



UNIVERSITÄTS-  
BIBLIOTHEK  
PADERBORN

## Universitätsbibliothek Paderborn

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

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

**Warton, Thomas**

**London, 1774**

Section III. Effects of the increase of tales of chivalry. Rise of chivalry.  
Crusades. Rise and improvements of Romance. View of the rise of metrical  
romances. Their currency about the end of the ...

[urn:nbn:de:hbz:466:1-51377](https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:hbz:466:1-51377)

## S E C T. III.

WE have seen, in the preceding section, that the character of our poetical composition began to be changed about the reign of the first Edward: that either fictitious adventures were substituted by the minstrels in the place of historical and traditionary facts, or reality disguised by the misrepresentations of invention; and that a taste for ornamental and even exotic expression gradually prevailed over the rude simplicity of the native English phraseology. This change, which with our language affected our poetry, had been growing for some time; and among other causes was occasioned by the introduction and increase of the tales of chivalry.

The ideas of chivalry, in an imperfect degree, had been of old established among the Gothic tribes. The fashion of challenging to single combat, the pride of seeking dangerous adventures, and the spirit of avenging and protecting the fair sex, seem to have been peculiar to the northern nations in the most uncultivated state of Europe. All these customs were afterwards encouraged and confirmed by corresponding circumstances in the feudal constitution. At length the crusades excited a new spirit of enterprise, and introduced into the courts and ceremonies of European princes a higher degree of splendor and parade, caught from the riches and magnificence of eastern cities<sup>a</sup>. These oriental expeditions

<sup>a</sup> I cannot help transcribing here a curious passage from old Fauchett. He is speaking of Louis the young, king of France about the year 1150. "Le quel fut le premier roy de sa maison, qui montra dehors ses richesses allant en Jerusalem. Aussi la France commença de

" son temps a s'embellir de bastimens plus  
 " magnifiques: prendre plaisir a pierrieres,  
 " et autres delicateffes goustus en Levant  
 " par luy, ou les seigneurs qui avoient ja  
 " fait ce voyage. De sorte qu'on peut  
 " dire qu'il a este le premier tenant Cour  
 " de grand Roy: estant si magnifique, que  
 " fa

established a taste for hyperbolical description, and propagated an infinity of marvellous tales, which men returning from distant countries easily imposed on credulous and ignorant minds. The unparalleled emulation with which the nations of christendom universally embraced this holy cause, the pride with which emperors, kings, barons, earls, bishops, and knights strove to excel each other on this interesting occasion, not only in prowess and heroism, but in sumptuous equipages, gorgeous banners, armorial cognisances, splendid pavilions, and other expensive articles of a similar nature, diffused a love of war, and a fondness for military pomp. Hence their very diversions became warlike, and the martial enthusiasm of the times appeared in tilts and tournaments. These practices and opinions co-operated with the kindred superstitions of dragons<sup>b</sup>, dwarfs, fairies, giants, and enchanters, which the traditions of the Gothic scalders had already planted; and produced that extraordinary species of composition which has been called ROMANCE.

Before these expeditions into the east became fashionable, the principal and leading subjects of the old fablers were the achievements of king Arthur with his knights of the round table, and of Charlemagne with his twelve peers. But in the romances written after the holy war, a new set of champions, of conquests and of countries, were introduced. Trebizonde took place of Rouncevalles, and Godfrey of Bulloigne, Solyman, Nouraddin, the caliphs, the souldans, and the cities of Ægypt and Syria, became the favourite topics. The troubadours of Provence, an idle and unsettled race of men, took up arms, and followed their barons

<sup>a</sup> sa femme dedaignant la simplicité de ses predecesseurs, luy fit elever une sepulture d'argent, au lieu de pierre." RECUEIL de la Lang. et Poef. Fr. ch. viii. p. 76. edit. 1581. He adds, that a great number

of French romances were composed about this period.

<sup>b</sup> See Kircher's Mund. Subterr. viii. § 4. He mentions a knight of Rhodes made grand master of the order for killing a dragon, 1345.

in prodigious multitudes to the conquest of Jerusalem. They made a considerable part of the household of the nobility of France. Louis the seventh, king of France, not only entertained them at his court very liberally, but commanded a considerable company of them into his retinue, when he took ship for Palestine, that they might solace him with their songs during the dangers and inconveniencies of so long a voyage<sup>c</sup>. The antient chronicles of France mention *Legions de poëtes* as embarking in this wonderful enterprize<sup>d</sup>. Here a new and more copious source of fabling was opened: in these expeditions they picked up numberless extravagant stories, and at their return enriched romance with an infinite variety of oriental scenes and fictions. Thus these later wonders, in some measure, supplanted the former: they had the recommendation of novelty, and gained still more attention, as they came from a greater distance<sup>e</sup>.

In the mean time we should recollect, that the Saracens or Arabians, the same people which were the object of the crusades, had acquired an establishment in Spain about the ninth century: and that by means of this earlier intercourse, many of their fictions and fables, together with their literature, must have been known in Europe before the christian armies invaded Asia. It is for this reason the elder Spanish romances have professedly more Arabian allusions than any other. Cervantes makes the imagined writer of

<sup>c</sup> Velley, Hist. Fr. sub. an. 1178.

<sup>d</sup> Maffieu, Hist. Poët. Fr. p. 105. Many of the troubadours, whose works now exist, and whose names are recorded, accompanied their lords to the holy war. Some of the French nobility of the first rank were troubadours about the eleventh century: and the French critics with much triumph observe, that it is the GLORY of the French poetry to number counts and dukes, that is *sovereigns*, among its professors, from its commencement. What a glory! The worshipful company of Merchant-taylors in

London, if I recollect right, boast the names of many dukes, earls, and princes, enrolled in their community. This is indeed an honour to that otherwise respectable society. But poets can derive no lustre from counts, and dukes, or even princes, who have been enrolled in their lists; only in proportion as they have adorned the art by the excellence of their compositions.

<sup>e</sup> The old French historian Mezeray goes so far as to derive the origin of the French poetry and romances from the crusades. Hist. p. 416, 417.

Don

Don Quixote's history an Arabian. Yet exclusive of their domestic and more immediate connection with this eastern people, the Spaniards from temper and constitution were extravagantly fond of chivalrous exercises. Some critics have supposed, that Spain having learned the art or fashion of romance-writing, from their naturalised guests the Arabians, communicated it, at an early period, to the rest of Europe<sup>f</sup>.

It has been imagined that the first romances were composed in metre, and sung to the harp by the poets of Provence at festival solemnities: but an ingenious Frenchman, who has made deep researches into this sort of literature, attempts to prove, that this mode of reciting romantic adventures was in high reputation among the natives of Normandy, above a century before the troubadours of Provence, who are generally supposed to have led the way to the poets of Italy, Spain, and France, commenced about the year 1162<sup>g</sup>. If the critic means to insinuate, that the French troubadours acquired their art of versifying from these Norman bards, this reasoning will favour the system of those, who contend that metrical romances lineally took their rise from the historical odes of the Scandinavian scalds: for the Normans were a branch of the Scandinavian stock. But Fauchett, at the same time that he allows the Normans to have been fond of chanting the praises of their heroes in verse, expressly<sup>h</sup>

<sup>f</sup> Huet in some measure adopts this opinion. But that learned man was a very incompetent judge of these matters. Under the common term *Romance*, he confounds romances of chivalry, romances of gallantry, and all the fables of the Provençal poets. What can we think of a writer, who having touched upon the gothic romances, at whose fictions and barbarisms he is much shocked, talks of the *consummate degree of art and elegance to which the French are at present arrived in romances*? He adds, that the superior refinement and

politesse of the French gallantry has happily given them an advantage of shining in this species of composition. Hist. Rom. p. 138. But the sophistry and ignorance of Huet's Treatise has been already detected and exposed by a critic of another cast, in the SUPPLEMENT TO JARVIS'S PREFACE, prefixed to the *Translation of Don Quixote*.

<sup>g</sup> Mons. L' Eveque de la Ravaulrie, in his *Revolutions de Langue François*, à la suite des POESIES DU ROI DE NAVARRE.

<sup>h</sup> "Ce que les Normans avoyent pris des François." Rec. liv. i. p. 70. edit. 1581.

pronounces

pronounces that they borrowed this practice from the Franks or French.

It is not my business, nor is it of much consequence, to discuss this obscure point, which properly belongs to the French antiquaries. I therefore proceed to observe, that our Richard the first, who began his reign in the year 1189, a distinguished hero of the crusades, a most magnificent patron of chivalry, and a Provencal poet<sup>h</sup>, invited to his court many minstrels or troubadours from France, whom he loaded with honours and rewards<sup>i</sup>. These poets imported into England a great multitude of their tales and songs; which before or about the reign of Edward the second became familiar and popular among our ancestors, who were sufficiently acquainted with the French language. The

<sup>h</sup> See Observations on Spenser, i. § i. p. 28. 29. And Mr. Walpole's Royal and Noble authors, i. 5. See also Rymer's *Short View of Tragedy*, ch. vii. p. 73. edit. 1693. Savarie de Maulcon, an English gentleman who lived in the service of Saint Louis king of France, and one of the Provencal poets, said of Richard,

Coblas a teira faire adroitement  
Pou voz oillez enten dompna gentiltz.

"He could make stanzas on the eyes of gentle ladies." Rymer, *ibid.* p. 74. There is a curious story recorded by the French chroniclers, concerning Richard's skill in the minstrel art, which I will here relate.—Richard, in his return from the crusade, was taken prisoner about the year 1193. A whole year elapsed before the English knew where their monarch was imprisoned. Blondell de Nefle, Richard's favourite minstrel, resolved to find out his lord; and after travelling many days without success, at last came to a castle where Richard was detained in custody. Here he found that the castle belonged to the duke of Austria, and that a king was there imprisoned. Suspecting that the prisoner was his master, he found means to place him-

self directly before a window of the chamber where the king was kept; and in this situation began to sing a French chanson, which Richard and Blondell had formerly written together. When the king heard the song, he knew it was Blondell who sung it; and when Blondell paused after the first half of the song, the king began the other half and completed it. On this, Blondell returned home to England, and acquainted Richard's barons with the place of his imprisonment, from which he was soon afterwards released. See also Fauchett, *Rec.* p. 93. Richard lived long in Provence, where he acquired a taste for their poetry. The only relic of his sonnets is a small fragment in old French accurately cited by Mr. Walpole, and written during his captivity; in which he remonstrates to his men and barons of England, Normandy, Poitiers, and Gascony, that they suffered him to remain so long a prisoner. *Catal. Roy. and Nob. Auth.* i. 5. Nostradamus's account of Richard is full of false facts and anachronisms. *Poet. Provenc. artic. RICHARD.*

<sup>i</sup> "De regno Francorum cantores et joculariores muneribus allexerat." *Rog. Hoved. Ric.* i. p. 340. These gratuities were chiefly arms, cloaths, horses, and sometimes money.

most

most early notice of a professed book of chivalry in England, as it should seem, appears under the reign of Henry the third; and is a curious and evident proof of the reputation and esteem in which this sort of composition was held at that period. In the revenue-roll of the twenty-first year of that king, there is an entry of the expence of silver clasps and studs for the king's great book of romances. This was in the year 1237. But I will give the article in its original dress. "Et in firmaculis hapsis et clavis argenteis ad magnum librum ROMANCIS regis<sup>k</sup>." That this superb volume was in French, may be partly collected from the title which they gave it: and it is highly probable, that it contained the Romance of Richard the first, on which I shall enlarge below. At least the victorious achievements of that monarch were so famous in the reign of Henry the second, as to be made the subject of a picture in the royal palace of Clarendon near Salisbury. A circumstance which likewise appears from the same antient record, under the year 1246. "Et in camera regis subtus capellam regis apud Clarendon lambruscanda, et muro ex transverso illius cameræ amovendo et hystoria Antiochiæ in eadem depingenda cum DUELLO REGIS RICARDI<sup>l</sup>." To these anecdotes we may add, that in the royal library at Paris there is, "*Lancelot du Lac mis en Francois par Robert de Borron, du commandement d' Henri roi de Angleterre avec figures*."<sup>m</sup> And the same manuscript occurs twice again in that library in three volumes, and in four volumes of the largest folio<sup>n</sup>. Which of our

<sup>k</sup> Rot. Pip. an. 21. Henr. iii.

<sup>l</sup> Rot. Pip. an. 36. Henr. iii. Richard the first performed great feats at the siege of Antioch in the crusade. The *Duellum* was another of his exploits among the Saracens. Compare Walpole's *Anecd. Paint.* i. 10. Who mentions a certain *great book* borrowed for the queen, written in French containing *GESTA ANTIOCHIE et regum*

*aliorum, &c.* This was in the year 1249. He adds, that there was a chamber in the old palace of Westminster painted with this history, in the reign of Henry the third, and therefore called the *ANTIOCH CHAMBER*: and another in the Tower.

<sup>m</sup> Cod. 6783. fol. max. See Montfaucon. *Catal. MSS.* p. 785. a.

<sup>n</sup> See Montf. *ibid.*

Henry's

Henrys it was who thus commanded the romance of LANCELOT DU LAC to be translated into French, is indeed uncertain: but most probably it was Henry the third just mentioned, as the translator Robert Borron is placed soon after the year 1200°.

But not only the pieces of the French minstrels, written in French, were circulated in England about this time; but translations of these pieces were made into English, which containing much of the French idiom, together with a sort of poetical phraseology before unknown, produced various innovations in our style. These translations, it is probable, were enlarged with additions, or improved with alterations of the story. Hence it was that Robert de Brunne, as we have already seen, complained of *strange* and *quaint* English, of the changes made in the story of SIR TRISTRAM, and of the liberties assumed by his cotemporary minstrels in altering facts and coining new phrases. Yet these circumstances enriched our tongue, and extended the circle of our poetry. And for what reason these fables were so much admired and encouraged, in preference to the languid poetical chronicles of Robert of Gloucester and Robert of Brunne, it is obvious to conjecture. The gallantries of chivalry were exhibited with new splendour, and the times were growing more refined. The Norman fashions were adopted even in Wales. In the year 1176, a splendid carousal, after the manner of the Normans, was given by a Welsh prince. This was Rhees ap Gryffyth king of South Wales, who at Christmas made a great feast in the castle of Cardigan, then

° Among the infinite number of old manuscript French romances on this subject in the same noble repository, the learned Montfaucon recites, "Le Roman de Tristan et Iseult traduit de Latin en François par Lucas chevalier fleur du chastel du Gast pres de Salisberi, Anglois, avec figures." Cod. 6776. fol. max. And

again, "Livres de Tristan mis en François par Lucas chevalier fleur de chateau du Gast." Cod. 6956. seq. fol. max. In another article, this translator the chevalier Lucas, of whom I can give no account, is called Huc or Hue. Cod. 6976. seq. Nor do I know of any castle, or place, of this name near Salisbury. See also Cod. 7174.

Q<sup>2</sup>

called



called Aberteivi, which he ordered to be proclaimed throughout all Britain; and to “ which came many strangers, who  
 “ were honourably received and worthily entertained, so that  
 “ no man departed discontented. And among deeds of arms  
 “ and other shewes, Rhees caused all the poets of Wales<sup>r</sup> to  
 “ come thither: and provided chairs for them to be set in  
 “ his hall, where they should dispute together to try their  
 “ cunning and gift in their several faculties, where great  
 “ rewards and rich giftes were appointed for the overcomers<sup>s</sup>.”

<sup>r</sup> In illustration of the argument pursued in the text we may observe, that about this time the English minstrels flourished with new honours and rewards. At the magnificent marriage of the countess of Holland, daughter of Edward the first, every king minstrel received xl. shillings. See Anstis Ord. Gart. ii. p. 303. And Dugd. Mon. i. 355. In the same reign a multitude of minstrels attended the ceremony of knight-ing prince Edward on the feast of Pentecost. They entered the hall, while the king was sitting at dinner surrounded with the new knights. Nic. Trivet. Annal. p. 342. edit. Oxon. The whole number knighted was two hundred and sixty-seven. Dugd. Bar. i. 80. b. Robert de Brunne says, this was the greatest royal feast since king Arthur's at Carleon: concerning which he adds, “ therof yit men rime.” p. 332. In the wardrobe-roll of the same prince, under the year 1306, we have this entry. “ Will. Fox et Cradoco socio suo CANTATORIBUS cantantibus coram Principe et aliis magnatibus in comitiva sua existente apud London, &c. xx s.” Again, “ Willo Pfox et Cradoco socio suo cantantibus in presentia principis et al. Magnatum apud London de dono ejusdem dni per manus Johis de Ringwode, &c. 8. die jan. xx s.” Afterwards, in the same roll, four shillings are given, “ Miniftrallo comitisse Marechal. facienti menestralciam suam coram principe, &c. in comitiva sua existent. apud Penreth.” Comp. Garderob. Edw. Princip. Wall. ann. 35. Edw. i. This I chiefly cite to shew the greatness of the gratuity. Minstrels

were part of the establishment of the household of our nobility before the year 1307. Thomas earl of Lancaster allows at Christmas, cloth, or *vestis liberata*, to his household-minstrels at a great expence, in the year 1314. Stowe's Surv. Lond. p. 134. edit. 1618. See *supr.* p. 91. Soon afterwards the minstrels claimed such privileges that it was thought necessary to reform them by an edict, in 1315. See Hearne's Append. Leland. Collectan. vi. 36. Yet, as I have formerly remarked in OBSERVATIONS ON SPENSER'S FAIRIE QUEENE, we find a person in the character of a minstrel entering Westminster-hall on horseback while Edward the second was solemnizing the feast of *Pentecost* as above, and presenting a letter to the king. See Walsing. Hist. Angl. Franc. p. 109.

<sup>s</sup> Powell's Wales, 237. edit. 1584. Who adds, that the bards of “ Northwales won the prize, and amonge the musicians. Rhee's owne household men were counted best.” Rhee was one of the Welsh princes who, the preceding year, attended the parliament at Oxford, and were magnificently entertained in the castle of that city by Henry the second. Lord Lyttelton's Hist. Hen. ii. edit. iii. p. 302. It may not be foreign to our present purpose to mention here, that Henry the second, in the year 1179, was entertained by Welsh bards at Pembroke castle in Wales in his passage into Ireland. Powell, ut *supr.* p. 238. The subject of their songs was the history of king Arthur. See Selden on POLYOLB. f. iii. p. 53.

Tilts.

Tilts and tournaments, after a long disuse, were revived with superiour lustre in the reign of Edward the first. Roger earl of Mortimer, a magnificent baron of that reign, erected in his stately castle of Kenelworth a Round Table, at which he restored the rites of king Arthur. He entertained in this castle the constant retinue of one hundred knights, and as many ladies; and invited thither adventurers in chivalry from every part of christendom\*. These fables were therefore an image of the manners, customs, mode of life, and favourite amusements, which now prevailed, not only in France but in England, accompanied with all the decorations which fancy could invent, and recommended by the graces of romantic fiction. They complimented the ruling passion of the times, and cherished in a high degree the fashionable sentiments of ideal honour, and fantastic fortitude.

Among Richard's French minstrels, the names only of three are recorded. I have already mentioned Blondell de Nefle. Fouquet of Marseilles, and Anselme Fayditt, many of whose compositions still remain, were also among the poets patronised and entertained in England by Richard. They are both celebrated and sometimes imitated by Dante and Petrarch. Fayditt, a native of Avignon, united the professions of music and verse; and the Provencials used to call his poetry *de bon mots e de bon son*. Petrarch is supposed to have copied, in his TRIUMFO DI AMORE, many strokes of high imagination, from a poem written by Fayditt on a similar subject: particularly in his description of the Palace of Love. But Petrarch has not left Fayditt without his due panegyric: he says that Fayditt's tongue was shield, helmet, sword, and spear\*. He is likewise in Dante's Paradise. Fayditt was extremely profuse and voluptuous. On the

\* Drayton's Heroic. Epist. MORT. ISABEL. v. 53. And Notes ibid. from Walsingham.

\* Triumf. Am. c. iv.

death

death of king Richard, he travelled on foot for near twenty years, seeking his fortune; and during this long pilgrimage he married a nun of Aix in Provence, who was young and lively, and could accompany her husband's tales and sonnets with her voice. Fouquett de Marfeilles had a beautiful person, a ready wit, and a talent for fingering: these popular accomplishments recommended him to the courts of king Richard, Raymond count of Tholouse, and Beral de Baulx; where, as the French would say, *il fit les delices de cour*. He fell in love with Adelfia the wife of Beral, whom he celebrated in his songs. One of his poems is entitled, *Las complanchas de Beral*. On the death of all his lords, he received absolution for his sin of poetry, turned monk, and at length was made archbishop of Tholouse<sup>1</sup>. But among the many French minstrels invited into England by Richard, it is natural to suppose, that some of them made their magnificent and heroic patron a principal subject of their compositions<sup>2</sup>. And this subject, by means of the constant communication

<sup>1</sup> See Beauchamps, Recherch. Theatr. Fr. Paris, 1735. p. 7. 9. It was Jeffrey, Richard's brother, who patronised Jeffrey Rudell, a famous troubadour of Provence, who is also celebrated by Petrarch. This poet had heard, from the adventurers in the crusades, the beauty of a countess of Tripoly highly extolled. He became enamoured from imagination: embarked for Tripoly, fell sick in the voyage through the fever of expectation, and was brought on shore at Tripoly half expiring. The countess, having received the news of the arrival of this gallant stranger, hastened to the shore and took him by the hand. He opened his eyes; and at once overpowered by his disease and her kindness, had just time to say inarticulately, that *having seen her he died satisfied*. The countess made him a most splendid funeral, and erected to his memory a tomb of porphyry, inscribed with an epitaph in Arabian verse. She commanded his sonnets to be richly copied and illuminated with letters of gold; was seized

with a profound melancholy, and turned nun. I will endeavour to translate one of the sonnets which he made on his voyage. *Yrat et dolent m'en partray*, &c. It has some pathos and sentiment, "I should depart pensive, but for this love of mine *so far away*; for I know not what difficulties I have to encounter, my native land being *so far away*. Thou who hast made all things, and who formed this love of mine *so far away*, give me strength of body, and then I may hope to see this love of mine *so far away*. Surely my love must be founded on true merit, as I love one *so far away*! If I am easy for a moment, yet I feel a thousand pains for her who is *so far away*. No other love ever touched my heart than this for her *so far away*. A fairer than she never touched any heart, either near, or *so far away*." Every fourth line ends with *du luench*. See Nostradamus, &c.  
<sup>2</sup> Fayditt is said to have written a *Chant funebre* on his death. Beauchamps, ib. p. 10.

between

between both nations, probably became no less fashionable in France: especially if we take into the account the general popularity of Richard's character, his love of chivalry, his gallantry in the crusades, and the favours which he so liberally conferred on the minstrels of that country. We have a romance now remaining in English rhyme, which celebrates the achievements of this illustrious monarch. It is entitled RICHARD CUER DU LYON, and was probably translated from the French about the period above-mentioned. That it was, at least, translated from the French, appears from the Prologue.

In Fraunce these rymes were wroht,  
Every Englyshe ne knew it not.

From which also we may gather the popularity of his story, in these lines.

King Richard is the beste<sup>w</sup>  
That is found in any geste<sup>x</sup>.

That this romance, either in French or English, existed before the year 1300, is evident from its being cited by Robert of Gloucester, in his relation of Richard's reign.

In *Romance* of him imade me it may finde iwrite<sup>y</sup>.

This tale is also mentioned as a romance of some antiquity among other famous romances, in the prologue of a voluminous metrical translation of Guido de Colonna, attributed to Lidgate<sup>y</sup>. It is likewise frequently quoted by Ro-

<sup>w</sup> This agrees with what Hoveden says, *ubi sup.* "Dicebatur ubique quod non erat talis in orbe."

<sup>x</sup> Impr. for W. C. 4to. It contains Sign. A. 1.—Q. iii. There is another edition impr. W. de Worde, 4to. 1528. There is a manuscript copy of it in Caius College at Cambridge, A. 9.

<sup>y</sup> Many speken of men that romaunces rede, &c.

Of Bevy's, Gy, and Gawayne,  
Of KYNG RYCHARD, and Owayne,  
Of Tristram, and Percyvayle,  
Of Rowland ris, and Aglavaule,  
Of Archeroun, and of Octavian,  
Of Charles, and of Cassibedlan,

<sup>z</sup> Chron. p. 487.

Of

bert de Brunne, who wrote much about the same time with Robert of Gloucester.

Whan Philip tille Acres cam litelle was his dede,  
 The ROMANCE fais gret sham who so that pas<sup>z</sup> wil rede,  
 The ROMANCER it fais Richard did make a pele<sup>a</sup>.—  
 The ROMANCE of Richard fais he wan the toun<sup>b</sup>.—  
 He tellis in the ROMANCE fen Acres wonnen was  
 How God gaf him fair chance at the bataile of Caifas<sup>c</sup>.—  
 Sithen at Japhet was slayn fanuelle his stede  
 The ROMANS tellis gret pas of his douhty dede<sup>d</sup>.—  
 Soudan so curteys never drank no wyne,  
 The same the ROMANS fais that is of Richardyn<sup>e</sup>.  
 In prifoun was he bounden, as the ROMANCE fais,  
 In cheynes and lede wonden that hevy was of peis<sup>f</sup>.—

I am not indeed quite certain, whether or no in some of these instances, Robert de Brunne may not mean his French original Peter Langtoft. But in the following lines he manifestly refers to our romance of RICHARD, between which and Langtoft's chronicle he expressly makes a distinction. And in the conclusion of the reign,

Of Keveloke, Horne, and of Wade,  
 In romances that of hem bi made  
 That geistours dos of him gestes  
 At mangeres and at great festes,  
 Here dedis ben in remembraunce,  
 In many fair romaunce.  
 But of the worthiest wyght in wede,  
 That ever bystrode any strede  
 Spekes no man, ne in romaunce redes,  
 Off his battayle ne of his dedes;  
 Off that battayle spekes no man,  
 There all prowes of knyghtes began,  
 Thet was forsothe of the batayle  
 Thet at TROVE was faunfayle,  
 Of swythe a fyght as ther was one, &c.—  
 Ffor ther were in thet on side,  
 Sixti kynges and dukes of pride.—

And there was the best bodi in dede  
 Thet ever yit wered wede,  
 Sithen the world was made so ferre,  
 That was ECTOR in eche werre, &c.  
 Laud K. 76. f. 1. fol. MSS. Bibl. Bodl.  
 Cod. membr. Whether this poem was  
 written by Lidgate, I shall not enquire at  
 present. I shall only say here, that it is  
 totally different from either of Lidgate's  
 two poems on the THEBAN and TROJAN  
 WARS; and that the manuscript, which  
 is beautifully written, appears to be of the  
 age of Henry the sixth.

<sup>a</sup> PASSUS. Compare Percy's Ball. ii.  
 66. 398. edit. 1767. <sup>a</sup> p. 157.

<sup>b</sup> Ibid. <sup>c</sup> P. 175. <sup>d</sup> P. 175.

<sup>e</sup> P. 188. <sup>f</sup> p. 198.

I knowe

I knowe no more to ryme of dedes of kyng Richard:  
 Who so wille his dedes all the sothe se,  
 The *romance* that men reden ther is propirte.  
 This that I have said it is Pers sawe <sup>a</sup>.  
 Als he in *romance* <sup>b</sup> lad ther after gan I drawe <sup>c</sup>.

It is not improbable that both these rhyming chroniclers cite from the English translation: if so, we may fairly suppose that this romance was translated in the reign of Edward the first, or his predecessor Henry the third. Perhaps earlier. This circumstance throws the French original to a still higher period.

In the royal library at Paris, there is "Histoire de Richard Roi d'Angleterre et de Maquemore d'Irlande en rime <sup>d</sup>." Richard is the last of our monarchs whose achievements were adorned with fiction and fable. If not a superstitious belief of the times, it was an hyperbolical invention started by the minstrels, which soon grew into a tradition, and is gravely recorded by the chroniclers, that Richard carried with him to the crusades king Arthur's celebrated sword CALIBURN, and that he presented it as a gift, or relic, of inestimable value to Tancred king of Sicily, in the year 1191 <sup>e</sup>. Robert of Brunne calls this sword a *jewel* <sup>m</sup>.

And Richard at that time gaf him a faire juelle,  
 The gude swerd CALIBURNE which Arthur luffed so well <sup>n</sup>.

<sup>a</sup> "The words of my original Peter

"Langtoft."

<sup>b</sup> In French.

<sup>c</sup> p. 205. Du Cange recites an old French manuscript prose romance, entitled *Histoire de la Mort de Richard Roy d'Angleterre*. Gloss. Lat. IND. AUCT. i. p. cxc. There was one, perhaps the same, among the manuscripts of the late Mr. Martin of Palgrave in Suffolk.

<sup>d</sup> Num. 7532.

<sup>e</sup> In return for several vessels of gold and silver, horses, bales of silk, four great ships, and fifteen galleys, given by Tancred. Benedict. Abb. p. 642. edit. Hearne.

<sup>m</sup> *Jocale*. In the general and true sense of the word. Robert de Brunne, in another place, calls a rich pavilion a *jowelle*. p. 152.

<sup>n</sup> Chron. p. 153.

R

Indeed

Indeed the Arabian writer of the life of the sultan Saladin, mentions some exploits of Richard almost incredible. But, as lord Lyttelton justly observes, this historian is highly valuable on account of the knowledge he had of the facts which he relates. It is from this writer we learn, in the most authentic manner, the actions and negotiations of Richard in the course of the enterprize for the recovery of the holy land, and all the particulars of that memorable war<sup>o</sup>.

But before I produce a specimen of Richard's English romance, I stand still to give some more extracts from its Prologues, which contain matter much to our present purpose: as they have very fortunately preserved the subjects of many romances, perhaps metrical, then fashionable both in France and England. And on these therefore, and their origin, I shall take this opportunity of offering some remarks.

Many romayns men make newe  
Of good knyghtes and of trewe:  
Of ther dedes men make romauns,  
Both in England and in Fraunce;  
Of Rowland and of Olyvere,  
And of everie *Dofepere*<sup>o</sup>,  
Of *Alysaundre* and *Charlemayne*,  
Of kyng *Arthur* and of *Garwayne*;  
How they wer knyghtes good and courtoys,  
Of *Turpin* and of *Oger* the Danois.  
Of *Troye* men rede in ryme,  
Of *Hector* and of *Achilles*,  
What folk they flewe in pres, &c<sup>o</sup>.

And again in a second Prologue, after a pause has been made by the minstrel in the course of finging the poem.

<sup>o</sup> See Hist. of Hen. ii. vol. iv. p. 361. App.

<sup>o</sup> Charlemagne's Twelve peers. *Douze Pairr. Fr.*

<sup>o</sup> Fol. 1. a.

Herkene now how my tale gothe  
 Though I swere to you no othe  
 I wyll you rede romaynes none  
 Ne of *Pertonape*, ne of *Ypomedon*,  
 Ne of *Alisaunder*, ne of *Charlemayne*,  
 Ne of *Arthur*, ne of *Gawayne*,  
 Ne of *Lancelot du Lake*,  
 Ne of *Bevis*, ne of *Guy of Sydrake*,  
 Ne of *Ury*, ne of *Octavian*,  
 Ne of *Hector* the strong man,  
 Ne of *Jason*, neither of *Achilles*,  
 Ne of *Eneas*, neither *Hercules*.

<sup>1</sup> Perhaps *Parthenope*, or *Parthenopeus*.

<sup>2</sup> Read, "ne of *Guy* ne of *Sydrake*."

<sup>3</sup> Signat. P. iii. To some of these romances the author of the manuscript *LIVES OF THE SAINTS*, written about the year 1200, and cited above at large, alludes in a sort of prologue. See *SECT. I. p. 14. supr.*

Wel auht we loug cristendom that is so dere y bougt,  
 With oure lorde's herte blode that the spere hath y fougt.

Men wilnethe more yhere of batayle of kyngis,

And of knygtis hardy, that mochel is lesyngis.

Of *Rouland* and of *Olyvere*, and *Gy of Warwyk*,

Of *Wawayne* and *Trifram* that ne founde here y like.

Who so loveth to here tales of fuche thinge,

Here he may y here thyng that nys no lesyng,

Of postoles and marteres that hardi knygttes were,

And stedfast were in bataile and fledde nogt for no fere, &c.

The anonymous author of an antient manuscript poem, called "*The boke of Stories called CURSOR MUNDI*," translated from the French, seems to have been of the same opinion. His work consists of religious legends: but in the prologue he takes occasion to mention many tales of another

kind, which were more agreeable to the generality of readers. MSS. Laud, K. 53. f. 117. Bibl. Bodl.

Men lykyn Jettis for to here  
 And romans rede in divers manere  
 Of *Alexandre* the conquerour,  
 Of *Julius Cesar* the emperour,  
 Of *Greece* and *Troy* the strong stryf,  
 Ther many a man lost his lyf:  
 Of *Brut* that baron bold of hand  
 The first conquerour of Englonde,  
 Of kyng *Artour* that was so ryche,  
 Was non in hys tyme so ilyche:

Of wonders that among his knyghts felle,  
 And aunteys dedyn as men her telle,  
 As *Gawayn* and othir full abyll  
 Which that kept the round tabyll,  
 How kyng *Charles* and *Rouland* fawght  
 With *Sarazins*, nold thei be cawght;

Of *Trifram* and *Ysode* the swete,  
 How thei with love first gan mete.  
 Of kyng *John* and of *Isenbras*  
 Of *Ydoine* and *Amadas*.

Stories of divers thynges  
 Of princes, prelates, and kynges,  
 Many songs of divers ryme  
 As English, French, and Latyne, &c.

This ylke boke is translate  
 Into English tong to rede  
 For the love of English lede  
 Ffor comyn folk of England, &c.

Syldyn yt ys for any chaunce  
 English tong preched is in France, &c.  
 See *Montf. Par. MSS. 7540. And p. 119. supr.*

R 2

Here,



Here, among others, some of the most capital and favourite stories of romance are mentioned, Arthur, Charlemagne, the Siege of Troy with its appendages, and Alexander the Great: and there are four authors of high esteem in the dark ages, Geoffry of Monmouth, Turpin, Guido of Colonna, and Callisthenes, whose books were the grand repositories of these subjects, and contained most of the traditional fictions, whether of Arabian or classical origin, which constantly supplied materials to the writers of romance. I shall speak of these authors, with their subjects, distinctly.

But I do not mean to repeat here what has been already observed<sup>u</sup> concerning the writings of Geoffry of Monmouth and Turpin. It will be sufficient to say at present, that these two fabulous historians recorded the achievements of Charlemagne and of Arthur: and that Turpin's history was artfully forged under the name of that archbishop about the year 1110, with a design of giving countenance to the crusades from the example of so high an authority as Charlemagne, whose pretended visit to the holy sepulchre is described in the twentieth chapter.

As to the Siege of Troy, it appears that both Homer's poems were unknown, at least not understood in Europe, from the abolition of literature by the Goths in the fourth century, to the fourteenth. Geoffry of Monmouth indeed, who wrote about the year 1160, a man of learning for that age, produces Homer in attestation of a fact asserted in his history: but in such a manner, as shews that he knew little more than Homer's name, and was but imperfectly acquainted with Homer's subject. Geoffry says, that Brutus having ravaged the province of Aquitain with fire and sword, came to a place where the city of Tours now stands, *as Homer testifies*<sup>\*</sup>. But the Trojan story was still kept alive

<sup>u</sup> See Diff. i.

<sup>\*</sup> L. i. ch. 14.

in two Latin pieces, which passed under the names of Dares Phrygius and Dictys Cretensis. Dares's history of the destruction of Troy, as it was called, pretended to have been translated from the Greek of Dares Phrygius into Latin prose by Cornelius Nepos, is a wretched performance, and forged under those specious names in the decline of Latin literature <sup>1</sup>. Dictys Cretensis is a prose Latin history of the Trojan war, in six books, paraphrased about the reign of Dioclesian or Constantine by one Septimius, from some Grecian history on the same subject, said to be discovered under a sepulchre by means of an earthquake in the city of Cnossus, about the time of Nero, and to have been composed by Dictys, a Cretan, and a soldier in the Trojan war. The fraud of discovering copies of books in this extraordinary manner, in order to infer from thence their high and indubitable antiquity, so frequently practised, betrays itself. But that the present Latin Dictys had a Greek original, now lost, appears from the numerous grecisms with which it abounds: and from the literal correspondence of many passages with the Greek fragments of one Dictys cited by ancient authors. The Greek original was very probably forged under the name of Dictys, a traditionary writer on the subject, in the reign of Nero, who is said to have been fond of the Trojan story <sup>2</sup>. On the whole, the work appears to

<sup>1</sup> In the Epistle prefixed, the pretended translator Nepos says, that he found this work at Athens, in the hand-writing of Dares. He adds, speaking of the controverted authenticity of Homer, *De ea re Athenis iudicium fuit, cum pro insano Homerus haberetur quod deos cum hominibus belligerasse descripsit.* In which words he does not refer to any public decree of the Athenian judges, but to Plato's opinion in his *REPUBLIC*. Dares, with Dictys Cretensis next mentioned in the text, was first printed at Milan in 1477. Mabillon says, that a manuscript of the Pseudo-Dares occurs in the Laurentian library at Florence, upwards of

eight hundred years old. *Mus. Ital. i. p. 169.* This work was abridged by Vincentius Bellovacensis, a friar of Burgundy, about the year 1244. See his *Specul. Histor. lib. iii. 63.*

<sup>2</sup> See Perizon. *Dissertat. de Dict. Cretens. sect. xxix.* Constantinus Lascaris, a learned monk of Constantinople, one of the restorers of Grecian literature in Europe near four hundred years ago, says that Dictys Cretensis in Greek was lost. This writer is not once mentioned by Eustathius, who lived about the year 1170, in his elaborate and extensive commentary on Homer.

have

have been an arbitrary metaphrase of Homer, with many fabulous interpolations. At length Guido de Colonna, a native of Messina in Sicily, a learned civilian, and no contemptible Italian poet, about the year 1260, engrafting on Dares and Dictys many new romantic inventions, which the taste of his age dictated, and which the connection between Grecian and Gothic fiction easily admitted; at the same time comprehending in his plan the Theban and Argonautic stories from Ovid, Statius, and Valerius Flaccus<sup>a</sup>, compiled a grand prose romance in Latin, containing fifteen books, and entitled in most manuscripts *Historia de Bello Trojano*<sup>b</sup>. It was written at the request of Mattheo de Porta, archbishop of Salerno. Dares Phrygius and Dictys Cretenfis seem to have been in some measure superseded by this improved and comprehensive history of the Grecian heroes: and from this period Achilles, Jason, and Hercules, were adopted into romance, and celebrated in common with Lancelot, Rowland, Gawain, Oliver, and other christian champions, whom they so nearly resembled in the extravagance of their adventures<sup>c</sup>. This work abounds with oriental imagery, of which the subject was extremely susceptible. It has also some traits of Arabian literature.

<sup>a</sup> The Argonautics of Valerius Flaccus are cited in Chaucer's *Hyppolyte and Medea*. "Let him reade the booke Argonauticon." v. 90. But Guido is afterwards cited as a writer on that subject, *ibid.* 97. Valerius Flaccus is a common manuscript. See pag. 133. *infr.*

<sup>b</sup> It was first printed Argentorat, 1486. and *ibid.* 1489. fol. The work was finished, as appears by a note at the end, in 1287. It was translated into Italian by Philip or Christopher Cessio, a Florentine, and this translation was first printed at Venice in 1481. 4to. It has also been translated into German. See Lambec. ii. 948. The purity of our author's Italian style has been much commended. For his Italian poetry, see Mongitor, *ubi sup.* p. 167.

Compare also, *Diar. Eruditor.* Ital. xiii. 258. Montfaucon mentions, in the royal library at Paris, *Le ROMAN de Tiebes qui futracine de Troye la grande.* Catal. MSS. ii. p. 923—198.

<sup>c</sup> Bale says, that Edward the first, having met with our author in Sicily, in returning from Asia, invited him into England, xiii. 36. This prince was interested in the Trojan story, as we shall see below. Our historians relate, that he wintered in Sicily in the year 1270. *Chron. Rob. Brun.* p. 227. A writer quoted by Hearne, supposed to be John Stowe the chronicler, says, that "Guido de Columpna arriving in England at the commandment of king Edward the first, made scholies and annotations upon Dictys Cretenfis and Dares

The Trojan horse is a horse of brass; and Hercules is taught astronomy, and the seven liberal sciences. But I forbear to enter at present into a more particular examination of this history, as it must often occasionally be cited hereafter. I shall here only further observe in general, that this work is the chief source from which Chaucer derived his ideas about the Trojan story; that it was professedly paraphrased by Lydgate, in the year 1420, into a prolix English poem, called the *Boke of Troye*<sup>d</sup>, at the command of king Henry the fifth; that it became the ground-work of a new compilation in French, on the same subject, written by Raoul le Feure chaplain to the duke of Burgundy, in the year 1464, and partly translated into English prose in the year 1471, by Caxton, under the title of the *Recuyel of the histories of Troy*, at the request of Margaret dutchess of Burgundy: and that from Caxton's book afterwards modernised, Shakespeare borrowed his drama of *Troilus and Cressida*<sup>e</sup>.

<sup>d</sup> Dares Phrygius. Besides these, he writ at "large the Battayle of Troye." Hemming. Cartul. ii. 649. Among his works is recited *Historia de Regibus Rebusque Anglie*. It is quoted by many writers under the title of *Chronicum Britannorum*. He is said also to have written *Chronicum Magnum libri xxxvi*. See Mongitor. Bibl. Sic. i. 265.

<sup>e</sup> Who mentions it in a French as well as Latin. edit. 1555. Signat. B. i. pag. 2.

As in the latyn and the frenshe yt is. It occurs in French, MSS. Bibl. Reg. Brit. Mus. 16 F. ix. This manuscript was probably written not long after the year 1300.

<sup>f</sup> The western nations, in early times, have been fond of deducing their origin from Troy. This tradition seems to be couched under Odin's original emigration from that part of Asia which is connected with Phrygia. Asgard, or *Asia's fortress*, was the city from which Odin led his colony; and by some it is called Troy. To this place also they supposed Odin to return after his death, where he was to receive those who died in battle, in a hall roofed with glitter-

ing shields. See Bartholin. L. ii. cap. 8. p. 402, 403. seq. This hall, says the Edda, is in the city of Asgard, which is called the *Field of Ida*. Bartholin. *ibid*. In the very sublime ode on the Dissolution of the World, cited by Bartholine, it is said, that after the twilight of the gods should be ended, and the new world appear, *the Ase shall meet in the field of Ida, and tell of the destroyed habitations*. Barthol. L. ii. cap. 14. p. 597. Compare Arngrim. Jon. *Crymog*, l. i. c. 4. p. 45, 46. See also Edda, fab. 5. In the poem to Resenius's Edda, it is said, "Odin appointed twelve judges or princes, at Sigtune in Scandinavia, as at TROY; and established there all the laws of TROY, and the customs of the TROJANS." See Hickef. *Theaur.* i. *Dissertat. Epist.* p. 39. See also Mallet's *Hist. Dannem.* ii. p. 34. Bartholinus thinks, that the compiler of the Eddic mythology, who lived A. D. 1070, finding that the Britons and Franks drew their descent from Troy, was ambitious of assigning the same boasted origin to Odin. But this tradition appears to have

Proofs have been given, in the two prologues just cited, of the general popularity of Alexander's story, another branch of Grecian history famous in the dark ages. To these we may add the evidence of Chaucer.

Alifaundres storie is so commune,  
That everie wight that hath discrecioune  
Hath herde somewhat of or al of his fortune<sup>f</sup>.

And in the *House of Fame*, Alexander is placed with Hercules<sup>g</sup>. I have already remarked, that he was celebrated in a Latin poem by Gualtier de Chatillon, in the year 1212<sup>h</sup>. Other proofs will occur in their proper places<sup>i</sup>. The truth

have been older than the Edda. And it is more probable, that the Britons and Franks borrowed it from the Scandinavian Goths, and adapted it to themselves; unless we suppose that these nations, I mean the former, were branches of the Gothic stem, which gave them a sort of inherent right to the claim. This reasoning may perhaps account for the early existence and extraordinary popularity of the Trojan story among nations ignorant and illiterate, who could only have received it by tradition. Geoffrey of Monmouth took this descent of the Britons from Troy, from the Welsh or Armorican bards, and they perhaps had it in common with the Scandinavian scalds. There is not a syllable of it in the authentic historians of England, who wrote before him; particularly those ancient ones, Bede, Gildas, and the uninterpolated Nennius. Henry of Huntingdon began his history from *Cæsar*; and it was only on further information that he added *Brute*. But this information was from a manuscript found by him in his way to Rome in the abbey of Bec in Normandy, probably Geoffrey's original. *H. Hunt. Epistol. ad Wavin.* MSS. Cantabr. Bibl. publ. cod. 251. I have mentioned in another place, that Witlaf, a king of the West Saxons, grants in his charter, dated A. D. 833, among other things, to Croyland-abbey, his robe of tissue, on which was embroidered

*The Destruction of Troy.* Obs. on Spenser's *Fairy Queen*, i. sect. v. p. 176. This proves the story to have been in high veneration even long before that period: and it should at the same time be remembered, that the Saxons came from Scandinavia.

This fable of the descent of the Britons from the Trojans was solemnly alledged as an authentic and undeniable proof in a controversy of great national importance, by Edward the first and his nobility, without the least objection from the opposite party. It was in the famous dispute concerning the subjection of the crown of England to that of Scotland, about the year 1301. The allegations are in a letter to pope Boniface, signed and sealed by the king and his lords. *Ypodigm. Neustr. apud Camd. Angl. Norman. p. 492.* Here is a curious instance of the implicit faith with which this tradition continued to be believed, even in a more enlightened age; and an evidence that it was equally credited in Scotland.

<sup>f</sup> V. 656. p. 165. *Utt. ed.*

<sup>g</sup> V. 323.

<sup>h</sup> See Second Dissertation.

<sup>i</sup> In the reign of Henry the first, the sheriff of Nottinghamshire is ordered to procure the queen's chamber at Nottingham to be painted with the HISTORY of ALEXANDER. *Madox, Hist. Exch. p. 249-259.*  
" Depingi facias HISTORIAM ALEXAN-

" DRI

is, Alexander was the most eminent knight errant of Grecian antiquity. He could not therefore be long without his romance. Callisthenes, an Olinthian, educated under Aristotle with Alexander, wrote an authentic life of Alexander<sup>k</sup>. This history, which is frequently referred to by antient writers, has been long since lost. But a Greek life of this hero, under the adopted name of Callisthenes, at present exists, and is no uncommon manuscript in good libraries<sup>l</sup>. It is entitled, *Βίος Αλεξάνδρου του Μακεδονος και Πραξεις*. That is, *The Life and Actions of Alexander the Macedonian*<sup>m</sup>. This piece was written in Greek, being a translation from the Persian, by Simeon Seth, styled *Magister*, and protovestiary or wardrobe keeper of the palace of Antiochus at Constantinople<sup>n</sup>, about the year 1070, under the emperor Michael Ducas<sup>o</sup>.

“ORI undiquaque.” In the Romance of Richard, the minstrell says of an army assembled at a siege in the holy land, Sign. Q. iii.

Covered is both mount and playne,  
Kyng ALYSAUNDER and Charlemayne  
He never had halfe the route  
As is the city now aboute.

By the way, this is much like a passage in Milton, Par. Reg. iii. 337.

Such forces met not, nor so wide a camp,  
When Agrican, &c.

<sup>k</sup> See Recherch. sur la Vie et les ouvrages de Callisthene. Par M. l'Abbe Sevin. Mem. de Lit. viii. p. 126. 4to. But many very antient Greek writers had corrupted Alexander's history with fabulous narratives, such as Orthogoras, Onesicritus, &c.

<sup>l</sup> Particularly Bibl. Bodl. Oxon. MSS. Barocc. Cod. xvii. And Bibl. Reg. Paris. Cod. 2064. See Montfauc. Catal. MSS. p. 733. See passages cited from this manuscript, in Steph. Byzant. Abr. Berckel. V. Βουσιφαλις. Cæsar Bulenger de Circo, c. xiii. 30, &c. And Fabric. Bibl. Gr. xiv. 148. 149. 150. It is adduced by Du Cange, Glossar. Gr. ubi vid. Tom. ii. Catal. Scriptor. p. 24.

<sup>m</sup> Undoubtedly many smaller histories, now in our libraries were formed from this greater work.

<sup>n</sup> Πρωτοβιβλιαριος, *Protovestiarius*. See du Cange, Constantinop. Christ. lib. ii. § 16. n. 5. Et ad Zonar. p. 46.

<sup>o</sup> Allat. de Simeonibus. p. 181. And Labb. Bibl. nov. MSS. p. 115. Simeon Seth translated many Persian and Arabic books into Greek. Allat. ubi supr. p. 182. seq. Among them he translated from Arabic into Greek, about the year 1100, for the use or at the request of the emperor Alexius Comnenus, the celebrated Indian Fables now commonly called the *Fables of Pilpay*. This work he entitled, *Σεφασθης και Ιχθυαλις*, and divided it into fifteen books. It was printed at Berlin, by Seb. Godfr. Starchius, A. D. 1697. 8vo. Under the title, *Συμμιων Μαγιστρο και Φιλοσοφου του Σεθ Κυβιλι και Διμι*. These are the names of two African or Asiatic animals, called in Latin *Thoei*, a sort of fox, the principal interlocutors in the fables. Sect. i. ii. This curious monument of a species of instruction peculiar to the orientals, is upwards of two thousand years old. It has passed under a great variety of names. Khofru a king of Persia, in whose reign

S Mahomet

It was most probably very soon afterwards translated from the Greek into Latin, and at length from thence into

Mahomet was born, sent his physician named Burzvisch into India, on purpose to obtain this book, which was carefully preserved among the treasures of the kings of India: and commanded it to be translated out of the Indian language into the ancient Persian. Herbelot. Dict. Oriental. p. 456. It was soon afterwards turned into Syriac, under the title *Calaleg* and *Damaq*. Fabric. Bibl. Gr. vi. p. 461. About the year of Christ 750, one of the caliphs ordered it to be translated from the ancient Persian into Arabic, under the name *Kalila ve Damna*. Herbel. ubi sup. In the year 920, the Sultan Ahmed, of the dynasty of the Samanides, procured a translation into more modern Persian: which was soon afterwards put into verse by a celebrated Persian poet named Roudéki. Herbel. ibid. Fabric. ibid. p. 462. About the year 1130, the Sultan Bahram, not satisfied with this Persian version, ordered another to be executed by Nasrallah, the most eloquent man of his age, from the Arabic text of Mocanna: and this Persian version is what is now extant under the title *Kalila ve Damna*. Herbel. ibid. See also Herbel. p. 118. But as even this last-mentioned version had too many Arabic idioms and obsolete phrases, in the reign of Sultan-Hosein Mirza, it was thrown into a more modern and intelligible style, under the name of *Anwar Sobeli*. Fraser's Hist. Nad. Shaw. Catal. MSS. p. 19. 20. Nor must it be forgotten, that about the year 1100, the Emir Sohail, general of the armies of Hushain, Sultan of Khorassan of the posterity of Timur, caused a new translation to be made by the doctor Hushien Vaez, which exceeded all others in elegance and perspicuity. It was named *Anwar Sobaili*, *Splendor Caspi*, from the Emir who was called after the name of that star. Herbel. p. 118. 245. It would be tedious to mention every new title and improvement which it has passed through among the eastern people. It has been translated into the Turkish language both in prose and verse: particularly for the use of Bajazet the second and Solyman the second. Herbel. p. 118. It has been also translated into Hebrew, by

Rabbi Joel: and into Latin, under the title *Directorium Vitae humanae*, by Johannes of Capua. [fol. fine ann.] From thence it got into Spanish, or Castilian: and from the Spanish was made an Italian version, printed at Ferrara, A. D. 1583. oct. viz. *Lelo Damno* [for *Calilab u Damuab*] *del Governo de regni, sotto morali, &c.* A second edition appeared at Ferrara in 1610. oct. viz. *Philosophia morale del doni, &c.* But I have a notion there was an Italian edition at Venice, under the last-mentioned title, with old rude cuts, 1552. 4to. From the Latin version it was translated into German, by the command of Eberhard first duke of Wirtenberg: and this translation was printed at Ulm, 1583. fol. At Strasburgh, 1525. fol. Without name of place, 1548. 4to. At Francfort on the Mayne, 1565. oct. A French translation by Gilb. Gaulmin from the Persian of Nasrallah above-mentioned appeared at Paris, 1698. But this is rather a paraphrase, and was reprinted in Holland. See Starchius, ubi sup. præf. §. 19. 20. 22. Fabric. ubi sup. p. 463. seq. Another translation was printed at Paris, viz. "Contes et Fables Indiennes de Bidpai et De Lokman traduits d'Ali Tchelchi-Bengalek auteur Turc, par M. Galland, 1714." ii vol. Again, Paris, 1724. ii vol. Fabricius says, that Monf. Galland had procured a Turkish copy of this book four times larger than the printed copies, being a version from the original Persian, and entitled *Humayoun Nameh*, that is, *The royal or imperial book*, so called by the orientals, who are of opinion that it contains the whole art of government. See Fabric. ubi sup. p. 465. Herbel. p. 456. A Translation into English from the French of the four first books was printed at London in 1747, under the title of *PILPAY'S FABLES*.—As to the name of the author of this book, Herbelot says that Bidpai was an Indian philosopher, and that his name signifies the *merciful physician*. See Herbelot. p. 206. 456. And Bibl. Lugdun. Catal. p. 301. Others relate, that it was composed by the Bramins of India, under the title *Kurtuk Dumnik*. Fraser, ubi sup. p. 19. It is also said to have been written by  
Hame

French, Italian, and German <sup>p</sup>. The Latin translation was printed Colon. Argentorat. A. D. 1489 <sup>q</sup>. Perhaps before. For among Hearne's books in the Bodleian library, there is an edition in quarto, without date, supposed to have been printed at Oxford by Frederick Corfellis, about the year 1468. It is said to have been made by one Æsopus, or by Julius Valerius <sup>r</sup>: supposititious names, which seem to have been forged by the artifice, or introduced through the ignorance, of scribes and librarians. This Latin translation, however, is of high antiquity in the middle age of learning: for it is quoted by Gyraldus Cambrensis, who flourished about the year 1190 <sup>s</sup>. About the year 1236, the substance

isame fifth king of the Indians, and translated into Arabic from the Indian tongue three hundred years before Alexander the Macedonian. Abraham Ecchelens. Not. ad Catal. Ebed Jesu, p. 87.—The Indians reckon this book among the three things in which they surpass all other nations. viz. "Liber CULILA ET DIMNA, ludus Sha-tangri, et novem figura numeraria." Saphad. Comment. ad Carm. Tograï. apud Hyde, prolegom. ad lib. de lud. Oriental. d. 3. Hyde intended an edition of the Arabic version. Prefat. ad lib. de lud. Oriental. vol. ii. 1767. edit. ad calc. I cannot forsake this subject without remarking, that the Persians have another book, which they esteem older than any writings of Zoroaster, entitled *Javidan Cbrad*, that is, *æterna Sapientia*. Hyde Prefat. Relig. Vet. Persarum. This has been also one of the titles of Pilpay's Fables.

<sup>p</sup> Casaub. Epist. ad Jos. Scaliger. 402. 413. Scalig. Epist. ad Casaubon. 113. 115. Who mentions also a translation of this work from the Latin into Hebrew, by one who adopted the name of Jos. Gorionides, called Pseudo-Gorionides. This Latin history was translated into German by John Hartlieb Moller, a German physician, at the command of Albert duke of Bavaria, and published Augst. Vindel. A. D. 1478. fol. See Lambecc. lib. ii. de Bibl. Vindobon. p. 949. Labbe mentions a fabulous

history of Alexander; written, as he says, in 1217, and transcribed in 1455. Undoubtedly this in the text. Londinensis quotes "pervetustum quendam librum manuscriptum de actibus Alexandri." Hearne's T. Caius ut infr. p. 82. See also p. 86. 258.

<sup>q</sup> Lenglet mentions "Historia fabulosa incerti authoris de Alexandri Magni praeliis." fol. 1494. He adds, that it is printed in the last edition of Cæsar's Commentaries by Grævius in octavo. Bibl. des Romans, ii. p. 228. 229. edit. Amst. Compare Vogt's *Catalogus librorum rarior*, pag. 24. edit. 1753. Montfaucon says this history of Callisthenes occurs often in the royal library at Paris, both in Greek and Latin: but that he never saw either of them printed. Cat. MSS. ii. pag. 733.—2543. I think a life of Alexander is subjoined to an edition of Quintus Curtius in 1584, by Joannes Monachus.

<sup>r</sup> Du Cange Glossar. Gr. v. ΕΞΑΛΛΗΝΟΣ. Jurat. ad Symmach. iv. 33. Barth. Adversar. ii. 10. v. 14.

<sup>s</sup> Hearne, T. Caii Vindic. Antiquit. Acad. Oxon. tom. ii. Not. p. 802. Who thinks it a work of the monks. "Nec dubium quin monachus quispiam Latine, ut potuit, scripserit. Eo modo, quo et alios id genus fœtus parturiebant scriptores aliquot monastici, e fabulis quas vulgo admodum placere sciebant." *ibid.*

S 2 of



of it was thrown into a long Latin poem, written in elegiac verse<sup>1</sup>, by Aretinus Quilichinus<sup>2</sup>. This fabulous narrative of Alexander's life and achievements, is full of prodigies and extravagancies<sup>3</sup>. But we should remember its origin. The Arabian books abound with the most incredible fictions and traditions concerning Alexander the Great, which they probably borrowed and improved from the Persians. They call him Escander. If I recollect right, one of the miracles of this romance is our hero's horn. It is said, that Alexander gave the signal to his whole army by a wonderful horn of immense magnitude, which might be heard at the distance of sixty miles, and that it was blown or sounded by sixty men at once<sup>4</sup>. This is the horn which Orlando won from the giant Jatmund, and which, as Turpin and the Islandic bards report, was endued with magical power, and might be heard at the distance of twenty miles. Cervantes says, that it was bigger than a maffy beam<sup>5</sup>. Boyardo,

<sup>1</sup> A Greek poem on this subject will be mentioned below, written in politic verses, entitled *Ἀλεξάνδρου ἡ Μακρόν*.

<sup>2</sup> Labb. Bibl. Nov. MSS. p. 68. Ol. Borrich. Dissertat. de Poet. p. 89.

<sup>3</sup> The writer relates, that Alexander, inclosed in a vessel of glass, dived to the bottom of the ocean for the sake of getting a knowledge of fishes and sea monsters. He is also represented as soaring in the air by the help of gryphons. At the end, the opinions of different philosophers are recited concerning the sepulchre of Alexander. Nectabanos, a magician and astrologer, king of Egypt, is a very significant character in this romance. He transforms himself into a dragon, &c. Compare Herbelot. Bibl. Oriental. p. 319. b. seq. In some of the manuscripts of this piece which I have seen, there is an account of Alexander's visit to the trees of the sun and moon: but I do not recollect this in the printed copies. Undoubtedly the original has had both interpolations and omissions. Pseudo-Gorionides above-mentioned seems to hint at the ground-work of this history

of Alexander in the following passage. "Cæteras autem res ab Alexandro gestas, et egregia ejus facinora ac quæcunque demum perpetravit, ea in libris Medorum et Persarum, atque apud Nicolaum Titum, et Strabonem; et in libris natiuitatis Alexandri, rerumque ab ipso gestarum, quos Magi ac Ægyptii eo anno quo Alexander decessit, composuerunt, scripta reperies." Lib. ii. c. 12.—22. [Lat. Vers.] p. 152. edit. Jo. Frid. Briethaupt.

<sup>4</sup> It is also in a manuscript entitled *Secretum Secretorum Aristotelis*, Lib. 5. MSS. Bodl. D. 1. 5. This treatise, ascribed to Aristotle, was antiently in high repute. It is pretended to have been translated out of Greek into Arabic or Chaldee by one John a Spaniard; from thence into Latin by Philip a Frenchman; at length into English verse by Lidgate: under whom more will be said of it. I think the Latin is dedicated to Theophina, a queen of Spain.

<sup>5</sup> See Observat. Fair. Qu. i. § v. p. 202.

Berni,

Berni, and Ariosto have all such a horn: and the fiction is here traced to its original source. But in speaking of the books which furnished the story of Alexander, I must not forget that Quintus Curtius was an admired historian of the romantic ages. He is quoted in the *POLICRATICON* of John of Salisbury, who died in the year 1181<sup>a</sup>. Eneas Sylvius relates, that Alphonsus the ninth, king of Spain, in the thirteenth century, a great astronomer, endeavoured to relieve himself from a tedious malady by reading the bible over fourteen times, with all the glosses; but not meeting with the expected success, he was cured by the consolation he received from once reading Quintus Curtius<sup>b</sup>. Peter Blesensis, archdeacon of London, a student at Paris about the year 1150, mentioning the books most common in the schools, declares that he *profited much by frequently looking into this author*<sup>c</sup>. Vincentius Bellovacensis, cited above, a writer of the thirteenth century, often quotes Curtius in his *Speculum Historiale*<sup>d</sup>. He was also early translated into French. Among the royal manuscripts in the British Museum, there is a fine copy of a French translation of this classic, adorned with elegant old paintings and illuminations, entitled, *Quinte Curse Ruf, des faiz d' Alexandre, ix liv. translate par Vasque de Lucene Portugalois. Escrip par la main de Jehan du Chesne, a Lille*<sup>e</sup>. It was made in 1468. But I believe the Latin translations of Simeon Seth's romance on this subject, were best known and most esteemed for some centuries.

The French, to resume the main tenour of our argument, had written metrical romances on most of these subjects, before or about the year 1200. Some of these seem to have

<sup>a</sup> viii. 18.

<sup>b</sup> Op. p. 476.

<sup>c</sup> Epist. 101. *Frequenter inspicere historiarum Q. Curtii, &c.*

<sup>d</sup> iv. 61, &c. Montfaucon, I think, mentions a manuscript of Q. Curtius in the Colbertine library at Paris eight hundred

years old. See Barth. ad Claudian. p. 1165. Alexander Benedictus, in his history of Venice, transcribes whole pages from this historian. I could give other proofs.

<sup>e</sup> 17 F. i. Brit. Mus. And again, 20 C. iii. And 15 D. iv.

been formed from prose histories, enlarged and improved with new adventures and embellishments from earlier and more simple tales in verse on the same subject. Chrestien of Troys wrote *Le Romans du Graal*, or the adventures of the Sangrale, which included the deeds of king Arthur, Sir Tristram, Lancelot du Lake, and the rest of the knights of the round table, before 1191. There is a passage in a coeval romance, relating to Chrestien, which proves what I have just advanced, that some of these histories previously existed in prose.

Christians qui entent et paine  
A rimoyer le meillor conte,  
Par le commandement le Conte,  
Qu'il soit contez in cort royal  
Ce est li contes del Graal  
Dont li quens li bailla le livre °.

Chrestien also wrote the romance of *Sir Percival*, which belongs to the same history<sup>f</sup>. Godfrey de Leigni, a cotem-

° Apud Fauchett, Rec. p. 99. Who adds, "Je croy bien que Romans que nous avons aujourd'hui imprimez, tels que Lancelot du Lac, Tristan, et autres, sont refondus sur les vieilles proses et rymes et puis rafraichis de langage." Rec. liv. ii. x. The oldest manuscripts of romances on these subjects which I have seen are the following. They are in the royal manuscripts of the British Museum. *Le Romanz de Tristran*, 20 D. ii. This was probably transcribed not long after the year 1200.—*Histoire du Lancelot ou S. Graal*, ibid. iii. Perhaps older than the year 1200.—Again, *Histoire du S. Graal, ou Lancelot*, 20 C. vi. 1. Transcribed soon after 1200. This is imperfect at the beginning. The subject of Joseph of Arimathea bringing a vessel of the Sanguis realis, or Sangral, that is our Saviour's blood, into England, is of high antiquity. It is thus mentioned in *Morte Arthur*. "And then the old man had an harpe, and he sung an olde songs how Jo-

seph of Arimathy came into this lande." B. iii. c. 5.

<sup>f</sup> Fauchett, p. 103. This story was also written in very old rhyme by one Menesfier, not mentioned in Fauchett, from whence it was reduced into prose 1530. fol. Paris. PERCAVAL LE GALOIS, *le quel acbeva les aventures du Saint Graal, avec aucun faits du chevalier Gavain, translatee du rime de l'ancien auteur MESSENIER*, &c. In the royal library at Paris is *LE ROMAN DE PERSEVAL le Galois, par CRESTIEN DE TROYES*. In verse. fol. Mons. Galland thinks there is another romance under this title, Mem. de Lit. iii. p. 427. seq. 433. 8vo. The author of which he supposes may be Raul de Biavais, mentioned by Fauchet, p. 142. Compare Lenglet, Bibl. Rom. p. 250. The author of this last-mentioned Percevall, in the exordium, says that he wrote among others, the romances of Eneas, Roy Marc, and Ufert le Blonde: and that he translated into French, Ovid's Art of Love.

porary,

porary, finished a romance begun by Chrestien, entitled *La Charette*, containing the adventures of Launcelot. Fauchett affirms, that Chrestien abounds with beautiful inventions<sup>5</sup>. But no story is so common among the earliest French poets as Charlemagne and his Twelve peers. In the British Museum we have an old French manuscript containing the history of Charlemagne, translated into prose from Turpin's Latin. The writer declares, that he preferred a sober prose translation of this authentic historian, as histories in rhyme, undoubtedly very numerous on this subject, looked so much like lies<sup>6</sup>. His title is extremely curious. "Ci comence l'Estoire que Turpin le Ercevesque de Reins fit del bon roy Charlemayne, coment il conquist Espaigne, e delivera des Paens. Et pur ceo qe *Estoire rimée semble mensonge*, est ceste mis in prose, solun le Latin qe Turpin mesmes fist, tut ensi cume il le vist et vist<sup>7</sup>."

Oddegir the Dane makes a part of Charlemagne's history; and, I believe, is mentioned by archbishop Turpin. But his exploits have been recorded in verse by Adenez, an old French poet, not mentioned by Fauchett, author of the two metrical romances of *Berlin* and *Cleomades*, under the name of *Ogier le Danois*, in the year 1270. This author was master of the musicians, or, as others say, herald at arms, to the duke of Brabant. Among the royal manuscripts in the Museum, we have a poem, *Le Livre de Ogeir de Dannemarcke*<sup>8</sup>. The French have likewise illustrated this

<sup>5</sup> P. 105. *ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> There is a curious passage to this purpose in an old French prose romance of Charlemagne, written before the year 1200: "Baudouin Comte de Hainau trouva a sens en Bourgogne le vie de Charlemagne: et mourant la donna a sa four Yolond Comtesse de S. Paul qui m'a prie que je la mette en *Roman sans ryme*. Parce que tel se delitera el Roman qui del Latin n'ent cure; et par le Roman

"fera miex garde. Maintes gens en ont ouy conter et chanter, mais n'est ce *mensonge* non ce qu'ils en disent et chantent cil contour ne cil juleor. Nuz contes rymes n'en est vrais: tot mensonge ce qu'ils dient." Liv. quatr.

<sup>7</sup> MSS. Harl. 273. 23. Cod. membr. f. 86. There is a very old metrical romance on this subject, *ibid.* MSS. Harl. 527. 1. f. 1. Cod. membr. 4to. <sup>8</sup> 15 E. vi. 4.

champion

champion in Leonine rhyme. And I cannot help mentioning, that they have in verse *Visions of Oddegir the Dane in the kingdom of Fairy*, "Vifions d'Ogeir le Danois au Royaume de "Faerie en vers Francois," printed at Paris in 1548<sup>1</sup>.

On the Trojan story, the French have an antient poem, at least not posterior to the thirteenth century, entitled *Roman de Troie*, written by Benoit de Saint More. As this author appears not to have been known to the accurate Fauchett, nor la Croix du Maine; I will cite the exordium, especially as it records his name; and implies that the piece translated from the Latin, and that the subject was not then common in French.

Cette estoire n'est pas ufée,  
N'en gaires livres n'est trouvée:  
La retraite ne fut encore  
Mais Benoit de fainte More,  
L' a tranflatè, et fait et dit,  
Et a sa main les mots escrit.

He mentions his own name again in the body of the work, and at the end.

Je n'en fait plus ne plus en dit;  
Benoit qui c'est Roman fit<sup>m</sup>.

Du Cange enumerates a metrical manuscript romance on this subject by Jaques Millet, entitled *De la Destruction de Troie*<sup>n</sup>. Montfaucon, whose extensive enquiries nothing could escape, mentions Dares Phrygius translated into French verse, at Milan, about the twelfth century<sup>o</sup>. We find also, among the royal manuscripts at Paris, Dictys Cretensis,

<sup>1</sup> 8vo. There is also *L'Histoire du preux Meurvin fils d'OGIER le DANOIS*. Paris. 1359. 4to. And 1540. 8vo.

<sup>m</sup> See M. Galland ut supr. p. 425.

<sup>n</sup> Gloss. Lat. IND. AUT. p. cxciii.

<sup>o</sup> Monum. Fr. i. 374.

translated

translated into French verse <sup>p</sup>. To this subject, although almost equally belonging to that of Charlemagne, we may also refer a French romance in verse, written by Philip de Mousques, canon and chancellor of the church of Tournay. It is in fact, a chronicle of France: but the author, who does not chuse to begin quite so high as Adam and Eve, nor yet later than the Trojan war, opens his history with the rape of Helen, passes on to an ample description of the siege of Troy; and, through an exact detail of all the great events which succeeded, conducts his reader to the year 1240. This work comprehends all the fictions of Turpin's Charlemagne, with a variety of other extravagant stories dispersed in many professed romances. But it preserves numberless curious particulars, which throw considerable light on historical facts. Du Cange has collected from it all that concerns the French emperors of Constantinople, which he has printed at the end of his entertaining history of that city.

It was indeed the fashion for the historians of these times, to form such a general plan as would admit all the absurdities of popular tradition. Connection of parts, and uniformity of subject, were as little studied as truth. Ages of ignorance and superstition are more affected by the marvellous than by plain facts; and believe what they find written, without discernment or examination. No man before the sixteenth century presumed to doubt that the Franks derived their origin from Francus, a son of Hector; that the Spaniards were descended from Japhet, the Britons from Brutus, and the Scotch from Fergus. Vincent de Beauvais, who lived under Louis the ninth of France, and who, on account of his extraordinary erudition, was appointed preceptor to that king's sons, very gravely classes archbishop Turpin's Charlemagne among the real histories, and places it on a level with Suetonius and Cesar. He was himself an historian,

<sup>p</sup> See Montf. Catal. MSS. ii. p. 1669.

T

and

and has left a large history of the world, fraught with a variety of reading, and of high repute in the middle ages; but edifying and entertaining as this work might have been to his cotemporaries, at present it serves only to record their prejudices, and to characterise their credulity<sup>1</sup>.

Hercules and Jason, as I have before hinted, were involved in the Trojan story by Guido de Colonna, and hence became familiar to the romance writers<sup>2</sup>. The Hercules, the Theseus, and the Amazons of Boccacio, hereafter more particularly mentioned, came from this source. I do not at present recollect any old French metrical romances on these subjects, but presume that there are many. Jason seems to have vied with Arthur and Charlemagne; and so popular was his expedition to Colchos, or rather so firmly believed, that in honour of so respectable an adventure, a duke of Burgundy instituted the order of the *Golden Fleece*, in the year 1468. At the same time his chaplain Raoul le Feure illustrated the story which gave rise to this magnificent institution, in a prolix and elaborate history, afterwards translated by Caxton<sup>3</sup>. But I must not forget, that among the royal manuscripts in the Museum, the French romance of *Hercules* occurs in two books, enriched with numerous ancient paintings<sup>4</sup>. *Pertonape* and *Ypomedon*, in our Prologue, seem to be Parthenopeus and Hippomedon, belonging to the Theban story, and mentioned, I think, in Statius. An English romance in verse, called *Childe Ippomedone*, will be cited hereafter, most probably translated from the French.

<sup>1</sup> He flourished about 1260.

<sup>2</sup> The *TROJOMANNA SAGA*, a Scandic manuscript at Stockholm, seems to be posterior to Guido's publication. It begins with Jason and Hercules, and their voyage to Colchos: proceeds to the rape of Helen, and ends with the siege and destruction of Troy. It celebrates all the Grecian and Asiatic heroes concerned in that

war. Wanl. Antiquit. Septentr. p. 315. col. 1.

<sup>3</sup> See Observat. on Spenser's Fairy Queen, i. § v. P. 176. seq. Montfaucon mentions *Medea et Jasonis Historia a Guidone de Colonna*. Catal. MSS. Bibl. Coislin. ii. p. 1109.—818.

<sup>4</sup> 17 E. ii.

The conquests of Alexander the great were celebrated by one Simon, in old Pictavian or Limosin, about the twelfth century. This piece thus begins:

Chanfon voil dis per ryme et per Leoin  
Del fil Filippe lo roy de Macedoin \*.

An Italian poem on Alexander, called *Trionfo Magno*, was presented to Leo the tenth, by Dominicho Falugi Ancifeno, in the year 1521. Crescimbeni says it was copied from a Provençal romance †. But one of the most valuable pieces of the old French poetry is on the subject of this victorious monarch, entitled, *Roman d'Alexandre*. It has been called the second poem now remaining in the French language, and was written about the year 1200. It was confessedly translated from the Latin; but it bears a nearer resemblance to Simeon Seth's romance, than to Quintus Curtius. It was the confederated performance of four writers, who, as Fauchett expresses himself, were *associez en leur JONGLERIE* ‡. Lambert li Cors, a learned civilian, began the poem; and it was continued and completed by Alexander de Paris, John le Nivelois, and Peter de Saint Clost §. The poem is closed with Alexander's will. This is no imagination of any of our three poets, although one of them was a civil lawyer. Alexander's will, in which he nominates successors to his provinces and kingdom, was a tradition commonly received, and is mentioned by Diodorus Siculus, and Ammianus Mar-

\* Fauch. p. 77.

† Itor. Volg. Poef. i. iv. p. 332. In the royal manuscripts there is a French poem entitled *La Vengeance du graunt Alexandre*. 19 D. i. 2. Brit. Mus. I am not sure whether or no it is not a portion of the French *Alexander*, mentioned below, written by Jehan li Nivelois.

‡ Fauchett, Rec. p. 83.

§ Fauchett, *ibid.* Mons. Galland mentions a French romance in verse, unknown to Fauchett, and entitled *Roman d'Abys et de Prophylias*, written by one Alexander, whom he supposes to be this Alexander of Paris. Mem. Lit. iii. p. 429. edit. Amst. It is often cited by Carpentier, Suppl. Cang.



cellinus<sup>a</sup>. I know not whether this work was ever printed. It is voluminous; and in the Bodleian library at Oxford is a vast folio manuscript of it on vellum, which is of great antiquity, richly decorated, and in high preservation<sup>b</sup>. The margins and initials exhibit, not only fantastic ornaments and illuminations exquisitely finished, but also pictures executed with singular elegance, expressing the incidents of the story, and displaying the fashion of buildings, armour, dress, musical instruments<sup>c</sup>, and other particulars appropriated to the times. At the end we read this hexameter, which points out the name of the scribe.

Nomen scriptoris est THOMAS PLENUS AMORIS.

Then follows the date of the year in which the transcript was completed, viz. 1338. Afterwards there is the name and date of the illuminator, in the following colophon, written in golden letters. "Che livre fu perfais de la enluminiere an xviii<sup>e</sup>. jour davryl par Jehan de grise l'an de grace m.ccc.xliiii." Hence it may be concluded, that the illuminations and paintings of this superb manuscript, which were most probably begun as soon as the scribe had finished his part, took up six years: no long time, if we consider the attention of an artist to ornaments so numerous, so various, so minute, and so laboriously touched. It has been supposed, that before the appearance of this poem, the *Romans*, or those pieces which celebrated *Gests*, were constantly composed in short verses of six or eight syllables: and that in this *Roman d'Alexandre* verses of twelve syllables were first used. It has therefore been imagined, that the verses called *ALEXANDRINES*, the present French heroic measure, took

<sup>a</sup> See Fabric. Bibl. Gr. c. iii. l. viii. p. 205.

<sup>b</sup> MSS. Bodl. B. 264. fol.

<sup>c</sup> The most frequent of these are organs, bagpipes, lutes, and trumpets.

<sup>c</sup> The bishop of Gloucester has a most beautiful French manuscript on vellum of *Mort d'Arthur*, ornamented in the same manner. It was a present from Vertue the engraver.

their

their rise from this poem; Alexander being the hero, and Alexander the chief of the four poets concerned in the work. That the name, some centuries afterwards, might take place in honour of this celebrated and early effort of French poetry, I think is very probable; but that verses of twelve syllables made their first appearance in this poem, is a doctrine which, to say no more, from examples already produced and examined, is at least ambiguous<sup>d</sup>. In this poem Gadifer, hereafter mentioned, of Arabian lineage, is a very conspicuous champion.

Gadifer fu moult preus, d'un Arrabi lignage.

A rubric or title of one of the chapters is, "Comment Alexander fuit mys en un vesal de vooire pour veoir le merveiles, &c." This is a passage already quoted from Simeon Seth's romance, relating Alexander's expedition to the bottom of the ocean, in a vessel of glass, for the purpose of inspecting fishes and sea monsters. In another place, from the same romance, he turns astronomer, and soars to the moon by the help of four gryphons. The caliph is frequently mentioned in this piece; and Alexander, like Charlemagne, has his twelve peers.

These were the four reigning stories of romance. On which perhaps English pieces, translated from the French, existed before or about the year 1300. But there are some other English romances mentioned in the prologue of RICHARD CŒUR DE LYON, which we likewise probably received from the French in that period, and on which I shall here also enlarge.

*BEUVES de Hanton*, or *Sir Beavis of Southampton*, is a French romance of considerable antiquity, although the hero is not older than the Norman conquest. It is alluded to in

<sup>d</sup> See Pref. *Le Roman de la Rose*, par Monf. L'Abbè Lenglet, i. p. xxxvi.

our English romance on this story, which will again be cited, and at large.

Forth thei yode *so saith the boke* <sup>o</sup>.

And again more exprefly,

Under the bridge wer fixty belles,  
Right as the *Romans* telles <sup>f</sup>.

The *Romans* is the French original. It is called the Romance of *Beuves de Hanton*, by Pere Labbe <sup>g</sup>. The very ingenious Monsieur de la Curne de sainte Palaye mentions an antient French romance in prose, entitled *Beufres de Hanton* <sup>h</sup>. Chaucer mentions BEVIS, with other famous romances, but whether in French or English is uncertain <sup>i</sup>. *Beuves of Hantonne* was printed at Paris in 1502 <sup>k</sup>. Ascapart was one of his giants, a character <sup>l</sup> in very old French romances. Bevis was a Saxon chieftain, who seems to have extended his dominion along the southern coasts of England, which he is said to have defended against the Norman invaders. He lived at Downton in Wiltshire. Near Southampton is an artificial hill called *Bevis Mount*, on which was probably a fortrefs <sup>m</sup>. It is pretended that he was earl of Southampton. His sword is shewn in Arundel castle. This piece was evidently written after the crusades; as Bevis is knighted by the king of Armenia, and is one of the generals at the siege of Damascus.

GUY EARL OF WARWICK is recited as a French romance by Labbe <sup>n</sup>. In the British Museum a metrical history in very old French appears, in which Felicia, or Felice, is called the

<sup>o</sup> Sign. P. ii. <sup>f</sup> Signat. E. iv.

<sup>g</sup> Nov. Bibl. p. 334. edit. 1652.

<sup>h</sup> Mem. Lit. xv. 582. 4to.

<sup>i</sup> Rim. Thop.

<sup>k</sup> 4to. Percy's Ball. iii. 217.

<sup>l</sup> Selden's Drayton. Polyolb. f. iii. p. 37.

<sup>m</sup> It is now inclosed in the beautiful gardens of General Sir John Mordaunt, and gives name to his seat.

<sup>n</sup> Ubi supr.

daughter

daughter of an earl of Warwick, and Guido, or Guy of Warwick, is the son of Seguart the earl's steward. The manuscript is at present imperfect °. Montfaucon mentions among the royal manuscripts at Paris, *Roman de Guy et Beuves de Hanton*. The latter is the romance last mentioned. Again, *Le Livre de Guy de Warwick et de Harold d'Ardenne* †. This Harold d'Arden is a distinguished warrior of Guy's history, and therefore his achievements sometimes form a separate romance: as in the royal manuscripts of the British Museum, where we find *Le Romant de Herolt Dardenne* ‡. In the English romance of Guy, mentioned at large in its proper place, this champion is called *Syr Heraude of Ardenne* §. At length this favourite subject formed a large prose romance, entitled *Guy de Warwick Chevalier d'Angleterre et de la belle fille Felix samie*, and printed at Paris in 1525 †. Chaucer mentions Guy's story among the *Romances of Pris* †: and it is alluded to in the Spanish romance of *Tirante il Blanco*, or *Tirante the White*, supposed to have been written not long after the year 1430 †. This romance was composed, or perhaps enlarged, after the crusades; as we find, that Guy's redoubted encounters with Colbrond the Danish giant, with the monster of Dunsmore heath, and the dragon of Northumberland, are by no means equal to some of his achievements in the holy land, and the trophies which he won from the foldan under the command of the emperor Frederick.

The romance of SIDRAC, often entitled, *Le Livre Sydrac le philosophe le quel hom appelle le livre de le fontane de totes Sciences*, appears to have been very popular, from the present frequency of its manuscripts. But it is rather a romance of Arabian philosophy than of chivalry. It is a system of natural knowledge, and particularly treats of the virtues of

° MSS. Harl. 3775. 2.  
 † Catal. MSS. p. 792.  
 ‡ 15 E. vi. 8. fol.

§ Sign. L. ii. vers.  
 † Fol. And again, ib. 1526. 4to.  
 † Rim. Thop. † Percy's Ball. iii. 100.

plants.

plants. Sidrac, the philosopher of this system, was astronomer to an eastern king. He lived eight hundred and forty-seven years after Noah, of whose book of astronomy he was possessed. He converts Bocchus, an idolatrous king of India, to the christian faith, by whom he is invited to build a mighty tower against the invasions of a rival king of India. But the history, no less than the subject of this piece, displays the state, nature, and migrations of literature in the dark ages. After the death of Bocchus, Sidrac's book fell into the hands of a Chaldean renowned for piety. It then successively becomes the property of king Madian, Namaan the Assyrian, and Grypho archbishop of Samaria. The latter had a priest named Demetrius, who brought it into Spain, and here it was translated from the Greek into Latin. This translation is said to be made at Toledo, by Roger de Palermo, a minorite friar, in the thirteenth century. A king of Spain then commanded it to be translated from Latin into Arabic, and sent it as a most valuable present to Emir Elmomenim, lord of Tunis. It was next given to Frederick the Second, emperor of Germany, famous in the crusades. This work, which is of considerable length, was translated into English verse, and will be mentioned on that account again. Sidrac is recited as an eminent philosopher, with Seneca and king Solomon, in the *Marchaunt's Second tale*, ascribed to Chaucer<sup>v</sup>.

It is natural to conclude, that most of these French romances were current in England, either in the French originals, which were well understood at least by the more polite readers, or else by translation or imitation, as I have before hinted, when the romance of *Richard Cœur de Lyon*, in whose prologue they are recited, was translated into English. That the latter was the case as to some of them,

<sup>v</sup> Urr. p. 616. v. 1932. There is an old translation of SIDRAC into Dutch, MSS. Marhall, Bibl. Bodl. 31. fol.

at least, we shall soon produce actual proofs. A writer, who has considered these matters with much penetration and judgment, observes, that probably from the reign of our Richard the first, we are to date that remarkable intercommunication and mutual exchange of compositions which we discover to have taken place at some early period between the French and English minstrels. The same set of phrases, the same species of characters, incidents, and adventures, and often the identical stories, being found in the metrical romances of both nations \*. From close connection and constant intercourse, the traditions and the champions of one kingdom were equally known in the other: and although Bevis and Guy were English heroes, yet on these principles this circumstance by no means destroys the supposition, that their achievements, although perhaps already celebrated in rude English songs, might be first wrought into romance by the French †. And it seems probable, that we continued for some time this practice of borrowing from our neighbours. Even the titles of our oldest romances, such as *Sir Blanda-*

\* Percy's *Ess. on Anc. Engl. Minstr.* p. 12.

† Dugdale relates, that in the reign of Henry the fourth, about the year 1410, a lord Beauchamp, travelling into the east, was hospitably received at Jerusalem by the Soldan's lieutenant: "Who hearing that he was descended from the famous Guy of Warwick, whose story they had in books of their own language, invited him to his palace; and royally feasting him, presented him with three precious stones of great value, besides divers cloaths of silk and gold given to his servants." Baron. i. p. 243. col. 1. This story is delivered on the credit of John Rousé, the traveller's cotemporary. Yet it is not so very improbable that Guy's history should be a book among the Saracens, if we consider, that Constantinople was not only a central and connecting point between the eastern and

western world, but that the French in the thirteenth century had acquired an establishment there under Baldwin earl of Flanders: that the French language must have been known in Sicily, Jerusalem, Cyprus, and Antioch, in consequence of the conquests of Robert Guiscard, Hugo le Grand, and Godfrey of Bulloigne: and that pilgrimages into the holy land were excessively frequent. It is hence easy to suppose, that the French imported many of their stories or books of this sort into the east; which being thus understood there, and suiting the genius of the orientals, were at length translated into their language. It is remarkable, that the Greeks at Constantinople, in the twelfth century, and since, called all the Europeans by the name of Franks; as the Turks do to this day. See *Seld. Polyorb.* §. viii. p. 130.

U

mouré,

*moure, Sir Triamour, Sir Eglamour, of Artoys* <sup>a</sup>, *La Mort d' Arthur*, with many more, betray their French extraction. It is likewise a presumptive argument in favour of this assertion, that we find no prose romances in our language, before Caxton translated from the French the History of Troy, the Life of Charlemagne, the Histories of Jason, Paris, and Vienne <sup>a</sup>, the Death of King Arthur, and other prose pieces of chivalry: by which, as the profession of minstrelsy decayed and gradually gave way to a change of manners and customs, romances in metre were at length imperceptibly superseded, or at least grew less in use as a mode of entertainment at public festivities.

Various causes concurred, in the mean time, to multiply books of chivalry among the French, and to give them a superiority over the English, not only in the number but in the excellence of those compositions. Their barons lived in greater magnificence. Their feudal system flourished on a more sumptuous, extensive, and lasting establishment. Schools were instituted in their castles for initiating the young nobility in the rules and practice of chivalry. Their tilts and tournaments were celebrated with a higher degree of pomp; and their ideas of honour and gallantry were more exaggerated and refined.

<sup>a</sup> In our English *SYR EGLAMOUR OF ARTOYS*, there is this reference to the French from which it was translated. Sign. E. i.

His own mother there he wedde,  
In ROMAUNCE as we rede.  
Again, fol. ult.

In ROMAUNCE this cronycle ys.

The authors of these pieces often refer to their original. Just as Ariosto mentions Turpin for his voucher.

<sup>a</sup> But I must not omit here that Du Cange

recites a metrical French romance in manuscript, *Le Roman de Girard de Vienne*, written by Bertrand le Clerc. Gloss. Lat. i. IND. AUCT. p. cxciii. Madox has printed the names of several French romances found in the reign of Edward the third, among which one on this subject occurs. Formul. Anglic. p. 12. Compare *Observations on Spenser's Fairy Queen*, vol. ii. §. viii. p. 43. Among the royal manuscripts, in the British Museum, there is in verse *Histoire de Gyrrart de Vienne et de ses freres*. 20 D, xi. 2. This manuscript was perhaps written before the year 1300.

We

We may add, what indeed has been before incidentally remarked, that their troubadours were the first writers of metrical romances. But by what has been here advanced, I do not mean to insinuate without any restrictions, that the French entirely led the way in these compositions. Undoubtedly the Provençal bards contributed much to the progress of Italian literature. Raimond the fourth of Aragon, count of Provence, about the year 1220, a lover and a judge of letters, invited to his court the most celebrated of the songsters who professed to polish and adorn the Provençal language by various sorts of poetry<sup>b</sup>. Charles the first, his son-in-law, and the inheritor of his virtues and dignities, conquered Naples, and carried into Italy a taste for the Provençal literature. At Florence especially this taste prevailed, where he reigned many years with great splendour, and where his successors resided. Soon afterwards the Roman court was removed to Provence<sup>c</sup>. Hitherto the Latin language had only been in use. The Provençal writers established a common dialect: and their examples convinced other nations, that the modern languages were no less adapted to composition than those of antiquity<sup>d</sup>. They introduced a love of reading, and diffused a general and popular taste for poetry, by writing in a language intelligible to the ladies and the people. Their verses being conveyed in a familiar tongue, became the chief amusement of princes and feudal lords, whose courts had now begun to assume an air of

<sup>b</sup> Giovan. Villani, Istor. l. vi. c. 92.

<sup>c</sup> Villani acquaints us, that Brunetto Latini, Dante's master, was the first who attempted to polish the Florentines by improving their taste and style; which he did by writing his grand work the *Tesoro* in Provençal. He died in 1294. See Villan. *ibid.* l. ix. c. 135.

<sup>d</sup> Dante designed at first that his *Inferno*, and Treatise on monarchy, should appear in

Latin. But finding that he could not so effectually in that language impress his satirical strokes and political maxims on the laity, or illiterate, he altered his mind, and published those pieces in Italian. Had Petrarch written his *Africa*, his *Eclogues*, and his prose compositions in Italian, the literature of his country would much sooner have arrived at perfection.



greater brilliancy: a circumstance which necessarily gave great encouragement to their profession, and by rendering these arts of ingenious entertainment universally fashionable, imperceptibly laid the foundation of polite literature. From these beginnings it were easy to trace the progress of poetry to its perfection, through John de Meun in France, Dante in Italy, and Chaucer in England.

This praise must undoubtedly be granted to the Provençal poets. But in the mean time, to recur to our original argument, we should be cautious of asserting in general and indiscriminating terms, that the Provençal poets were the first writers of metrical romance: at least we should ascertain, with rather more precision than has been commonly used on this subject, how far they may claim this merit. I am of opinion that there were two sorts of French troubadours, who have not hitherto been sufficiently distinguished. If we diligently examine their history, we shall find that the poetry of the first troubadours consisted in satires, moral fables, allegories, and sentimental sonnets. So early as the year 1180, a tribunal called the *Court of Love*, was instituted both in Provence and Picardy, at which questions in gallantry were decided. This institution furnished eternal matter for the poets, who threw the claims and arguments of the different parties into verse, in a style that afterwards led the way to the spiritual conversations of Cyrus and Clelia\*. Fontenelle does not scruple to acknowledge, that gallantry was the parent of French poetry<sup>f</sup>. But to sing romantic and chivalrous adventures was a very different task, and required very different talents. The troubadours therefore who composed metrical romances form a different species, and ought always to be considered separately. And

\* This part of their character will be insisted upon more at large when we come to speak of Chaucer.

<sup>f</sup> Theatr. Fr. p. 13.

this

this latter class seems to have commenced at a later period, not till after the crusades had effected a great change in the manners and ideas of the western world. In the mean time, I hazard a conjecture. Cinthio Giraldi supposes, that the art of the troubadours, commonly called the *Gay Science*, was first communicated from France to the Italians, and afterwards to the Spaniards<sup>a</sup>. This perhaps may be true: but at the same time it is highly probable, as the Spaniards had their JUGLARES or convivial bards very early, as from long connection they were immediately and intimately acquainted with the fictions of the Arabians, and as they were naturally fond of chivalry, that the troubadours of Provence in great measure caught this turn of fabling from Spain. The communication, to mention no other obvious means of intercourse in an affair of this nature, was easy through the ports of Toulon and Marseilles, by which the two nations carried on from early times a constant commerce. Even the French critics themselves universally allow, that the Spaniards, having learned rhyme from the Arabians, through this very channel conveyed it to Provence. Tasso preferred *Amadis de Gaul*, a romance originally written in Spain, by Vasco Lobeyra, before the year 1300<sup>b</sup>, to the most celebrated pieces of the Provençal poets<sup>c</sup>. But this is a subject which will perhaps receive illustration from a writer of great taste, talents, and industry, Monsieur de la Curne de Sainte Palaye, who will soon oblige the world with an ample history of Provençal poetry; and whose researches into a kindred subject, already published, have opened a new and extensive field of information concerning the manners, institutions, and literature of the feudal ages<sup>d</sup>.

<sup>a</sup> Apud Huet, Orig. Rom. p. 108.

<sup>b</sup> Nic. Antonius, Bibl. Hispan. Vet. tom. ii. l. viii. c. 7. num. 291.

<sup>c</sup> Disc. del Poem. Eroid. l. ii. p. 45. 46.

<sup>d</sup> See *Memoires sur l'ancienne Chevalerie*, &c. Paris, 1759. ii. tom. 12<sup>mo</sup>.

S E C T.