid.* Lib. i. p. 16. and p. 26. And again, of Ingeram, Adalgerion, and others of their ancient heroes, "Ingerami et Adalgerionis nomina frequentissime in fastis referuntur; ipsos, more majorum, *antiqui proavi celebrant carminibus*, que in bibliothecis extant. Subsequuntur, quos patrio sermone adhuc canimus, Laertes atque Ulysses." *ibid.* Lib. i. p. 15. The same historian also relates, that his countrymen

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But we are not informed whether these were Scandinavian, Celtic, or Teutonic poems.

About the beginning of the tenth century, France was invaded by the Normans, or NORTHERN-MEN, an army of adventurers from Norway, Denmark, and Sweden. And although the conquerors, especially when their success does not solely depend on superiority of numbers, usually assume

trymen had a poetical history called the Book of HEROES, containing the achievements of the German warriors. *ibid.* Lib. i. p. 18. See also *ibid.* Lib. vii. p. 432. Lib. i. p. 9. And many other passages to this purpose. Suffridus Petrus cites some old Frisian rhymes, *De Orig. Frisior.* l. iii. c. 2. Compare Robertson's *Hist. Charles V.* vol. i. p. 235. edit. 1772. From Trithemius a German abbot and historian, who wrote about 1490, we learn, that among the ancient Franks and Germans, it was an exercise in the education of youth, for them to learn to repeat and to sing verses of the achievements of their heroes. *Compend. Annal. L.* i. p. 11. edit. Francof. 1601. Probably these were the poems which Charlemagne is said to have committed to memory.

The most ancient Theotic or Teutonic ode I know, is an Epinicion published by Schilter, in the second volume of his *THESAURUS ANTIQUITATUM TEUTONICARUM*, written in the year 833. He entitles it *ETHNIKION rhythmo Teutonico Ludovico regi acclamatum cum Northmannis anno DCCCXXXIII vicisset*. It is in rhyme, and in the four-lined stanza. It was transcribed by Mabillon from a manuscript in the monastery of Saint Amand in Holland. I will give a specimen from Schilter's Latin interpretation, but not on account of the merit of the poetry. "The king seized his shield and lance, galloping hastily. He truly wished to revenge himself on his adversaries. Nor was there a long delay: he found the Normans. He said, thanks be to God, at seeing what he desired. The king rushed on boldly, he first began the customary song *Kyrie eleison*, in which they all joined. The song was sung, the battle begun. The

blood appeared in the cheeks of the impatient Franks. Every soldier took his revenge, but none like Louis. Impetuous, bold, &c." As to the military chorus *Kyrie eleison*, it appears to have been used by the christian emperors before an engagement. See Bona, *Rer. Liturg.* ii. c. 4. Vossius, *Theolog. Gentil.* i. c. 2. 3. Matth. Brouerius de *Niedek, De Populor. vet. et recent. Adorationibus*, p. 31. And, among the ancient Norwegians, Erlingus Scacchius before he attacked earl Sigund, commanded his army to pronounce this formulary aloud, and to strike their shields. See Dolmerus ad *HERD-SKRAAN*, five *Jus Aulicum antiq. Norvegic.* p. 51. p. 413. edit. Hafn. 1673. Engelhusius, in describing a battle with the Huns in the year 934, relates, that the christians at the onset cried, *Kyrie eleison*, but on the other side, *diabolica vox hui, hui, hui, auditur*. *Chronic.* p. 1073. in tom. ii. *Scriptor. Brunf. Leibnit.* Compare *Bed. Hist. Eccl. Anglican.* lib. ii. c. 20. And Schilterus, *ubi sup.* p. 17. And *Sarbiev. Od.* i. 24. The Greek church appears to have had a set of military hymns, probably for the use of the soldiers, either in battle or in the camp. In a Catalogue of the manuscripts of the library of Berne, there is "Sylloge *Tacticorum Leonis Imperatoris cui operi finem imponunt HYMNI MILITARES quibus iste titulus, Αὐδωβία Ἰατροῦσα ἰππικῆς καὶ πεζῆς ἐπιμαρτυρία*, &c." *Catal. Cod.* &c. p. 600. See Meurfius's edit. of *Leo's TACTICS*, c. xii. p. 155. *Lugd. Bat.* 1612. 4to. But to return to the main subject of this tedious note, Wagenfeil, in a letter to Cuperus, mentions a treatise written by one Ernest Casimir Wassenback, I suppose a German, with this title, "De Bardis ac Barditu, sive antiquis



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the manners of the conquered, yet these strangers must have still further familiarised in France many of their northern fictions.

From this general circulation in these and other countries, and from that popularity which it is natural to suppose they must have acquired, the scaldic inventions might have taken deep root in Europe<sup>c</sup>. At least they seem to have prepared the way for the more easy admission of the Arabian fabling about the ninth century, by which they were, however, in great measure, superseded. The Arabian fictions were of a more splendid nature, and better adapted to the increasing civility of the times. Less horrible and gross, they had a novelty, a variety, and a magnificence, which carried with them the charm of fascination. Yet it is probable, that many of the scaldic imaginations might have been blended with the Arabian. In the mean time, there is great reason to believe, that the Gothic scalds enriched their vein of fabling from this new and fruitful source of fiction, opened by the Arabians in Spain, and afterwards propagated by the crusades. It was in many respects congenial with their own<sup>d</sup>: and the northern bards, who visited the coun-

<sup>c</sup> "antiquis Carminibus ac Cantilenis veterum Germanorum Dissertatio, cui junctus est de S. Annone Coloniensi archiepiscopo vetustissimus omnium Germanorum rhythmus et monumentum." See Polen. Supplem. Thesaur. Gronov. et Græv. tom. iv. p. 24. I do not think it was ever published. See Joach. Swabius, de Semnotheis veterum Germanorum philosophis. p. 8. And Sect. i. infr. p. 7. 8. Pelloutier, sur la Lang. Celt. part i. tom. i. ch. xii. p. 20.

We must be careful to distinguish between the poetry of the Scandinavians, the Teutonics, and the Celts. As most of the Celtic and Teutonic nations were early converted to christianity, it is hard to find any of their native songs. But I must except the poems of Ossian, which are noble and genuine remains of the Celtic poetry.

<sup>c</sup> Of the long continuance of the Celtic superstitions in the popular belief, see what is said in the most elegant and judicious piece of criticism which the present age has produced, Mrs. Montague's ESSAY ON SHAKESPEARE. p. 145. edit. 1772.

<sup>d</sup> Besides the general wildness of the imagery in both, among other particular circumstances of coincidence which might be mentioned here, the practice of giving names to swords, which we find in the scaldic poems, occurs also among the Arabians. In the HERVARER SAGA, the sword of Suarfulama is called TIRFING. Hicel. Thes. i. p. 193. The names of swords of many of the old northern chiefs are given us by Olaus Wormius, Lit. Run. cap. xix. p. 110. 4to. ed. Thus, Herbelot recites a long catalogue of the names of the swords of the most famous Arabian and

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tries where these new fancies were spreading, must have been naturally struck with such wonders, and were certainly fond of picking up fresh embellishments, and new strokes of the marvellous, for augmenting and improving their stock of poetry. The earliest scald now on record is not before the year 750. From which time the scalds flourished in the northern countries, till below the year 1157<sup>e</sup>. The celebrated ode of Regner Lodbrog was composed about the end of the ninth century<sup>f</sup>.

And that this hypothesis is partly true, may be concluded from the subjects of some of the old Scandic romances, manuscripts of which now remain in the royal library at Stockholm. The titles of a few shall serve for a specimen; which I will make no apology for giving at large. "SAGAN  
" AF HIALMTER OC OLWER. The History of Hialmter  
" king of Sweden, son of a *Syrian* princess, and of Olver  
" Jarl. Containing their expeditions into Hunland, and  
" *Arabia*, with their numerous encounters with the Vikings  
" and the giants. Also their leagues with Alfola, daughter  
" of Ringer king of *Arabia*, afterwards married to Hervor  
" king of Hunland, &c.—SAGAN AF SIOD. The History  
" of Siod, son of Ridgare king of England; who first was  
" made king of England, afterwards of *Babylon* and *Niniveh*,

and *Perfic* warriors. V. SAIF. p. 736. b. Mahomet had nine swords, all which are named. As were also his bows, quivers, cuirasses, helmets, and lances. His swords were called *The Piercing, Ruin, Death, &c.* Mod. Univ. Hist. i. p. 253. This is common in the romance-writers and Ariosto. Mahomet's horses had also pompous or heroic appellations. Such as the *Swift, The Thunderer, Shaking the earth with his hoof, The Red, &c.* As likewise his mules, asses, and camels. Horses were named in this manner among the Runic heroes. See OL. Worm. ut sup. p. 110. Odin's horse was called STEIFNER. See EDDA Island. fab. xxi. I could give other proofs. But we have already wandered too far, in what

Spenser calls, *this delightful land of Faerie*. Yet I must add, that from one, or both, of these sources, King Arthur's sword is named in Geoffrey of Monmouth, Lib. ix. cap. 11. Ron is also the name of his lance, *ibid.* cap. 4. And Turpin calls Charlemagne's sword *Gaudoisa*. See Obf. Spenf. i. §. vi. p. 214. By the way, from these correspondencies, an argument might be drawn, to prove the oriental origin of the Goths. And some perhaps may think them proofs of the doctrine just now suggested in the text, that the scalds borrowed from the Arabians.

<sup>e</sup> Ol. Worm. Lit. Run. p. 241.

<sup>f</sup> Id. *Ibid.* p. 196.

h

" Compre-

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“ Comprehending various occurrences in Saxland, *Babylon*,  
 “ *Greece*, *Africa*, and especially in Eirice <sup>a</sup> the region of the  
 “ giants.—SAGAN AF ALEFLECK. The History of Alefleck,  
 “ a king of England, and of his expeditions into *India* and  
 “ *Tartary*.—SAGAN AF ERIK WIDFORLA. The History of  
 “ Eric the traveller, who, with his companion Eric, a Danish  
 “ prince, undertook a wonderful journey to Odin’s Hall,  
 “ or Oden’s Aker, near the river *Pifon* in *India* <sup>b</sup>.” Here  
 we see the circle of the Islandic poetry enlarged; and the  
 names of countries and cities belonging to another quarter  
 of the globe, Arabia, India, Tartary, Syria, Greece, Babylon,  
 and Niniveh, intermixed with those of Hunland, Sweden,  
 and England, and adopted into the northern romantic nar-  
 ratives. Even Charlemagne and Arthur, whose histories, as  
 we have already seen, had been so lavishly decorated by the  
 Arabian fablers, did not escape the Scandinavian scalds <sup>c</sup>.  
 Accordingly we find these subjects among their Sagas.  
 “ SAGAN AF ERIK EINGLANDS KAPPE. The History of  
 “ Eric, son of king Hiac, king Arthur’s chief wrestler.—  
 “ HISTORICAL RHYMES of king Arthur, containing his  
 “ league with Charlemagne.—SAGAN AF IVENT. The  
 “ History of Ivent, king Arthur’s principal champion,  
 “ containing his battles with the giants <sup>d</sup>.—SAGAN AF

<sup>a</sup> In the Latin *ERICÆA REGIONE*.  
 f. Erse or Irish land.

<sup>b</sup> Wanley, apud Hickes, iii. p. 314. seq.

<sup>c</sup> It is amazing how early and how uni-  
 versally this fable was spread. G. de la  
 Flamma says, that in the year 1339, an  
 antient tomb of a king of the Lombards  
 was broke up in Italy. On his sword was  
 written, “ C’el est l’espée de Meser Trifram,  
 “ un qui occist l’Amoroyt d’Yrlant.”—  
 i. e. “ This is the sword of sir Trifram,  
 “ who killed Amoroyt of Ireland.”  
 SCRIPT. ITAL. tom. xii. 1028. The  
 Germans are said to have some very an-  
 cient narrative songs on our old British  
 heroes, Trifram, Gawain, and the rest of  
 the knights *Von der Tafel-ronde*. See Gol-

dash. Not. Vit. Carol. Magn. p. 207. edit.  
 1711.

<sup>d</sup> They have also, “ *BRETOMANNA*  
 “ *SAGA*, The History of the Britons,  
 “ from Eneas the Trojan to the emperor  
 “ Constantius.” Wanl. *ibid*. There are  
 many others, perhaps of later date, re-  
 lating to English history, particularly the  
 history of William the Bastard and other  
 christians, in their expedition into the holy  
 land. The history of the destruction of  
 the monasteries in England, by William  
 Rufus. Wanl. *ibid*.

In the history of the library at Upsal,  
 I find the following articles, which are left  
 to the conjectures of the curious enquirer.  
 Historia Biblioth. Upsaliens. per Celsum.  
 Upf.

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“ KARLAMAGNUSE OF HOPPUM HANS. *The History of Charle-*  
 “ *magne, of his champions, and captains.* Containing all his  
 “ actions in several parts. 1. Of his birth and coronation :  
 “ and the combat of Carvetus king of Babylon, with Od-  
 “ degir the Dane <sup>1</sup>. 2. Of Aglandus king of Africa, and of  
 “ his son Jatmund, and their wars in Spain with Charle-  
 “ magne. 3. Of Roland, and his combat with Villaline king  
 “ of Spain. 4. Of Ottuel’s conversion to christianity, and  
 “ his marriage with Charlemagne’s daughter. 5. Of Hugh  
 “ king of Constantinople, and the memorable exploits of  
 “ his champions. 6. Of the wars of Ferracute king of  
 “ Spain. 7. Of Charlemagne’s atchievements in Rounce-  
 “ valles, and of his death <sup>2</sup>.” In another of the Sagas,  
 Jarl, a magician of Saxland, exhibits his feats of necro-  
 mancy before Charlemagne. We learn from Olaus Magnus,  
 that Roland’s magical horn, of which archbishop Turpin relates  
 such wonders, and among others that it might be heard at  
 the distance of twenty miles, was frequently celebrated in  
 the songs of the Islandic bards <sup>3</sup>. It is not likely that these  
 pieces, to say no more, were composed till the Scandinavian  
 tribes had been converted to christianity ; that is, as I have  
 before observed, about the close of the tenth century. These  
 barbarians had an infinite and a national contempt for the  
 christians, whose religion inculcated a spirit of peace, gen-  
 tleness, and civility ; qualities so dissimilar to those of their own

Upf. 1745. 8vo.—pag. 38. Artic. vii. *Variæ Britannorum fabulæ, quas in carmine conversas olim, atque in convivis ad citharam decantari solitas fuisse, perhibent. Sunt autem relationes de GUIAMARO equite Britannicæ meridionalis Æskeliød Britannis veteribus dictæ. De Nobilium duorum conjugibus gemellos enixis ; et id genus alia.*—pag. 87. Artic. v. *Drama equivoor, fol. in membran. Res continet amatorias, olim, ad jocos concitandum Islandica lingua scriptum.*—ibid. Artic. vii. *The history of Duke Julianus, son of S.*

Giles. Containing many things of Earl William and Rosamund. In the ancient Islandic. See OBSERVATIONS ON THE FAIRY QUEEN, i. pag. 203. 204. §. vi.

<sup>1</sup> Mabillon thinks, that Turpin first called this hero a Dane. But this notion is refuted by Bartholinus, *Antiq. Danic.* ii. 13. p. 578. His old Gothic sword, SPATHA, and iron shield, are still preserved and shewn in a monastery of the north. Bartholin. *ibid.* p. 579.

<sup>2</sup> Wanley, *ut sup.* p. 314.

<sup>3</sup> See *infr.* SECT. iii. p. 132.

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ferocious and warlike disposition, and which they naturally interpreted to be the marks of cowardice and pusillanimity\*. It has, however, been urged, that as the irruption of the Normans into France, under their leader Rollo, did not take place till towards the beginning of the tenth century, at which period the scaldic art was arrived to the highest perfection in Rollo's native country, we can easily trace the descent of the French and English romances of chivalry from the Northern Sagas. It is supposed, that Rollo carried with him many scalds from the north, who transmitted their skill to their children and successors: and that these, adopting the religion, opinions, and language, of the new country, substituted the heroes of christendom, instead of those of their pagan ancestors, and began to celebrate the feats of Charlemagne, Roland, and Oliver, whose true history they set off and embellished with the scaldic figments of dwarfs, giants, dragons, and enchantments†. There is, however, some reason to believe, that these fictions were current among the French long before; and, if the principles advanced in the former part of this dissertation be true, the fables adhering to Charlemagne's real history must be referred to another source.

Let me add, that the enchantments of the Runic poetry are very different from those in our romances of chivalry. The former chiefly deal in spells and charms, such as would preserve from poison, blunt the weapons of an enemy, procure victory, allay a tempest, cure bodily diseases, or call the dead from their tombs: in uttering a form of mysterious words, or inscribing Runic characters. The magicians of romance are chiefly employed in forming and conducting a train of deceptions. There is an air of barbaric horror in the

\* Regner Lodbrog, in his DYING ODE, speaking of a battle fought against the christians, says, in ridicule of the eucharist,

“ There we celebrated a Mass [Missæ, *Island.*] of weapons.”

† Percy's Ess. Metr. Rom. p. viii.

incantations

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incantations of the scaldic fablers : the magicians of romance often present visions of pleasure and delight ; and, although not without their alarming terrors, sometimes lead us through flowery forests, and raise up palaces glittering with gold and precious stones. The Runic magic is more like that of Canidia in Horace, the romantic resembles that of Armida in Tasso. The operations of the one are frequently but mere tricks, in comparison of that sublime solemnity of necromantic machinery which the other so awefully displays.

It is also remarkable, that in the earlier scaldic odes, we find but few dragons, giants, and fairies. These were introduced afterwards, and are the progeny of Arabian fancy. Nor indeed do these imaginary beings often occur in any of the compositions which preceded the introduction of that species of fabling. On this reasoning, the Irish tale-teller mentioned above, could not be a lineal descendant of the elder Irish bards. The absence of giants and dragons, and, let me add, of many other traces of that fantastic and brilliant imagery which composes the system of Arabian imagination, from the poems of Ossian, are a striking proof of their antiquity. It has already been suggested, at what period, and from what origin, those fancies got footing in the Welsh poetry : we do not find them in the odes of Talieffin or Aneurin<sup>9</sup>. This reasoning explains an observa-

<sup>9</sup> Who flourished about the year 570. He has left a long spirited poem called *Gododin*, often alluded to by the later Welsh bards, which celebrates a battle fought against the Saxons near *Cattraeth*, under the conduct of *Mynnydawe Biddin*, in which all the Britons, three only excepted, among which was the bard *Aneurin* himself, were slain. I will give a specimen. " The men whose drink was mead, comely " in shape, hastened to *Cattraeth*. These " impetuous warriors in ranks, armed with " red spears, long and bending, began " the battle. Might I speak my revenge " against the people of the *Deiri*, I would " overwhelm them, like a deluge, in one

" slaughter : for unheeding I have lost a " friend, who was brave in resisting his " enemies. I drank of the wine and " metheglin of *Mordai*, whose spear was " of huge size. In the shock of the battle, " he prepared food for the eagle. When " *Cydwal* hastened forward, a shout arose : " before the yellow morning, when he " gave the signal, he broke the shield " into small splinters. The men hastened " to *Cattraeth*, noble in birth : their drink " was wine and mead, out of golden cups. " There were three hundred and sixty three " adorned with chains of gold ; but of " those, who filled with wine, rushed on to " the fight, only three escaped, who hewed " their

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tion of an ingenious critic in this species of literature, and who has studied the works of the Welsh bards with much attention. "There are not such extravagant FLIGHTS in any poetic compositions, except it be in the EASTERN; to which, as far as I can judge by the few translated specimens I have seen, they bear a near resemblance." I will venture to say he does not meet with these flights in the elder Welsh bards. The beautiful romantic fiction, that king Arthur, after being wounded in the fatal battle of Camlan, was conveyed by an Elfin princess into the land of Faery, or spirits, to be healed of his wounds, that he reigns there still as a mighty potentate in all his pristine splendour, and will one day return to resume his throne in Britain, and restore the solemnities of his champions, often occurs in the antient Welsh bards'. But not in the most antient. It

" their way with the sword, the warrior  
 " of Acron, Conan Dacarawd, and I the  
 " bard Aneurin, red with blood, otherwise  
 " I should not have survived to compose  
 " this song. When Caradoc hastened to  
 " the war, he was the son of a wild boar,  
 " in hewing down the Saxons; a bull in  
 " the conflict of fight, he twisted the wood  
 " [spear] from their hands. Gurien saw  
 " not his father after he had lifted the  
 " glistening mead in his hand. I praise  
 " all the warriors who thus met in the  
 " battle, and attacked the foe with one  
 " mind. Their life was short, but they  
 " have left a long regret to their friends.  
 " Yet of the Saxons they slew more than  
 " seven . . . . There was many a mo-  
 " ther shedding tears. The song is due to  
 " thee who hast attained the highest  
 " glory; thou who wast like fire, thunder  
 " and storm: O Rudd Fedell, warlike  
 " champion, excellent in might, you still  
 " think of the war. The noble chiefs  
 " deserve to be celebrated in verse, who  
 " after the fight made the rivers to over-  
 " flow their banks with blood. Their  
 " hands glutted the throats of the dark-  
 " brown eagles, and skilfully prepared food  
 " for the ravenous birds. Of all the chiefs  
 " who went to Cattrath with golden  
 " chains," &c. This poem is extremely

difficult to be understood, being written, if not in the Pictish language, at least in a dialect of the Britons very different from the modern Welsh. See the learned and ingenious Mr. Evans's DISSERTATIO DE BARDIS, p. 68.--75.

<sup>1</sup> Evans, ubi supr. Pref. p. iv.

<sup>2</sup> The Arabians call the Fairies *Ginn*, and the Persians *Peri*. The former calls Fairy-land *Ginnistan*, many beautiful cities of which they have described in their fabulous histories. See Herbelot. *Bibl. Orient. GIAN.* p. 306. a. *GENN.* p. 375. a. *PERI.* p. 701. b. They pretend that the fairies built the city of Esthekar, or Persepolis. *Id.* in. V. p. 327. a. One of the most eminent of the oriental fairies was *MERGIAN PERI*, or *Mergian the Fairy*. Herbel. ut supr. V. *PERI.* p. 702. a. *THAHAMURATH*, p. 1017. a. This was a good fairy, and imprisoned for ages in a cavern by the giant Demrusch, from which she was delivered by Thahamurath, whom she afterwards assisted in conquering another giant, his enemy. *Id.* *ibid.* And this is the fairy or elfin queen, called in the French romances *MORGAIN LE FAY*, Morgain the fairy, who preserved king Arthur. See *Obs.* on Spenser's *Fairy Queen*, i. 63. §. ii.

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is found in the compositions of the Welsh bards only, who flourished after the native vein of British fabling had been tinged by these FAIRY TALES, which the Arabians had propagated in Armorica, and which the Welsh had received from their connection with that province of Gaul. Such a fiction as this is entirely different from the cast and completion of the ideas of the original Welsh poets. It is easy to collect from the Welsh odes, written after the tenth century, many signatures of this EXOTIC imagery. Such as, " Their assault was like strong lions. He is valourous as a lion, who can resist his lance? The dragon of Mona's sons were so brave in fight, that there was horrible consternation, and upon Tal Moelvre a thousand banners. Our lion has brought to Trallwng three armies. A dragon he was from the beginning, unterrified in battle. A dragon of Ovain. Thou art a prince firm in battle, like an elephant. Their assault was as of strong lions. The lion of Cemais fierce in the onset, when the army rusheth to be covered with red. He saw Llewellyn like a burning dragon in the strife of Arfon. He is furious in fight like an outrageous dragon. Like the roaring of a furious lion, in the search of prey, is thy thirst of praise." Instead of producing more proofs from the multitude that might be mentioned, for the sake of illustration of our argument, I will contrast these with some of their natural unadulterated thoughts. " Fetch the drinking horn, whose gloss is like the wave of the sea. Tudor is like a wolf rushing on his prey. They were all covered with blood when they returned, and the high hills and the dales enjoyed the sun equally<sup>1</sup>. O thou virgin, that shinest like the snow on the brows of Aran<sup>2</sup>: like the fine spiders webs on the grafs on a summer's day. The army at Offa's dike panted

<sup>1</sup> The high mountains in Merionethshire.

<sup>2</sup> A beautiful periphrasis for noon day,

and extremely natural in so mountainous a country as Wales. This circumstance of time added to the merit of the action.

for



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“ for glory, the soldiers of Venedotia, and the men of London, were as the alternate motion of the waves on the sea-shore, where the sea-mew screams. The hovering crows were numberless: the ravens croaked, they were ready to suck the prostrate carcases. His enemies are scattered as leaves on the side of hills driven by hurricanes. He is a warrior, like a furge on the beach that covers the wild salmons. Her eye was piercing like that of the hawk<sup>w</sup>: her face shone like the pearly dew on Eryri<sup>x</sup>. Llewellyn is a hero who setteth castles on fire. I have watched all night on the beach, where the sea-gulls, whose plumes glitter, sport on the bed of billows; and where the herbage, growing in a solitary place, is of a deep green<sup>y</sup>.” These images are all drawn from their own country, from their situation and circumstances; and, although highly poetical, are in general of a more sober and temperate colouring. In a word, not only that elevation of allusion, which many suppose to be peculiar to the poetry of Wales, but that fertility of fiction, and those marvellous fables recorded in Geoffrey of Monmouth, which the generality of readers, who do not sufficiently attend to the origin of that historian’s romantic materials, believe to be the genuine offspring of the Welsh poets, are of foreign growth. And, to return to the ground of this argument, there is the strongest reason to suspect, that even the Gothic EDDA, or system of poetic mythology of the northern nations, is enriched with those higher strokes of oriental imagination, which the Arabians had communicated to the Europeans. Into this extravagant tissue of unmeaning allegory, false philosophy, and false theology, it was easy to incorporate their most wild and romantic conceptions<sup>z</sup>.

<sup>w</sup> See *infr.* SECT. XIII. p. 380.

<sup>x</sup> Mountains of snow, from *Eiry*, snow.

<sup>y</sup> See Evans, *ubi supr.* p. 8. 10. 11. 15. 16. 21. 22. 23. 26. 28. 34. 37. 39. 40. 41. 42. And his *Diss. de Bard.* p. 84.

Compare Aneurin’s ode, cited above.

<sup>z</sup> Huet is of opinion, that the EDDA is entirely the production of Snorro’s fancy. But this is saying too much. See *Orig. Roman.* p. 116. The first Edda was compiled

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It must be confessed, that the ideas of chivalry, the appendage and the subject of romance, subsisted among the Goths. But this must be understood under certain limitations. There is no peculiarity which more strongly discriminates the manners of the Greeks and Romans from those of modern times, than that small degree of attention and respect with which those nations treated the fair sex, and that inconsiderable share which they were permitted to take in conversation, and the general commerce of life. For the truth of this observation, we need only appeal to the classic writers: in which their women appear to have been devoted to a state of seclusion and obscurity. One is surprised that barbarians should be greater masters of complaisance than the most polished people that ever existed. No sooner was the Roman empire overthrown, and the Goths had overpowered Europe, than we find the female character assuming an unusual importance and authority, and distinguished with new privileges, in all the European governments established by the northern conquerors. Even amidst the confusions of savage war, and among the almost incredible enormities committed by the Goths at their invasion of the empire, they forbore to offer any violence to the women. This perhaps is one of the most striking features in the new state of manners, which took place about the seventh century: and it is to this period, and to this people, that we must refer the origin of gallantry in Europe. The Romans never introduced these sentiments into their European provinces.

piled, undoubtedly with many additions and interpolations, from fictions and traditions in the old Runic poems, by Sœmund Sigfússon, surnamed the Learned, about the year 1057. He seems to have made it his business to select or digest into one body such of these pieces as were best calculated to furnish a collection of poetic phrases and figures. He studied in Germany, and chiefly at Cologne. This first Edda, being not only prolix, but perplexed and obscure, a second, which is that now

extant, was compiled by Snorro Sturleson, born in the year 1179.

It is certain, and very observable, that in the EDDA we find much more of giants, dragons, and other imaginary beings, undoubtedly belonging to Arabian romance, than in the earlier Scaldic odes. By the way, there are many strokes in both the EDDAS taken from the REVELATIONS of Saint John, which must come from the compilers who were Christians.

The

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The Goths believed some divine and prophetic quality to be inherent in their women; they admitted them into their councils, and consulted them on the public business of the state. They were suffered to conduct the great events which they predicted. Ganna, a prophetic virgin of the Marcomanni, a German or Gaulish tribe, was sent by her nation to Rome, and admitted into the presence of Domitian, to treat concerning terms of peace<sup>7</sup>. Tacitus relates, that Velleda, another German prophetess, held frequent conferences with the Roman generals; and that on some occasions, on account of the sacredness of her person, she was placed at a great distance on a high tower, from whence, like an oracular divinity, she conveyed her answers by some chosen messenger<sup>8</sup>. She appears to have preserved the supreme rule over her own people and the neighbouring tribes<sup>9</sup>. And there are other instances, that the government among the ancient Germans was sometimes vested in the women<sup>10</sup>. This practice also prevailed among the Sitones or Norwegians<sup>11</sup>. The Cimbri, a Scandinavian tribe, were accompanied at their assemblies by venerable and hoary-headed prophetesses, apparelled in long linen vestments of a splendid white<sup>12</sup>. Their matrons and daughters acquired a reverence from their skill in studying simples, and their knowledge of healing wounds, arts reputed mysterious. The wives frequently attended their husbands in the most perilous expeditions, and fought with great intrepidity in the most bloody engagements<sup>13</sup>. These nations dreaded

<sup>7</sup> Dio. lib. lxxvii. p. 761.

<sup>8</sup> Hist. lib. iv. p. 953. edit. D'Orlean. fol.

<sup>9</sup> He says just before, "ea virgo late imperitabat." Ibid. p. 951. He saw her in the reign of Vespasian. De Morib. German. p. 972. Where he likewise mentions Aurinia.

<sup>10</sup> See Tacit. Hist. lib. v. p. 969. ut supr.

<sup>11</sup> De Morib. German. p. 983. ut supr.

<sup>12</sup> Strab. Geograph. lib. viii. p. 205. edit. If. Caf. 1587. fol. Compare Keyser, Antiquit. Sel. Septentrional. p. 371. viz.

DISSERTATIO de Mulieribus Fatidicia veterum Celtae gentiumque Septentrionalium. See also Cluverius's GERMANIA ANTIQUA, lib. i. cap. xxiv. pag. 165. edit. fol. Lugd. Bat. 1631. It were easy to trace the WEIRD sisters, and our modern witches, to this source.

<sup>13</sup> See SECT. vii. infr. p. 254. Diodorus Siculus says, that among the Scythians the women are trained to war as well as the men, to whom they are not inferior in strength and courage. L. ii. p. 90.

captivity,

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captivity, more on the account of their women, than on their own: and the Romans, availing themselves of this apprehension, often demanded their noblest virgins for hostages<sup>f</sup>. From these circumstances, the women even claimed a sort of precedence, at least an equality subsisted between the sexes, in the Gothic constitutions.

But the deference paid to the fair sex, which produced the spirit of gallantry, is chiefly to be sought for in those strong and exaggerated ideas of female chastity which prevailed among the northern nations. Hence the lover's devotion to his mistress was increased, his attentions to her service multiplied, his affection heightened, and his sollicitude aggravated, in proportion as the difficulty of obtaining her was enhanced: and the passion of love acquired a degree of delicacy, when controlled by the principles of honour and purity. The highest excellence of character then known was a superiority in arms; and that rival was most likely to gain his lady's regard, who was the bravest champion. Here we see valour inspired by love. In the mean time, the same heroic spirit which was the surest claim to the favour of the ladies, was often exerted in their protection: a protection much wanted in an age of rapine, of plunder, and piracy, when the weakness of the softer sex was exposed to continual dangers and unexpected attacks<sup>g</sup>. It is easy to suppose the officious emulation and ardour of many a gallant young warrior, pressing forward to be foremost in this honourable service, which flattered the most agreeable of all passions, and which gratified every enthusiasm of the times,

<sup>f</sup> Tacit. de Morib. Germ. pag. 972. ut sup.

<sup>g</sup> See instances of this sort of violence in the ancient HISTORY of HIALMAR, a Runic romance, p. 135. 136. 140. Diff. Epist. Ad calc. Hicel. Thesaur. vol. i. Where also is a challenge between two champions for king Hialmar's daughter. But the king composes the quarrel by giving to one of them, named Ulfo, among

other rich presents, an inestimable horn, on which were inlaid in gold the images of Odin, Thor, and Freya: and to the other, named Hramur, the lady herself, and a drum, embossed with golden imagery, which foretold future events. This piece, which is in Runic capital characters, was written before the year 1000. Many stories of this kind might be produced from the northern chronicles.

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especially the fashionable fondness for a wandering and military life. In the mean time, we may conceive the lady thus won, or thus defended, conscious of her own importance, affecting an air of stateliness: it was her pride to have preserved her chastity inviolate, she could perceive no merit but that of invincible bravery, and could only be approached in terms of respect and submission.

Among the Scandinavians, a people so fond of cloathing adventures in verse, these gallantries must naturally become the subject of poetry, with its fictitious embellishments. Accordingly, we find their chivalry displayed in their odes; pieces, which at the same time greatly confirm these observations. The famous ode of Regner Lodbrog, affords a striking instance; in which, being imprisoned in a loathsome dungeon, and condemned to be destroyed by venomous serpents, he solaces his desperate situation by recollecting and reciting the glorious exploits of his past life. One of these, and the first which he commemorates, was an achievement of chivalry. It was the delivery of a beautiful Swedish princess from an impregnable fortress, in which she was forcibly detained by one of her father's captains. Her father issued a proclamation, promising that whoever would rescue the lady, should have her in marriage. Regner succeeded in the attempt, and married the fair captive. This was about the year 860<sup>b</sup>. There are other strokes in Regner's ode, which, although not belonging to this particular story, deserve to be pointed out here, as illustrative of our argument. Such as, "It was like being placed near a beautiful virgin on a couch.---It was like kissing a young widow in the first seat at a feast. I made to struggle in the twilight that golden-haired chief, who passed his mornings among the young maidens, and loved to converse with

<sup>b</sup> See Torf. Hist. Norw. tom. i. lib. 10. Saxo Grammat. p. 152. And Ol. Worm. Lit. Rom. p. 221. edit. 46. I suspect that the romantic amour between Regner and

Astauga is the forgery of a much later age. See REGNARA LODBROG'S Saga. C. 5. apud Biorneri Histor. Reg. Her. et Pugil. Res. præclar. gest. Stockholm. 1737.

" widows.

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“ widows.---He who aspires to the love of young virgins, ought always to be foremost in the din of arms<sup>1</sup>.” It is worthy of remark, that these sentiments occur to Regner while he is in the midst of his tortures, and at the point of death. Thus many of the heroes in Froissart, in the greatest extremities of danger, recollect their amours, and die thinking of their mistresses. And by the way, in the same strain, Boh, a Danish champion, having lost his chin, and one of his cheeks, by a single stroke from Thurstain Midlang, only reflected how he should be received, when thus maimed and disfigured, by the Danish girls. He instantly exclaimed in a tone of savage gallantry, “ The Danish virgins will not now willingly or easily give me kisses, if I should perhaps return home<sup>2</sup>.” But there is an ode, in the *KNYTLINGA-SAGA*, written by Harald the *VALIANT*, which is professedly a song of chivalry; and which, exclusive of its wild spirit of adventure, and its images of savage life, has the romantic air of a set of stanzas, composed by a Provencal troubadour. Harald, appears to have been one of the most eminent adventurers of his age. He had killed the king of Drontheim in a bloody engagement. He had traversed all the seas, and visited all the coasts, of the north; and had carried his piratical enterprises even as far as the Mediterranean, and the shores of Africa. He was at length taken prisoner, and detained for some time at Constantinople. He complains in this ode, that the reputation he had acquired by so many hazardous exploits, by his skill in single combat, riding, swimming, gliding along the ice, darting, rowing, and guiding a ship through the rocks, had not been able to make any impression on Elissiff, or Elifabeth, the beautiful daughter of Jarilas, king of Ruffia<sup>3</sup>.

Here, however, chivalry subsisted but in its rudiments. Under the feudal establishments, which were soon afterwards erected in Europe, it received new vigour, and was invested

<sup>1</sup> St., 13. 14. 19. 23.

<sup>2</sup> Chron. Norveg. p. 136.

<sup>3</sup> Bartholin. p. 54.

with

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with the formalities of a regular institution. The nature and circumstances of that peculiar model of government, were highly favourable to this strange spirit of fantastic heroism; which, however unmeaning and ridiculous it may seem, had the most serious and salutary consequences in assisting the general growth of refinement, and the progression of civilisation, in forming the manners of Europe, in inculcating the principles of honour, and in teaching modes of decorum. The genius of the feudal policy was perfectly martial. A numerous nobility, formed into separate principalities, affecting independence, and mutually jealous of their privileges and honours, necessarily lived in a state of hostility. This situation rendered personal strength and courage the most requisite and essential accomplishments. And hence, even in time of peace, they had no conception of any diversions or public ceremonies, but such as were of the military kind. Yet, as the courts of these petty princes were thronged with ladies of the most eminent distinction and quality, the ruling passion for war was tempered with courtesy. The prize of contending champions was adjudged by the ladies; who did not think it inconsistent to be present or to preside at the bloody spectacles of the times; and who, themselves, seem to have contracted an unnatural and unbecoming ferocity, while they softened the manners of those valorous knights who fought for their approbation. The high notions of a noble descent, which arose from the condition of the feudal constitution, and the ambition of forming an alliance with powerful and opulent families, cherished this romantic system. It was hard to obtain the fair feudatary, who was the object of universal adoration. Not only the splendor of birth, but the magnificent castle surrounded with embattelled walls, guarded with massy towers, and crowned with lofty pinnacles, served to inflame the imagination, and to create an attachment to some illustrious heirs, whose point of honour it was to be chaste and inaccessible. And the difficulty

## DISSERTATION I.

culty of success on these occasions, seems in great measure to have given rise to that sentimental love of romance, which acquiesced in a distant respectful admiration, and did not aspire to possession. The want of an uniform administration of justice, the general disorder, and state of universal anarchy, which naturally sprung from the principles of the feudal policy, presented perpetual opportunities of checking the oppressions of arbitrary lords, of delivering captives injuriously detained in the baronial castles, of punishing robbers, of succouring the distressed, and of avenging the impotent and the unarmed, who were every moment exposed to the most licentious insults and injuries. The violence and injustice of the times gave birth to valour and humanity. These acts conferred a lustre and an importance on the character of men professing arms, who made force the substitute of law. In the mean time, the crusades, so pregnant with enterprize, heightened the habits of this warlike fanaticism. And when these foreign expeditions were ended, in which the hermits and pilgrims of Palestine had been defended, nothing remained to employ the activity of adventurers but the protection of innocence at home. Chivalry by degrees was consecrated by religion, whose authority tinged every passion, and was engrafted into every institution, of the superstitious ages; and at length composed that singular picture of manners, in which the love of a god and of the ladies were reconciled, the saint and the hero were blended, and charity and revenge, zeal and gallantry, devotion and valour, were united.

Those who think that chivalry started late, from the nature of the feudal constitution, confound an improved effect with a simple cause. Not having distinctly considered all the particularities belonging to the genius, manners, and usages of the Gothic tribes, and accustomed to contemplate nations under the general idea of barbarians, they cannot look for the seeds of elegance amongst men, distinguished  
only



## DISSERTATION III.

only for their ignorance and their inhumanity. The rude origin of this heroic gallantry was quickly overwhelmed and extinguished, by the superior pomp which it necessarily adopted from the gradual diffusion of opulence and civility, and that blaze of splendor with which it was surrounded, amid the magnificence of the feudal solemnities. But above all, it was lost and forgotten in that higher degree of embellishment, which at length it began to receive from the representations of romance.

From the foregoing observations taken together, the following general and comprehensive conclusion seems to result.

Amid the gloom of superstition, in an age of the grossest ignorance and credulity, a taste for the wonders of oriental fiction was introduced by the Arabians into Europe, many countries of which were already seasoned to a reception of its extravagancies, by means of the poetry of the Gothic scalds, who perhaps originally derived their ideas from the same fruitful region of invention. These fictions, coinciding with the reigning manners, and perpetually kept up and improved in the tales of troubadours and minstrels, seem to have centered about the eleventh century in the ideal histories of Turpin and Geoffrey of Monmouth, which record the supposititious achievements of Charlemagne and king Arthur, where they formed the ground-work of that species of fabulous narrative called romance. And from these beginnings or causes, afterwards enlarged and enriched by kindred fancies fetched from the crusades, that singular and capricious mode of imagination arose, which at length composed the marvellous machineries of the more sublime Italian poets, and of their disciple Spenser.

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