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

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

**Warton, Thomas**

**London, 1774**

Section XVIII. Chaucer continued. State of French and Italian poetry: and their influence on Chaucer. Rise of allegorical composition in the dark ages. Love-courts, and Love-fraternities, in France. ...

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## S E C T. XVIII.

**I**T is not my intention to dedicate a volume to Chaucer, how much soever he may deserve it; nor can it be expected, that, in a work of this general nature, I should enter into a critical examination of all Chaucer's pieces. Enough has been said to prove, that in elevation, and elegance, in harmony and perspicuity of versification, he surpasses his predecessors in an infinite proportion: that his genius was universal, and adapted to themes of unbounded variety: that his merit was not less in painting familiar manners with humour and propriety, than in moving the passions, and in representing the beautiful or the grand objects of nature with grace and sublimity. In a word, that he appeared with all the lustre and dignity of a true poet, in an age which compelled him to struggle with a barbarous language, and a national want of taste; and when to write verses at all, was regarded as a singular qualification. It is true indeed, that he lived at a time when the French and Italians had made considerable advances and improvements in poetry: and although proofs have already been occasionally given of his imitations from these sources, I shall close my account of him with a distinct and comprehensive view of the nature of the poetry which subsisted in France and Italy when he wrote: pointing out in the mean time, how far and in what manner the popular models of those nations contributed to form his taste, and influence his genius.

I have already mentioned the troubadours of Provence, and have observed that they were fond of moral and allegorical fables\*. A taste for this sort of composition they

\* See *supr.* p. 148.

partly

partly acquired by reading Boethius, and the *PSYCHOMACHIA* of Prudentius, two favorite classics of the dark ages; and partly from the Saracens their neighbours in Spain, who were great inventors of apologues. The French have a very early metrical romance *DE FORTUNE ET DE FELICITE*, a translation from Boethius's book *DE CONSOLATIONE*, by Reynault de Louens a Dominican friar<sup>b</sup>. From this source, among many others of the Provencal poems, came the Tournament of *ANTICHRIST* above-mentioned, which contains a combat of the Virtues and Vices<sup>c</sup>: the Romaunt of Richard de Lisle, in which *MODESTY* fighting with *LUST*<sup>d</sup> is thrown into the river Seine at Paris: and, above all, the *ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE*, translated by Chaucer, and already mentioned at large in its proper place. Visions were a branch of this species of poetry, which admitted the most licentious excursions of fancy in forming personifications, and in feigning imaginary beings and ideal habitations. Under these we may rank Chaucer's *HOUSE OF FAME*, which I have before hinted to have been probably the production of Provence.

But the principal subject of their poems, dictated in great measure by the spirit of chivalry, was love: especially among the troubadours of rank and distinction, whose castles being crowded with ladies, presented perpetual scenes of the most splendid gallantry. This passion they spiritualised into various metaphysical refinements, and filled it with abstracted notions of visionary perfection and felicity. Here too they were perhaps influenced by their neighbours the Saracens, whose philosophy chiefly consisted of fantastic abstractions. It is

<sup>b</sup> See Mem. Lit. tom. xviii. p. 741. 4<sup>to</sup>. And tom. vii. 293. 294. I have before mentioned John of Meun's translation of Boethius. It is in verse. John de Langres is said to have made a translation in prose, about 1336. It is highly probable that Chaucer translated Boethius from some of the French translations. In the Bodleian library there is an *EXPLANATIO* of Boe-

thius's *CONSOLATION* by our countryman Nicholas Trivett, who died before 1329.

<sup>c</sup> See *supr.* p. 285.

<sup>d</sup> *PUTERIE*. Properly Bawdry, Obscenity. *MODESTY* is drowned in the river, which gives occasion to this conclusion, "Dont vien que plus n'y a *HONTE* dans "Paris." The author lived about the year 1300.

manifest,

manifest, however, that nothing can exceed the profound pedantry with which they treated this favorite argument. They defined the essence and characteristics of true love with all the parade of a Scotist in his professorial chair: and bewildered their imaginations in speculative questions concerning the most desperate or the most happy situations of a sincere and sentimental heart\*. But it would be endless, and indeed ridiculous, to describe at length the systematical solemnity with which they cloathed this passion'. The ROMANT OF THE ROSE which I have just alledged as a proof of their allegorising turn, is not less an instance of their affectation in writing on this subject: in which the poet, under the agency of allegorical personages, displays the gradual approaches and impediments to fruition, and introduces a regular disputation conducted with much formality between Reason and a lover. Chaucer's TESTAMENT OF LOVE is also formed on this philosophy of gallantry. It is a lover's parody of Boethius's book DE CONSOLATIONE mentioned above. His poem called LA BELLE DAME SANS MERCY<sup>5</sup>, and his ASSEMBLE OF LADIES, are from the same

\* In the mean time the greatest liberties and indecencies were practiced and encouraged. These doctrines did not influence the manners of the times. In an old French tale, a countess in the absence of her lord having received a knight into her castle, and conducted him in great state to his repose, will not suffer him to sleep alone: with infinite politeness she orders one of her damsels, *la plus cortoise et la plus bele*, into his bed-chamber, *avec ce chevalier gesser*. Mem. Cheval. ut supr. tom. ii. p. 70. Not. 17.

† This infatuation continued among the French down to modern times. "Les gens de qualité, says the ingenious M. de la Curne de Sainte Palaye, confessoient encore ce goût que leurs pères avoient pris dans nos anciennes cours: ce fut sans doute pour complaire à son fondateur, que l'Académie Française

" traita, dans ses premiers séances, plusieurs sujets qui concernoient l'AMOUR; et l'on vit encore dans l'hôtel du Louvre les personnes les plus qualifiées et le plus spirituelles du siècle de Louis XIV. se disputer à qui commenteroit et et raffineroit le mieux sur la délicatesse du cœur et des sentimens, à qui seroit, sur ce chapitre, les distinctions le plus subtiles." Mem. Cheval. ut supr. tom. ii. P. v. pag. 17.

\* Translated or imitated from a French poem of Alain Chartier, v. 11.

Which Maistr Alayne made of remembrance  
Chief secretary to the king of France.

He was secretary to Charles the sixth and seventh. But he is chiefly famous for his prose.

school.

school<sup>h</sup>. Chaucer's PRIORESSE and MONKE, whose lives were devoted to religious reflection and the most serious engagements, and while they are actually travelling on a pilgrimage to visit the shrine of a fainted martyr, openly avow the universal influence of love. They exhibit, on their apparel, badges entirely inconsistent with their profession, but easily accountable for from these principles. The Prioress wears a bracelet on which is inscribed, with a crowned A, *Amor vincit omnia*<sup>l</sup>. The Monke ties his hood with a true-lover's knot<sup>k</sup>. The early poets of Provence, as I before hinted, formed a society called the COURT OF LOVE, which gave rise to others in Gascony, Languedoc, Poictou, and Dauphiny: and Picardy, the constant rival of Provence, had a similar institution called *Plaidz et Jeux sous l'Ormel*. These establishments consisted of ladies and gentlemen of the highest rank, exercised and approved in courtesy, who tried with the most consummate ceremony, and decided with supreme authority, cases in love brought before their tribunal. Martial d'Avergne, an old French poet, for the diversion and at the request of the countess of Beaujeu, wrote a poem entitled ARRESTA AMORUM, or the Decrees of Love, which is a humourous description of the *Plaidz* of Picardy. Fontenelle has recited one of their processes, which conveys an idea of all the rest<sup>l</sup>. A queen of France was appealed to from an unjust sentence pronounced in the love-pleas, where the countess of Champagne presided. The queen did not chuse to interpose in a matter of so much consequence, nor to reverse the decrees of a court whose decision was absolute and final. She answered, "God forbid, that I should presume to contradict the sentence of the countess of Champagne!" This was about the year 1206. Chaucer has a poem called the COURT

<sup>h</sup> So is Gower's CONFESSIO AMANTIS, as we shall see hereafter.  
<sup>l</sup> v. 162.

<sup>k</sup> v. 197.  
<sup>l</sup> Hist. Theat. Franc. p. 15. tom. iii. Oeuvr. Paris, 1742.

OF LOVE, which is nothing more than the love-court of Provence<sup>a</sup>: it contains the twenty statutes which that court prescribed to be universally observed under the severest penalties<sup>o</sup>. Not long afterwards, on the same principle, a society was established in Languedoc, called the *Fraternity of the Penitents of Love*. Enthusiasm was here carried to as high a pitch of extravagance as ever it was in religion. It was a contention of ladies and gentlemen, who should best sustain the honour of their amorous fanaticism. Their object was to prove the excess of their love, by shewing with an invincible fortitude and consistency of conduct, with no less obstinacy of opinion, that they could bear extremes of heat and cold. Accordingly the resolute knights and esquires, the dames and damsels, who had the hardiness to embrace this severe institution, dressed themselves during the heat of summer in the thickest mantles lined with the warmest fur. In this they demonstrated, according to the antient poets, that love works the most wonderful and extraordinary changes. In winter, their love again perverted the nature of the seasons: they then cloathed themselves in the lightest and thinnest stuffs which could be procured. It was a crime to wear fur on a day of the most piercing cold; or to appear with a hood, cloak, gloves, or muff. The flame of love kept them sufficiently warm. Fires, all the winter,

<sup>a</sup> See also Chaucer's TEN COMMANDMENTS OF LOVE, p. 554. Urr.

<sup>o</sup> Vie de Petrarque, tom. ii. Not. xix. p. 60. Probably the *Cour d'Amour* was the origin of that called *La Cour Amoureuse*, established under the gallant reign of Charles the sixth, in the year 1410. The latter had the most considerable families of France for its members, and a parade of grand officers, like those in the royal household and courts of law. See Hist. Acad. Inscript. Tom. vii. p. 287. seq. 4<sup>to</sup>. See also Hist. Langued. tom. iii. p. 25. seq. The most uniform and unembarrassed

view of the establishment and usages of this COURT, which I can at present recollect, is thrown together from scattered and scarce materials by the ingenious author of *VIE DE PETRARQUE*, tom. ii. p. 45. seq. Not. xix. But for a complete account of these institutions, and other curious particulars relating to the antient manners and antient poetry of the French, the public waits with impatience for the history of the Provençal poets written by Mons. de la Curne de Sainte Palaye, who has copied most of their manuscripts with great care and expence.

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were

were utterly banished from their houses; and they dressed their apartments with evergreens. In the most intense frost their beds were covered only with a piece of canvass. It must be remembered, that in the mean time they passed the greater part of the day abroad, in wandering about from castle to castle; infomuch, that many of these devotees, during so desperate a pilgrimage, perished by the inclemency of the weather, and died martyrs to their profession<sup>p</sup>.

The early universality of the French language greatly contributed to facilitate the circulation of the poetry of the troubadours in other countries. The Frankish language was familiar even at Constantinople and its dependent provinces in the eleventh century, and long afterwards. Raymond Montaniero, an historian of Catalonia, who wrote about the year 1300, says, that the French tongue was as well known in the Morea and at Athens as at Paris. "E parlavan axi belle " Francis com dins en Paris?" The oldest Italian poetry seems to be founded on that of Provence. The word SONNET was adopted from the French into the Italian versification. It occurs in the ROMAN DE LA ROSE, "Lais d'amour et SONNETS courtois". Boccaccio copied many of his best Tales from the troubadours<sup>q</sup>. Several of Dante's fictions are

<sup>p</sup> See D. Vaisette, Hist. du Languedoc, tom. iv. p. 184. seq. Compare p. 145. Note, 7.

<sup>q</sup> Hist. Arragon. c. 261. v. 720.

<sup>r</sup> Particularly from Rutebeuf and Hebers. Rutebeuf was living in the year 1310. He wrote tales and stories of entertainment in verse. It is certain that Boccaccio took, from this old French minstrel, Nov. x. Giorn. ix. And perhaps two or three others. Hebers lived about the year 1200. He wrote a French romance, in verse, called the *Seven Sages of Greece, or Dolopatbos*. He translated it from the Latin of Döm Johans, a monk of the abbey of Haute-selve. It has great variety, and contains several agreeable stories, pleasant adventures, emblems, and proverbs. Boc-

caccio has taken from it four Tales, viz. Nov. ii. Giorn. iii. Nov. iv. Giorn. vii. Nov. viii. Giorn. viii. And the Tale of the Boy who had never seen a woman, since finely touched by Fontaine. An Italian book called *Erastus* is compiled from this *Roman of the Seven Sages*. It is said to have been first composed by Sandaber the Indian, a writer of proverbs: that it afterwards appeared successively in Hebrew, Arabic, Syriac, and Greek; was at length translated into Latin by the monk above-mentioned, and from thence into French by Hebers. It is very probable that the monk translated it from some Greek manuscript of the dark ages, which Huet says was to be found in some libraries. Three hundred years after the *Roman* of Hebers, it was translated

derived from the same fountain. Dante has honoured some of them with a seat in his Paradise<sup>1</sup>: and in his tract DE VULGARI ELOQUENTIA, has mentioned Thiebault king of Navarre as a pattern for writing poetry<sup>2</sup>. With regard to Dante's capital work the INFERNO, Raoul de Houdane, a Provençal bard about the year 1180, wrote a poem entitled, LE VOYE OU LE SONGE D'ENFER<sup>3</sup>. Both Boccaccio and Dante studied at Paris, where they much improved their taste by reading the songs of Thiebault king of Navarre, Gaces Brules, Chatelain de Coucy, and other antient French fabulists<sup>4</sup>. Petrarch's refined ideas of love are chiefly drawn from those amorous reveries of the Provençals which I have above described; heightened perhaps by the Platonic system, and exaggerated by the subtilising spirit of Italian fancy. Varchi and Pignatelli have written professed treatises on the nature of Petrarch's love. But neither they, nor the rest of the Italians who, to this day, continue to debate a point of so much consequence, consider how powerfully Petrarch must have been influenced to talk of love in so peculiar a strain by studying the poets of Provence. His TRIUMFO DI AMORE has much imagery copied from Anselm Fayditt, one of the most celebrated of these bards. He has likewise many imitations from the works of Arnaud Daniel, who is called the most eloquent of the troubadours<sup>5</sup>. Petrarch,

translated into Dutch, and again from the Dutch into Latin. There is an English abridgement of it, which is a story-book for children. See Mem. Lit. Tom. ii. p. 731. 4<sup>to</sup>. Fauchett, p. 106. 160. Huet, Orig. Fab. Rom. 136. Fabric. Bibl. Gr. x. 339. Massieu, Poef. Fr. p. 137. Crescimben. Volg. Poef. Vol. i. L. v. p. 332. Many of the old French minstrels deal much in Tales and novels of honour and amusement, like those of Boccaccio's Decameron. They call them *Fabliaux*.

<sup>1</sup> See p. 117. supr. Compare Crescimben. Volg. Poef. L. i. c. xiv. p. 162.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 43. 45. And Commed. Infern. cant. xxii.

<sup>3</sup> Fauch. Rec. p. 96.

<sup>4</sup> See Fauchett, Rec. p. 47. 116. And Huet, Rom. p. 121. 108.

<sup>5</sup> See p. 117. supr. He lived about 1180. Recherch. Par Beauchamps, p. 5. Nostradamus asserts, that Petrarch stole many things from a troubadour called Richard seigneur de Barbezieux, who is placed under 1383. Petrarch however was dead at that time.



in one of his sonnets, represents his mistress Laura sailing on the river Rhone, in company with twelve Provençal ladies, who at that time presided over the COURT OF LOVE<sup>7</sup>.

Pasquier observes, that the Italian poetry arose as the Provençal declined<sup>8</sup>. It is a proof of the decay of invention among the French in the beginning of the fourteenth century, that about that period they began to translate into prose their old metrical romances: such as the fables of king Arthur, of Charlemagne, of Oddegir the Dane, of Renaud of Montauban, and other illustrious champions, whom their early writers had celebrated in rhyme<sup>9</sup>. At length, about the year 1380, in the place of the Provençal a new species of poetry succeeded in France, consisting of Chants Royaux<sup>b</sup>,

<sup>7</sup> Sonnet. clxxxviii. Dodici Donne, &c. The academicians della Crusca, in their Dictionary, quote a manuscript entitled, LIBRO D'AMORE of the year 1408. It is also referred to by Crescimbeni in his Lives of the Provençal poets. It contains verdicts or determinations in the *Court of Love*.

<sup>8</sup> Pasq. Les Recherch. de la France. vii. 5. p. 609. 611. edit. 1633. fol.

<sup>9</sup> These translations, in which the originals were much enlarged, produced an infinite number of other romances in prose: and the old metrical romances soon became unfashionable and neglected. The romance of PERCEFORREST, one of the largest of the French romances of chivalry, was written in verse about 1220. It was not till many years afterwards translated into prose. M. Falconet, an ingenious enquirer into the early literature of France, is of opinion, that the most antient romances, such as that of the ROUND TABLE, were first written in Latin prose: it being well known that Turpin's CHARLEMAGNE, as it is now extant, was originally composed in that language. He thinks they were translated into French rhymes, and at last into French prose, *tels que nous les avons aujourd'hui*. See Hist. Acad. Inscript. vii. 293. But part of this doctrine may be justly doubted.

<sup>b</sup> With regard to the *Chant royal*, Pasquier describes it to be a song in honour of God, the holy Virgin, or any other argument of dignity, especially if joined with distress. It was written in heroic stanzas, and closed with a *l'Envey*, or stanza containing a recapitulation, dedication, or the like. Chaucer calls the *Chant royal* above-mentioned, a *Kyngis Note*. Mill. T. v. 111. p. 25. His *Complaint of Venus*, *Cuckow and Nighingale*, and *La belle Dame sans Mercy*, Have all a *l'Envey*, and belong to this species of French verse. His *l'Envey* to the *Complaint of Venus*, or *Mars and Venus*, ends with these lines, v. 79.

And eke to me it is a grete penaunce,  
Sith rime in English hath soche scarcite,  
To follow word by word the curiosite  
Of granfonflour of them that make in  
Fraunce.

*Make* signifies to write poetry; and here we see that this poem was translated from the French. See also Chaucer's *Dream*, v. 2204. Petrarch has the *Envoi*. I am inclined to think, that Chaucer's *Assemble of Fowles* was partly planned in imitation of a French poem written by Gace de la Vigne, Chaucer's cotemporary, entitled, *Roman d'Oiseaux*, which treats of the nature, properties, and management

Balades, Rondeaux, and Pastorales<sup>e</sup>. This was distinguished by the appellation of the NEW POETRY: and Froissart, who has been mentioned above chiefly in the character of an historian, cultivated it with so much success, that he has been called its author. The titles of Froissart's poetical pieces will alone serve to illustrate the nature of this NEW POETRY: but they prove, at the same time, that the Provencal cast of composition still continued to prevail. They are, *The Paradise of Love, A Panegyric on the Month of May, The Temple of Honour, The Flower of the Daisy, Amorous Lays, Pastorals, The Amorous Prison, Royal Ballads in honour of our Lady, The Ditty of the Amorous Spinnett, Virelais, Rondeaux, and The Plea of the Rose and Violet*<sup>a</sup>. Whoever examines Chaucer's smaller pieces will perceive that they are altogether formed on this plan, and often compounded of these ideas. Chaucer himself declares, that he wrote

-----Many an hymne for your holidiaies  
 \* That hightin balades, rondils, virelaies.

But above all, Chaucer's FLOURE AND THE LEAFE, in which an air of rural description predominates, and where the allegory is principally conducted by mysterious allusions to the virtues or beauties of the vegetable world, to flowers and plants, exclusive of its general romantic and allegoric vein,

management of all birds *de chasse*. But this is merely a conjecture, for I have never seen the French poem. At least there is an evident similitude of subject.

<sup>e</sup> About this time, a Prior of S. Genevieve at Paris wrote a small treatise entitled, *L'Art de Distier BALLADES, ET RONDELLES*. See *Monf. Beauchamps Rech. Theatr.* p. 88. M. Maffien says this is the first ART OF POETRY printed in France. *Hist. Poet. Fr.* p. 222. See *L'ART POETIQUE* du Jaques Pelloutier du Mons. Lyon, 555. 8vo. Liv. 11. ch. i. Du L'ODE.

<sup>a</sup> Pasquier, ubi sup. p. 612. Who calls such pieces MIGNARDISES.

<sup>c</sup> Here is an elleipsis. He means, *And poems.*

<sup>f</sup> *Prol. Leg. G. W.* v. 422. He mentions this sort of poetry in the *Franklein's Tale*, v. 2493. p. 109. Urr.

Of which matere [love] madin he many layes.

Songis, Complaintis, Roundils, Virelayes.

Compare Chaucer's DREME, v. 973. In the FLOURE AND LEAFE we have the words of a French Rondeau, v. 177.

bears

bears a strong resemblance to some of these subjects. The poet is happily placed in a delicious arbour, interwoven with eglantine. Imaginary troops of knights and ladies advance: some of the ladies are crowned with flowers, and others with chaplets of agnus castus, and these are respectively subject to a *Lady of the Flower*, and a *Lady of the Leaf*<sup>a</sup>. Some are cloathed in green, and others in white. Many of the knights are distinguished in much the same manner. But others are crowned with leaves of oak or of other trees: others carry branches of oak, laurel, hawthorn, and woodbine<sup>b</sup>. Besides this profusion of vernal ornaments, the whole procession glitters with gold, pearls, rubies, and other costly decorations. They are preceded by minstrels cloathed in green and crowned with flowers. One of the ladies sings a bargaret, or pastoral, in praise of the daisy.

A<sup>1</sup> bargaret in praising the daisie,  
For as methought among her notis swete  
She said *si douce est le margaruite*<sup>k</sup>.

This might have been Froissart's song: at least this is one of his subjects. In the mean time a nightingale, seated in a laurel-tree, whose shade would cover an hundred persons, sings the whole service, "longing to May." Some of the knights and ladies do obeysance to the leaf, and some to the

<sup>a</sup> In a decision of the COURT OF LOVE cited by Fontenelle, the judge is called *Le Marquis des fleurs et violettes*. Font. ubi supr. p. 15.

<sup>b</sup> v. 270.

<sup>1</sup> Rather *Bergerette*. A song *du Berger*, of a shepherd.

<sup>k</sup> v. 350. A panegyric on this flower is again introduced in the Prologue to the *Leg. of G. Wom.* v. 180.

The long daie I shope me for to abide  
For nothing ellis, and I shall not lie  
But for to lokin upon the *daisie*,  
That wel by reason men it calle maie  
The *Daisie*, or els the *eye of the daie*:  
The emprise, and the flour, of flouris al, &c.

All this while he means to pay a compliment to Lady *Margaret*, countess of Pembroke, king Edward's daughter, one of his patronesses. See the *Balade* beginning *In Fowere*, &c. p. 556. Urr. v. 688. Froissart's song in praise of the daisy might have the same tendency: for he was patronised both by Edward and Philippa. *Margaruite* is French for *Daisy*. Chaucer perhaps intends the same compliment by the "*Margarite perle*," *Test. Love*, p. 483. col. i. &c. Urr. See also *Prolog. Leg. G. Wom.* v. 218. 224. That Prologue has many images like those in the *Flower and the Leaf*. It was evidently written after that poem.

flower

flower of the daisy. Others are represented as worshipping a bed of flowers. Flora is introduced "of these flowers" "goddesse." The lady of the leaf invites the lady of the flower to a banquet. Under these symbols is much morality couched. The leaf signifies perseverance and virtue: the flower denotes indolence and pleasure. Among those who are crowned with the leaf, are the knights of king Arthur's round table, and Charlemagne's Twelve Peers; together with the knights of the order of the garter now just established by Edward the third<sup>1</sup>.

But these fancies seem more immediately to have taken their rise from the FLORAL GAMES instituted in France in the year 1324<sup>2</sup>, which filled the French poetry with images of this sort<sup>3</sup>. They were founded by Clementina Isabeau countess of Thoulouse, and annually celebrated in the month of May. She published an edict, which assembled all the poets of France in artificial arbours dressed with flowers: and he that produced the best poem was rewarded with a violet of gold. There were likewise inferior prizes of flowers made in silver. In the mean time the conquerors were crowned with natural chaplets of their own respective flowers. During the ceremony, degrees were also conferred. He who had won a prize three times was created a doctor *en gaye Science*, the name of the poetry of the Provençal troubadours. The instrument of creation was in verse<sup>4</sup>. This institution, however fantastic, soon became common through the whole kingdom of France: and these romantic rewards, distributed with the most impartial attention to merit, at least infused an useful emulation, and in some measure revived the languishing genius of the French poetry.

<sup>1</sup> v. 516. 517. 519.

<sup>2</sup> Mem. Lit. tom. vii. p. 422. 4<sup>to</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> Hence Froissart in the *EPINETTE AMOUREUSE*, describing his romantic amusements, says he was delighted with

Violettes en leur saisons

Et roses blanches et vermeilles, &c.

See Mem. Lit. tom. x. p. 665. 287. 4<sup>to</sup>.

<sup>4</sup> Recherches sur les poètes couronnés, Mem. Lit. tom. x. p. 567. 4<sup>to</sup>.

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The French and Italian poets, whom Chaucer imitates, abound in allegorical personages: and it is remarkable, that the early poets of Greece and Rome were fond of these creations. Homer has given us, STRIFE, CONTENTION, FEAR, TERROR, TUMULT, DESIRE, PERSUASION, and BENEVOLENCE. We have, in Hesiod, DARKNESS, and many others, if the Shield of Hercules be of his hand. COMUS occurs in the Agamemnon of Eschylus; and in the Prometheus of the same poet, STRENGTH and FORCE are two persons of the drama, and perform the capital parts. The fragments of Ennius indicate, that his poetry consisted much of personifications. He says, that in one of the Carthaginian wars, the gigantic image of SORROW appeared in every place: "Omnibus endo locis ingens apparet imago TRISTITIAS." Lucretius has drawn the great and terrible figure of SUPERSTITION, "Quæ caput e cæli regionibus ostendebat." He also mentions, in a beautiful procession of the Seasons, CALOR ARIDUS, HYEMS, and ALGUS. He introduces MEDICINE *muttering with silent fear*, in the midst of the deadly pestilence at Athens. It seems to have escaped the many critics who have written on Milton's noble but romantic allegory of SIN and DEATH, that he took the person of Death from the Alcestis of his favorite tragedian Euripides, where ΘΑΝΑΤΟΣ is a principal agent in the drama. As knowledge and learning encrease, poetry begins to deal less in imagination: and these fantastic beings give way to real manners and living characters.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.