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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, 1781

Section XXVI. The Notbrowne Mayde. Not older than the sixteenth century.
Artful contrivance of the story. Misrepresented by Prior. Metrical
romances, Guy, syr Bevys, and Kynge Apolyn, printed in the ...

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S E C T. XXVI.

I FEAR I shall be pronounced a heretic to modern criticism, in retracting what I have said in a preceding page, and in placing the NOT-BROWNE MAYDE under some part of this reign. Prior, who, about the year 1718, paraphrased this poem, without improving its native beauties, supposes it to have been three hundred years old. It appears from two letters preserved in the British Museum, written by Prior to Wanley, lord Oxford's librarian, that Prior consulted Wanley about this antient ballad^a. It is, however, certain, that Wanley, an antiquarian of unquestionable skill and judgement in these niceties, whatever directions and information he might have imparted to Prior on this subject, could never have communicated such a decision. He certainly in these letters gives no such opinion^b. This is therefore the hasty conjecture of Prior; who thought that the curiosity which he was presenting to the world, would derive proportionable value from its antiquity, who was better employed than in the petty labour of ascertaining dates, and who knew much more of modern than antient poetry.

The NOT-BROWNE MAYDE first appeared in Arnolde's CHRONICLE, or CUSTOMS OF LONDON, which was first printed about the year 1521. This is perhaps the most heterogeneous and multifarious miscellany that ever existed. The collector sets out with a catalogue of the mayors and sheriffs, the customs and charters, of the city of London. Soon afterwards we have

^a MSS. HARL. 3777.

^b These letters are printed in the AD-

DITIONS TO POPE'S WORKS, in two volumes, published about two years ago.

receipts to pickle sturgeon, to make vinegar, ink, and gunpowder; how to raise parsley in an hour; the arts of brewery and soap-making; an estimate of the livings in London; an account of the last visitation of saint Magnus's church; the weight of Essex cheese, and a letter to cardinal Wolsey. The NOT-BROWNE MAYDE is introduced, between an estimate of some subsidies paid into the exchequer, and directions for buying goods in Flanders. In a word, it seems to have been this compiler's plan, by way of making up a volume, to print together all the notices and papers, whether antient or modern, which he could amass, of every sort and subject. It is supposed, that he intended an antiquarian repertory: but as many recent materials were admitted, that idea was not at least uniformly observed; nor can any argument be drawn from that supposition, that this poem existed long before, and was inserted as a piece of antiquity.

The editor of the *PROLUSIONS* infers^c, from an identity of rhythmus and orthography, and an affinity of words and phrases, that this poem appeared after sir Thomas More's *JEST OF THE SERJEANT AND FREER*, which, as I have observed, was written about the year 1500. This reasoning, were not other arguments obvious, would be inconclusive, and might be turned to the opposite side of the question. But it is evident from the language of the *NOTBROWNE MAYDE*, that it was not written earlier than the beginning, at least, of the sixteenth century. There is hardly an obsolete word, or that requires a glossary, in the whole piece: and many parts of Surry and Wyat are much more difficult to be understood. Reduce any two stanzas to modern orthography, and they shall hardly wear the appearance of antient poetry. The reader shall try the experiment on the two following, which occur accidentally^d.

^c *PROLUSIONS, or select pieces of antient Poetry*, Lond. 1760. 4to. Pref. p. vii.

^d V. 168.

H E.

Yet take good hede, for ever I drede
 That ye could nat sustayne,
 The thornie wayes, the depe valèis,
 The snowe, the frost, the rayne,
 The colde, the hete: for, dry or wete,
 We must lodge on the playne;
 And us abofe * none other rofe
 But a brake bush, or twayne.
 Which sone sholde greve you, I believe;
 And ye wolde gladly than,
 That I had to the grene wode go
 Alone a banyshed man.—

S H E.

Among the wylde dere, such an archère,
 As men fay that ye be,
 May ye not fayle of good vitayle
 Where is so grete plentè:
 And water clere of the ryvère
 Shall be full fwete to me;
 With which in hele, I shall ryght wele
 Endure, as ye shall see:
 And, or we go, a bedde or two
 I can provyde anone.
 For, in my mynde, of all mankynde
 I love but you alone.

The simplicity of which passage Prior has thus decorated and dilated.

H E N R Y.

Those limbs, in lawn and softest filk array'd,
 From sun-beams guarded, and of winds afraid;

* i. e. Above.

S 2

Can

Can they bear angry Jove? can they resist
 The parching dog-star, and the bleak north-east?
 When, chill'd by adverse snows and beating rain,
 We tread with weary steps the longsome plain;
 When with hard toil we seek our evening food,
 Berries and acorns from the neighbouring wood;
 And find among the cliffs no other house,
 But the thin covert of some gather'd boughs;
 Wilt thou not then reluctant send thine eye
 Around the dreary waste; and weeping try
 (Though then, alas! that trial be too late)
 To find thy father's hospitable gate,
 And seats, where ease and plenty brooding fate?
 Those seats, whence long excluded thou must mourn;
 That gate, for ever barr'd to thy return:
 Wilt thou not then bewail ill-fated love,
 And hate a banish'd man, condemn'd in woods to rove?

EMMA.

Thy rise of fortune did I only wed,
 From it's decline determin'd to recede;
 Did I but purpose to embark with thee
 On the smooth surface of a summer's sea:
 While gentle Zephyrs play in prosperous gales,
 And Fortune's favour fills the swelling sails;
 But would forsake the ship, and make the shore,
 When the winds whistle, and the tempests roar?
 No, Henry, no: one sacred oath has tied
 Our loves; one destiny our life shall guide;
 Nor wild nor deep our common way divide.
 When from the cave thou risest with the day,
 To beat the woods, and rouse the bounding prey,
 The cave with moss and branches I'll adorn,
 And cheerful sit, to wait my lord's return:

And,

And, when thou frequent bring'st the smitten deer
 (For seldom, archers say, thy arrows err,)
 I'll fetch quick fuel from the neighbouring wood,
 And strike the sparkling flint, and dress the food;
 With humble duty and officious haste,
 I'll cull the farthest mead for thy repast;
 The choicest herbs I to thy board will bring,
 And draw thy water from the freshest spring:
 And, when at night with weary toil opprest,
 Soft slumbers thou enjoy'st, and wholesome rest;
 Watchful I'll guard thee, and with midnight prayer
 Weary the Gods to keep thee in their care;
 And joyous ask, at morn's returning ray,
 If thou hast health, and I may bless the day.
 My thoughts shall fix, my latest wish depend,
 On thee, guide, guardian, kinsman, father, friend:
 By all these sacred names be Henry known
 To Emma's heart; and grateful let him own,
 That she, of all mankind, could love but him alone!

What degree of credit this poem maintained among our earlier ancestors, I cannot determine. I suspect the sentiment was too refined for the general taste. Yet it is enumerated among the popular tales and ballads by Lancham, in his narrative of queen Elizabeth's entertainment at Kenilworth-castle in 1575^f. I have never seen it in manuscript. I believe it was never reprinted from Arnolde's Chronicle, where it first appeared in 1521, till so late as the year 1707. It was that year revived in a collection called the MONTHLY MISCELLANY, or MEMOIRS FOR THE CURIOUS, and prefaced with a little essay on our antient poets and poetry, in which it is said to have been three hundred old. Fortunately for modern poetry, this republication suggested it to the notice of Prior, who perhaps from the same source might

^f Fol. 34.

have

have adopted or confirmed his hypothesis, that it was coeval with the commencement of the fifteenth century.

Whoever was the original inventor of this little dramatic dialogue, he has shewn no common skill in contriving a plan, which powerfully detains our attention, and interests the passions, by a constant succession of suspense and pleasure, of anxiety and satisfaction. Betwixt hopes perpetually disappointed, and solicitude perpetually relieved, we know not how to determine the event of a debate, in which new difficulties still continue to be raised, and are almost as soon removed. In the midst of this vicissitude of feelings, a striking contrast of character is artfully formed, and uniformly supported, between the seeming unkindness and ingratitude of the man, and the unconquerable attachment and fidelity of the woman, whose amiable compliance unexpectedly defeats every objection, and continually furnishes new matter for our love and compassion. At length, our fears subside in the triumph of suffering innocence and patient sincerity. The Man, whose hard speeches had given us so much pain, suddenly surprises us with a change of sentiment, and becomes equally an object of our admiration and esteem. In the disentanglement of this distressful tale, we are happy to find, that all his cruelty was tenderness, and his inconstancy the most invariable truth; his levity an ingenious artifice, and his perversity the friendly disguise of the firmest affection. He is no longer an unfortunate exile, the profligate companion of the thieves and ruffians of the forest, but an opulent earl of Westmoreland; and promises, that the lady, who is a baron's daughter, and whose constancy he had proved by such a series of embarrassing proposals, shall instantly be made the partner of his riches and honours. Nor should we forget to commend the invention of the poet, in imagining the modes of trying the lady's patience, and in feigning so many new situations: which, at the same time, open a way to description, and to a variety of new scenes and images.

I cannot help observing here, by the way, that Prior has misconceived

conceived and essentially marred his poet's design, by softening the sternness of the Man, which could not be intended to admit of any degree of relaxation. Henry's hypocrisy is not characteristically nor consistently sustained. He frequently talks in too respectful and complaisant a style. Sometimes he calls Emma my *tender maid*, and my *beauteous Emma*; he fondly dwells on the ambrosial plenty of her flowing ringlets gracefully wreathed with variegated ribbands, and expatiates with rapture on the charms of her snowy bosom, her slender waist, and harmony of shape. In the antient poem, the concealed lover never abates his affectation of rigour and reserve, nor ever drops an expression which may tend to betray any traces of tenderness. He retains his severity to the last, in order to give force to the conclusion of the piece, and to heighten the effect of the final declaration of his love. Thus, by diminishing the opposition of interests, and by giving too great a degree of uniformity to both characters, the distress is in some measure destroyed by Prior. For this reason, Henry, during the course of the dialogue, is less an object of our aversion, and Emma of our pity. But these are the unavoidable consequences of Prior's plan, who presupposes a long connection between the lovers, which is attended with the warmest professions of a reciprocal passion. Yet this very plan suggested another reason, why Prior should have more closely copied the cast of his original. After so many mutual promises and protestations, to have made Henry more obdurate, would have enhanced the sufferings and the sincerity of the amiable Emma.

It is highly probable, that the metrical romances of RICHARD CUER DE LYON, GUY EARL OF WARWICK, and SYR BEVYS OF SOUTHAMPTON, were modernised in this reign from more antient and simple narrations. The first was printed by Wynkyn de Worde, in 1528^b. The second without date, but about the same time, by William Copland. I mean that which begins thus,

^b In quarto. See *supr.* Vol. i. p. 150. seq.

Ithen

Ithen the tyme that God was borne,
And crystendome was fet and fworne.

With this colophon. "Here endeth the booke of the most
"victorious prynce Guy earle of Warwyk. Imprinted at Lon-
"don in Lothbury, over agaynst faynt Margaret's church by
"Wyllyam Copland¹." Richard Pinson printed SIR BEVVS
without date. Many quarto prose romances were printed be-
tween the years 1510 and 1540^k. Of these, KYNGE APPOLYN
OF THYRE is not one of the worst.

In the year 1542, as it seems, Robert Wyer printed, "Here
"begynneth a lytell boke named the SCOLE HOWSE. wherein
"every man may rede a goodly Prayer of the condycions of
"women." Within the leaf is a border of naked women. This
is a satire agaynst the female sex. The writer was wise enough
to suppress his name, as we may judge from the following
passage.

Trewly some men there be,
That lyve alwaye in greate horroure ;
And say, it goth by destenye
To hange or wed, both hath one houre :
And whether it be, I am well sure,
Hangynge is better of the twayne,
Sooner done, and shorter payne.

In the year 1521, Wynkyn de Worde printed a sett of Christ-
mas Carols^l. I have seen a fragment of this scarce book, and
it preserves this colophon. "Thus endeth the Christmasse
"carolles newly imprinted at London in the Flete-strete at the
"fygne of the sonne by Wynkyn de Worde. The yere of our
"Lorde, M. D. XXI^m." These were festal chancons for enli-

^l In octavo.

^k See supr. p. 58.

^l For many small miscellaneous pieces
under the reign of Henry viii, the more

inquisitive reader is referred to MSS. Cott.
Vesp. A. 25.

^m In quarto.

vening

vening the merriments of the Christmas celebrity: and not such religious songs as are current at this day with the common people under the same title, and which were substituted by those enemies of innocent and useful mirth the puritans. The boar's head soufed, was antiently the first dish on Christmas day, and was carried up to the principal table in the Hall with great state and solemnity. Hollinhead says, that in the year 1170, upon the day of the young prince's coronation, king Henry the first "served his sonne at the table as sewer, bringing up the BORES HEAD with trumpets before it according to the manner". For this indispenfable ceremony, as also for others of that season, there was a Carol, which Wynkyn de Worde has given us in the miscellany just mentioned, as it was sung in his time, with the title, "A CAROL bryngyng in the bores head."

*Caput Apri defero,
Reddens laudes Domino.*

The bores head in hande bringe I,
With garlandes gay and rosemary.
I pray you all syng mereley,
Qui estis in convivio.

The bores head, I understande,
Is the chefe servyce ° in this lande:
Loke wherever it be fande †
Servite cum cantico.

Be gladde lordes, both more and lasse ‡,
For this hath ordayned our stewarde
To chere you all this christmasse,
The bores head with mustarde.

° CHRON. iii. 76. See also Polyd. Virg. Hist. p. 212. 10. ed. 1534.

° That is, the chief dish served at a feast.

† Found.

‡ Great and small.

This carol, yet with many innovations, is retained at Queen's college in Oxford. Other antient Christmas carols occur with Latin Burthens or Latin intermixtures. As thus,

Puer nobis natus est de Virgine Maria.
Be glad lordynges, be the more or lesse,
I brynge you tydynges of gladnesse[†].

The Latin scraps were banished from these jocund hymns, when the Reformation had established an English liturgy. At length appeared, "Certaine of David's Psalmes intended for Christmas Carolls fitted to the most follempne tunes every where familiarly used, by William Slatyer, printed by Robert Yong 1630."

It was impossible that the Reformation of religion could escape without its rhyming libels. Accordingly, among others, we have, "An Answer to a papyistical exhortation, pretending "to avoyd false doctrine, under that colour to mayntayne the same," printed in 1548, and beginning,

Every pilde[†] pedlar
Will be a medlar.

In the year 1533, a proclamation was promulged, prohibiting evil-disposed persons to preach, either in public or private, "After their *own braine*, and by playing of enterludes, and "printing of false fond bookes, ballades, rhymes, and other "lewd treatyses in the English tongue, concerning doctrines in "matters now in question and controversie, &c." But this popular mode of attack, which all understood, and in which the idle and unlearned could join, appears to have been more powerful than royal interdictions and parliamentary censures.

In the year 1540, Thomas lord Cromwell, during the short

[†] MSS. HARL. 5396. fol. 4. fol. 18.

[†] In octavo.

[†] Pilled, i. e. bald.

* FOX, MARTYROLOG. f. 1339. edit. 1576.

interval

interval which Henry's hasty passion for Catharine Howard permitted between his commitment and execution, was insulted in a ballad written by a defender of the declining cause of popery, who certainly shewed more zeal than courage, in reproaching a disgraced minister and a dying man. This satire, however unseemly, gave rise to a religious controversy in verse, which is preserved in the archives of the antiquarian society.

I find a poem of thirty octave stanzas, printed in 1546, called the DOWFAL OF ANTICHRISTES MAS, or Mafs, in which the nameless satirist is unjustly severe on the distresses of that ingenious class of mechanics who got their living by writing and ornamenting service-books for the old papistic worship, now growing into decay and disuse; insinuating at the same time, in a strain of triumph, the great blow their *craft* had received, by the diminution of the number of churches in the dissolution of the monasteries*. It is, however, certain, that this busy and lucrative occupation was otherwise much injured by the invention and propagation of typography, as several catholic rituals were printed in England: yet still they continued to employ

* In a roll of John Morys, warden of Winchester college, an. xx Ric. ii. A. D. 1397, are large articles of disbursement for grails, legends, and other service-books for the choir of the chapel, then just founded. It appears that they bought the parchment; and hired persons to do the business of writing, illuminating, noting, and binding, within the walls of the college. As thus. "Item in xi dofeyn iiij pellibus emptis pro i legenda integra, que incipit folio secundo *Quia dixerunt*, continente xxxiiij quaterniones, (pret. dofeyn iiij s. vi d. pret. pellis iiij d. ob.) li s. "Item in scriptura ejusdem Legende, lxix s. Et in illuminatione et ligacione ejusdem, xxx s. Item in vj dofeyn de velym emptis pro factura vj Professionarium, quorum quilibet continet xv quaterniones, (pret. dofeyn iiij s. vi d.) xxvi s. Et in scriptura, notacione, illuminatione, et ligacione corundem,

"xxxij s." The highest cost of one of these books is, 7l. 13s. Vellum, for this purpose, made an article of *staurum* or store. As, "Item in vj dofeyn de velym emptis in staurum pro aliis libris inde faciendis, xxxiiij s. xj d." The books were covered with deer-skin. As, "Item in vj pellibus cervinis emptis pro libris predictis cooperiendis, xij s. iiij d." In another roll (xix Ric. ii. A. D. 1396.) of warden John Morys abovementioned, disbursements of diet for *SCRIPTORES* enter into the quarterly account of that article. "EXPENSE extraneorum supervenientium, iij *SCRIPTORUM*, viij serviencium, et x choristarum, ix l. iiij s. xd." The whole diet-expences this year, for strangers, writers, servants, and choristers, amount to 20l. 19s. 10d. In another roll of 1399, (Rot. Comp. Burff. 22 Ric. ii.) writers are in commons weekly with the regular members of the society.

writers and illuminators for this purpose. The finest and the latest specimen of this sort I have seen, is Cardinal Wolsey's *LECTIONARY*, now preserved at Christ-church in Oxford, a prodigious folio on vellum, written and embellished with great splendor and beauty by the most elegant artists, either for the use of his own private chapel, or for the magnificent chapel which he had projected for his college, and peculiarly characteristic of that prelate's predominant ideas of ecclesiastical pomp.

Wynkyn de Worde printed a *TRETISE OF MERLYN*, or his prophecies in verse, in 1529. Another appeared by John Hawkyngs, in 1533. Metrical and profane prophecies attributed to the magician Merlin, all originating from Geoffrey of Monmouth's historical romance, and of oriental growth, are numerous and various. Merlin's predictions were successively accommodated by the minstrel-poets to the politics of their own times. There are many among the Cotton manuscripts, both in French and English, and in other libraries*. Laurence Minot above-cited, who wrote about 1360, and in the northern dialect, has applied some of them to the numerous victories of Edward the third^y. As thus.

Men may rede in Romance^z ryght,
Of a grete clerke that MERLIN hight:
Ful many bokes er of him wreten,
Als thir clerkes wele may witten^a;
And zit^b in many prive nokes^c
May men find of Merlin bokes.
Merlin said thus with his his mouth,
Out of the North into the Sowth,

* See Geoffr. Monm. vii. 3. And Rob. Glouc. p. 132. 133. seq. 254. 256. Of the authority of Merlin's Prophecies in England in 1216, See Wykes's *CHRON.* sub ann. Merlin's Prophecies were printed in French at Paris, in 1498. And *MERLINI VITÆ ET PROPHETIÆ*, at Venice, 1554.

^y MS. GALB. E. ix. ut supr.

* In another place Minot calls the book on which his narrative is founded, the *ROMANCE*.

How Edward, als the Romence saies,
Held his sege before Calais.

^a As scholars well know.

^b And yet.

^c Privy nooks.

Suld cum a Bare^d over the se,
 That suld mak many men to fle;
 And in the se, he said, ful right,
 Suld he schew^e ful mekill myght:
 And in France he suld bigin^f
 To make tham wrath that are thare in:
 Untill the se his taile reche sale^g,
 All folk of France to mekill bale^h.
 Thus have I mater for to make
 For a nobill Princeⁱ sake.
 Help me, God, my wit is thin^k,
 Now LAURENCE MINOT will bigin.
 A Bore is brought on bankes bare^l,
 With ful batail bifor his brest,
 For John^m of France will he nocht spare
 In Normandy to take his rest.——
 At Cressy whan thai brak the brigⁿ,
 That saw Edward with both his ine^o;
 Than liked him no langer to lig^p,
 Ilk Inglis man on others rig^q;
 Over that watir er thai went^r,
 To batail er thai baldly big,
 With brade ax^s, and with bowes bent,
 With bent bowes thai war ful bolde,
 For to fell of^t the Frankish men.
 Thai gert^v them lig with cares cold.
 Full fari^w was fir Philip^x then:

^d Should come a Boar. This Boar is
king Arthur in Merlin's Prophecies.

^e Should he shew.

^f Begin.

^g His tail shall reach to the sea.

^h To the great destruction of the French.

ⁱ That is, king Edward the third.

^k Weak. Tenuis.

^m King John.

ⁿ Bridge.

^o Eyne. Eyes.

^p Lie idle.

^q The English ran over one another.
Puffed forward.

^r Froissart calls this the passage or ford
of Blanch taque. B. i. ch. cxxvii. Berners's
Tranil. fol. lxxiii. a.

^s Broad-ax. Battle-ax.

^t Fall upon.

^v Caused.

^w Sorry.

^x Philip of Valois, son of John king of
France.

He

He saw the town of Ferrum ^v bren ^z,
 And folk for ferd war fast fleand ^a :
 The teres he let ful rathly ^b ren
 Out of his eghen ^c, I understand.
 Than cum Philip, ful redy dight,
 Toward the toun with all his rowt ;
 With him come mani a kumly knight,
 And all umset ^e the Boar about :
 The Boar made them ful law to lout,
 And delt tham knobbes to thair mede ^d,
 He gert tham stumbell that war stowt.
 Thar helpid noather staf ne stede ^e.
 Stedes strong bileved still ^f
 Bifide Cressy opon the grene ^g.
 Sir Philip wanted all his will
 That was wele on his sembland ^h fene,
 With spere and schelde, and helmis schene ⁱ,
 Thai Bare than durst thai noght habide ^k.
 The king of Beme ^l was cant and kene ^m,
 Bot thaire he left both play and pride.
 Pride in prese ne prais I noght ⁿ.
 Omong thair princes proud in pall,
 Princes should be well bithoght ^o
 When kinges fuld them tell ^p counfaill call.

^v Perhaps Vernon.

^z Burn.

^a Flying for fear.

^b Quickly. Fast, run.

^c Eyes. ^e Befet. ^d Reward.

^e Lances and horses were now of no service.

^f Stood still. Blev. Sax. Chauc. TR.

CR. IV. 1357.

^g A plain. So in Minor's Siege of Tournay, MSS. ibid.

A Bore with brenis bright
 Es broght opon zowre grene,
 That as a semely sizht,
 With schilterouns faire and schene.

^h Countenance.

ⁱ Bright helmets.

^k They could no longer withstand the Boar.

^l John king of Bohemia. Ey Froissart he is called inaccurately the king of Be-haigne, or Charles of Luxemburgh. See Froissart, ut supr. fol. lxiv. b. The lord Charles of Bohemia, his son, was also in the battle and killed, being lately elected emperor. Hollinsh. iii. 372.

^m Gay. Alert.

ⁿ I cannot praise the mere pomp of royalty.

^o Advised. Prepared.

^p To.

The

The same boar, that is, Edward the third, is introduced by Minot as resisting the Scottish invasion in 1347, at Nevil's cross near Durham^r.

Sir David the Bruse^s
Was at distance,
When Edward the baliolfe^t,
Rade^u with his lance :

^r The reader will recollect, that this versification is in the structure of that of the LIVES OF THE SAINTS, where two lines are thrown into one. [See *supr.* Vol. ii. EM. ADD. at p. 14.] viz. VNDECIM MILLIA VIRGINUM. MSS. Coll. Trin. Oxon. 57.

Ellevene thousand virgines, that fair companie was,
Imartird wer for godis sone, ich wille telle that cas.
A kyng ther was in Bretaygne, Maur was his name,
A douzter he hadde that het Vrfé, a mayde of guod fame.
So fair woman me nyfte non, ne so guod in none poynte,
Cristene was al hire ken, swithe noble and queynte :
Of hire fairhede and guodnesse me told in eche fonde side,
That the word com into Engelonde, and elles wher wide.
A kyng ther was in Engelonde, man of gret power,
Of this maide he herde telle gret nobleize far and ner.

The minstrel, who used the perpetual return of a kind of plain chant, made his pause or close at every hemistich. In the same manner, the verses of the following poem were divided by the minstrel. MSS. Cott. Jul. V. fol. 175. Pergamen. [The transcript is not later than the year 1300.]

^a Went on.
^b His beard was a span broad, and shone like a peacock's plumage.
^c Head.
^d Eyes.

Als y yod on a Monday, by twene Wittingdon and Walle,
Me anc after brade way, a litel man y mette withalle,
The lest man that ever y fathe, to say owt her in boure other in halle,
His robe was nother grene ne gray, bot alle yt was of riche palle.
On me he cald and bade me bide, well still y floode ay little space ;
Fro Lanchester the Parke syde, then he come wel faire his pace :
I biheld that litell man, bi the strete als we gon gac^a,
His berde was syde ay large span, and glided als the fether of pae^b.
His heved^c was whyte as any snawe, his higehe^d were gret and grai, &c.
His robe was al golde biganne, well cristlik made i undurstande,
Botones asurd everwick ane, from his el-bouthe to his hande^e.

They enter a castle.

The bankers on the binkes lay^f, and faire lordes fette y fonde,
In ilk ay hirn y herd ay lay, and levedys southe me loud songe^g.

^s David Bruce, king of Scotland. See P. LANGTOFT, p. 116.

^t Warlike.

^u Rode.

^e Buttons, every one of them azure, from his elbow to his hand.
^f Cushions, or tapestry, on the benches laid.
^g In every corner I heard a Lay, and ladies, &c.

The

The north end of England,
 Tauched him to dance,
 When he was met on the more,
 With mekill mischance.
 Sir Philip the Valayce,
 May him not avance^a,
 The flowres that faire wer,
 Er^b fallen in France!
 The flowres er now fallen,
 That fers^c wer and fell,
 A Bare^d, with his bataille,
 Has done tham to dwell.
 Sir David the Bruse,
 Said he fulde fonde^e
 To ride thurgh all England,
 Wold he noght wonde^f:
 At the Westminster Hall,
 Sulde his stedes stonde,
 Whils oure king Edward
 War out of the londe^g.

Also in Edward's victory over the Spaniards in a sea-fight, in 1350, a part of Minot's general subject.

I wold noght spare for to speke,
 Wist I to spede,
 Of wight men with wapin^a,
 And worthly in wede.
 That now are driven to dale^b,
 And ded all thaire dede,
 Thai faile in the sea-gronde^c,

^a Could do him no service.
^c Are.
^d Fierce.
^e Boar.
^f Should attempt.

^f Wander in going.
^g MSS. ut supr. GALB. E. ix.
^a Active with weapons.
^b Sorrow.
^c Sea-bottom.

Fisches

Fifches for to fede !
 Fele^a Fifches thai fede,
 For all thaire grete fare^c,
 It was in the waniand^e
 That thai come thare.
 Thai failed furth in the Swin
 In a somers tyde,
 With trompès and taburnes^g,
 And mikell other pryde^h.

I have seen one of Merlin's PROPHESES, probably translated from the French, which begins thus.

Listeneth now to Merlin's saw,
 And I woll tell to awⁱ,
 What he wrat for men to come,
 Nother by greffe ne by plume^k.

The public pageantries of this reign are proofs of the growing familiarity and national diffusion of classical learning. I

^a Many.

^c Feasting.

^e Q. Waning of the Moon?

^g Tambourins. Tabours or drums. In Chaucer we have TABOURE, Fr. to drum.

^h MSS. ut supr.

ⁱ All.

^k I know not when this piece was written. But the word *greffe* is old French for *Graphium*, or *Stylus*. It is generally supposed, and it has been positively asserted by an able French antiquary, that the ancient Roman practice of writing with a style on waxen tablets, lasted not longer than the fifth century. Hearne also supposes that the pen had succeeded to the style long before the age of Alfred. LEL. ITIN. Vol. vii. PREF. p. xxi. I will produce an instance of this practice in England so late as the year 1395. In an account-roll of Winchester college, of that year, is the following disbursement. "Et in i tabula ceranda cum viridi cera pro

"intitulatione capellanorum et clericorum
 "Capelle ad missas et alia psallenda,
 "viii^d." This very curious and remarkable article signifies, that a tablet covered with green wax was kept in the chapel, for noting down with a style, the respective courses of daily or weekly portions of duty, alternately assigned to the officers of the choir. So far, indeed, from having ceased in the fifth century, it appears that this mode of writing continued throughout all the dark ages. Among many express proofs that might be produced of the centuries after that period, Du Cange cites these verses from a French metrical

^a Viz. "COMPUTUS magistri Johis Morys Cui-
 "todis a die Sabbati proxime post festum Annuncia-
 "tionis beate Marie anno regni Regis Ricardi secundi
 "post conquestum xvij^{mo}, ulque diem Veneris proxime
 "ante festum sancti Michaelis extime proxime sequens
 "anno regis predicti xvij^{mo}, vidit per xxvj septi-
 "manas." It is indorsed, "Computus primus post
 "ingressum in Collegium. Anno octavo post incep-
 "tionem Operis."

will select an instance, among others, from the shews exhibited with great magnificence at the coronation of queen Anne Boleyn, in the year 1533. The procession to Westminster abbey, began from the Tower; and the queen, in passing through Gracechurch street, was entertained with a representation of mount Parnassus. The fountain of Helicon, by a bold fiction unknown to the bards of antiquity, ran in four streams of Rhenish wine from a bason of white marble. On the summit of the mountain sat Apollo, and at his feet Calliope. On either side of the declivity were arranged four of the Muses, playing on their re-

romance, written about the year 1376.
Lat. GLOSS. V. GRAPHIUM^b.

Les uns se prennent a etrire,
Des greffes^c en tables de cire;
Les autres suivent la coustume
De fournir lettres a la plume.

Many ample and authentic records of the royal household of France, of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, written on waxen tablets, are still preserved. Waxen tablets were constantly kept in the French religious houses, for the same purpose as at Winchester college. Thus in the Ordinary of the Priour of saint Lo at Rouen, printed at Rouen, written about the year 1250. "Qui, ad missam, lectiones aut tractus dicturi sunt, in tabula cerea primitus recitentur." pag. 261. Even to this day, several of the collegiate bodies in France, more especially the chapter of the cathedral of Rouen, retain this usage of marking the successive rotation of the ministers of the choir. See the Sieur le Brun's VOYAGE LITURGIQUE, 1718. p. 275. The same mode of writing was used for registering the capitular acts of the monasteries in France. Du Cange, in reciting from an antient manuscript the *Signs* in-joined to the monks of the order of saint Victor at Paris, where the rule of silence was rigorously observed, gives us, among others, the tacit signals by which they called for the style and tablet. "Pro SIGNO

" *Grafi.*—Signo metalli præmissio, extenso
" pollice cum indice simula [simula] scri-
" bentem. Pro SIGNO Tabularum.—Manus
" ambas complica, et ita disjunge quasi
" aperiens Tabulas." GLOSS. ut supr. V.
SIGNA. tom. iii. p. 866. col. 2. edit. vet.
Among the implements of writing allowed to the Carthusians, *Tabule* and *Graphium* are enumerated. Statut. Antiq. CARTHUSIAN. 2 part. cap. xvi. §. 8. This, however, at Winchester college, is the only express specification which I have found of the practice, in the religious houses of England^d. Yet in many of our old collegiate establishments it seems to be pointed out by implication: and the article here extracted from the roll at Winchester college, explains the manner of keeping the following injunction in the Statutes of saint Elisabeth's college at Winchester, now destroyed, which is a direction of the same kind, and cannot be well understood without supposing a waxen tablet. These statutes were given in 1301. "Habeat itaque que idem præcentor unam Tabulam semper in capella appensam, in qua scribat quolibet die sabbati post prandium, et ordinet, qualem Missam quis eorum capellanorum in sequenti septimana debeat celebrare; quis qualem lectionem in crastino legere debeat; Et sic de cæteris divinis officiis in prædicta capella faciendis. Et sic cotidie post prandium ordinet idem præcentor de servicio

^b See *ibid.* STYLISONUS.
^c Styles. Lat. *Graphium*.

^d But see Wanley's account of the text of S. Chad CATAL. Codd. Anglo-Sax. p. 289. seq.

" *dici*

spective musical instruments. Under them were written epigrams and poesies in golden letters, in which every Muse praised the queen, according to her character and office. At the Conduit in Cornhill appeared the three Graces; before whom, with no great propriety, was the spring of *Grace* perpetually running wine. But when a conduit came in the way, a religious allusion was too tempting and obvious to be omitted. Before the spring, however, fate a poet, describing in metre the properties or functions of every Grace: and then each of these four Graces allot-

“diei sequentis: hoc diligentius observando, quod capellani Missam, ad quam die sabbati, ut præmittitur, intitulatur, per integram celebrent septimanam.” Dugd. MONAST. tom. iii. ECCLES. COLL. i. 10. Nothing could have been a more convenient method of temporary notation, especially at a time when parchment and paper were neither cheap nor common commodities, and of carrying on an account, which was perpetually to be obliterated and renewed: for the written surface of the wax being easily smoothed by the round or blunt end of the style, was soon again prepared for the admission of new characters. And among the Romans, the chief use of the style was for fugitive and occasional entries. In the same light, we must view the following parallel passage of the Ordination of bishop Wykeham’s sepulchral chantry, founded in Winchester cathedral, in the year 1404. “Die sabbati cujuslibet septimanæ futuræ, monachi prioratus nostri in ordine sacerdotum tali constituti, valentes et dispositi ad celebrandum, ordinentur et intulentur in Tabula seriatim ad celebrandum Missæ fas prædictas cotidie per septimanam tunc sequentem, &c.” B. Lowth’s WYKEHAM. Append. p. xxxi. edit. 1777. Without multiplying superfluous citations*, I think we may fairly conclude, that whenever a *Tabula pro Clericis intitulandis* occurs in the more antient rituals of our ecclesiastical fraternities, a PUGILLARE or

waxen tablet, and not a schedule of parchment or paper, is intended. The inquisitive reader, who wishes to see more foreign evidences of this mode of writing during the course of the middle ages, is referred to a Memoir drawn up with great diligence and research by M. L’Abbé Lebeuf. MEM. LITT. tom. xx. p. 267. edit. 4to.

The reasonings and conjectures of Wife and others, who have treated of the Saxon *ÆSTEL*, more particularly of those who contend that king Alfred’s *STYLE* is still in being at Oxford, may perhaps receive elucidation or correction from what is here casually collected on a subject, which needs and deserves a full investigation.

To a Note already labouring with its length I have only to add, that without supposing an allusion to this way of writing, it will be hard to explain the following lines in Shakespeare’s *TIMON OF ATHENS*, Act i. Sc. i.

——— My free drift
Halts not particularly, but moves itself
“In a wide sea of wax.”———

Why Shakespeare should here allude to this peculiar and obsolete fashion of writing, to express a poet’s design of describing general life, will appear, if we consider the freedom and facility with which it is executed. It is not yet, I think, discovered, on what original Shakespeare formed this drama.

* See Statut. Eccles. Cath. Lichf. Dugd. Mon. iii. p. 244. col. 2. 10, p. 247. col. 2. 20. Statut. Ec-

cles. Collegiat. de Tonge, ibid. ECCLES. COLL. p. 132. col. 2. 40.

ted in a short speech to the queen, the virtue or accomplishment over which she severally presided. At the Conduit in Cheapside, as my chronicler says, she was saluted with "a rich pageant full of melodie and song." In this pageant were Pallas, Juno, and Venus: before them stood Mercury, who presented to her majesty, in the name of the three goddesses, a golden ball or globe divided into three parts, signifying wisdom, riches, and felicity. At entering saint Paul's *gate*, an antient portal leading into the church-yard on the east, and long since destroyed, three ladies richly attired showered on her head wafers, in which were contained Latin distichs. At the eastern side of saint Paul's Church-yard, two hundred scholars of saint Paul's School, addressed her in chosen and apposite passages from the Roman poets, translated into English rhymes. On the leads of saint Martin's church stood a choir of boys and men, who sung, not spiritual hymns, but *new balads* in praise of her majesty. On the conduit without Ludgate, where the arms and angels had been *refreshed*, was erected a tower with four turrets, within each of which was placed a Cardinal Virtue, symbolically habited. Each of these personages in turn uttered an oration, promising to protect and accompany the queen on all occasions¹. Here we see the pagan history and mythology predominating in those spectacles, which were once furnished from the Golden Legend. Instead of saints, prophets, apostles, and confessors, we have Apollo, Mercury, and the Muses. Instead of religious canticles, and texts of scripture, which were usually introduced in the course of these ceremonies, we are entertained with profane poetry, translations from the classics, and occasional verses; with exhortations, not delivered by personified doctors of the church, but by the heathen divinities.

¹ Hall's CHRONICLE, fol. cexii. Among the Orations spoken to the Queen, is one too curious to be omitted. At Leadenhall sat saint Anne with her numerous progeny, and Mary Cleophas with her

four children. One of the children made "a goodlie oration to the queene, of the fruitfulness of saint Anne, and of her generation; trusting the like fruit should come of hir."

It

It may not be foreign to our purpose, to give the reader some distinct idea of the polite amusements of this reign, among which, the Masque, already mentioned in general terms, seems to have held the first place. It chiefly consisted of music, dancing, gaming, a banquet, and a display of grotesque personages and fantastic dresses. The performers, as I have hinted, were often the king, and the chief of the nobility of both sexes, who under proper disguises executed some preconcerted stratagem, which ended in mirth and good humour. With one of these shews, in 1530, the king formed a scheme to surprize cardinal Wolsey, while he was celebrating a splendid banquet at his palace of Whitehall^m. At night his majesty in a masque, with twelve more masquers all richly but strangely dressed, privately landed from Westminster at Whitehall stairs. At landing, several small pieces of canon were fired, which the king had before ordered to be placed on the shore near the house. The cardinal, who was separately seated at the banquet in the presence-chamber under the cloth of state, a great number of ladies and lords being seated at the side-tables, was alarmed at this sudden and unusual noise: and immediately ordered lord Sandys, the king's chamberlain, who was one of the guests, and in the secret, to enquire the reason. Lord Sandys brought answer, that thirteen foreign noblemen of distinction were just arrived, and were then waiting in the great hall below; having been drawn thither by the report of the cardinal's magnificent banquet, and of the beautiful ladies which were present at it. The cardinal ordered them immediately into the banquetting-room, to which they were conducted from the hall with twenty new torches and a concert of drums and fifes. After a proper refreshment, they requested in the French language to dance with the ladies, whom they kissed, and to play with them at mum-chanceⁿ; producing at the same time a great golden cup filled with many hundred crowns. Having played for sometime with the ladies, they de-

^m It then belonged to Wolsey.

ⁿ A game of hazard with dice.

signedly

signedly lost all that remained in the cup to the cardinal; whose sagacity was not easily to be deceived, and who now began, from some circumstances, to suspect one of them to be the king. On finding their plot in danger, they answered, "If your grace can point him out, he will readily discover himself." The cardinal pointed to a masque with a black beard, but he was mistaken, for it was sir Edward Nevil. At this, the king could not forbear laughing aloud; and pulling off his own and sir Edward Nevil's masque, convinced the cardinal, with much arch complaisance, that he had for once guessed wrong. The king and the masquers then retired into another apartment to change their apparel: and in the meantime the banquet was removed, and the table covered afresh with perfumed clothes. Soon afterwards the king, with his company, returned, and took his seat under the cardinal's canopy of state. Immediately two hundred dishes of the most costly cookery and confectionary were served up; the contrivance and success of the royal joke afforded much pleasant conversation, and the night was spent in dancing, dice-playing, *banketting and other triumphs*^o. The old chronicler Edward Hall, a cotemporary and a curious observer, acquaints us, that at Greenwich, in 1512, "on the daie of the Epiphanie at night, the king with eleven others was disguised after the maner of Italic, called a Maske, a thing not seene before in England: they were appalled in garments long and broad, wrought all with gold, with visors and caps of gold. And after the banket doone, these maskers came in, with six gentlemen disguised in silke, bearing staffe-torches and desired the ladies to danse; some were content, and some refused; and after they had danfed and communed together, as the fashion of the maske is, they tooke their leave and departed, and so did the queene and all the ladies^p."

I do not find that it was a part of their diversion in these entertainments to display humour and character. Their chief aim

^o Hollinsh. CHRON. iii. 921. seq. ^p CHRON. fol. xv. [See supr. Vol. i. p. 239.]

seems

seems to have been, to surprize, by the ridiculous and exaggerated oddity of the visors, and by the singularity and splendor of the dresses. Every thing was out of nature and propriety. Frequently the Masque was attended with an exhibition of some gorgeous machinery, resembling the wonders of a modern pantomime. For instance, in the great hall of the palace, the usual place of performance, a vast mountain covered with tall trees arose suddenly, from whose opening caverns issued hermits, pilgrims, shepherds, knights, damsels, and gypsies, who being regaled with spices and wine danced a morisco, or morris-dance. They were then again received into the mountain, which with a symphony of rebecs and recorders closed its caverns; and tumbling to pieces, was replaced by a ship in full sail, or a castle besieged. To be more particular. The following device was shewn in the hall of the palace at Greenwich. A castle was reared, with numerous towers, gates, and battlements; and furnished with every military preparation for sustaining a long siege. On the front was inscribed *Le fortresse dangereux*. From the windows looked out six ladies, cloathed in the richest russet sattin, "laid all over with leaves of gold, and every one knit
"with laces of blew silk and gold, on their heads coifs and caps
"all of golde." This castle was moved about the hall; and when the queen had viewed it for a time, the king entered the hall with five knights, in embroidered vestments, spangled and plated with gold, of the most curious and costly workmanship. They assaulted the castle; and the six ladies, finding them to be champions of redoubted prowess, after a parley, yielded their perilous fortress, descended, and danced with their assailants. The ladies then led the knights into the castle, which immediately vanished, and the company retired^s. Here we see the representation of an action. But all these magnificent mummeries, which were their evening-amusements on festivals, notwithstanding a parley, which my historian calls a *communication*,

^s Hollinsh. iii, 812.

is here mentioned, were yet in dumb shew', and without dialogue.

But towards the latter part of Henry's reign, much of the old cumbersome state began to be laid aside. This I collect from a set of new regulations given to the royal household about the year 1526, by cardinal Wolfey. In the Chapter *For keeping the Hall and ordering of the Chapel*, it is recited, that by the frequent intermission and disuse of the solemnities of dining and supping in the great hall of the palace, the proper officers had almost forgot their duty, and the manner of conducting that very long and intricate ceremonial. It is therefore ordered, that when his majesty is not at Westminster, and with regard to his palaces in the country, the formalities of the Hall, which ought not entirely to fall into desuetude, shall be at least observed, when he is at Windsor, Beaulieu, or Newhall*, in Essex, Richmond, Hampton-court, Greenwich, Eltham, and Woodstock. And that at these places only, the whole choir of the chapel shall attend. This attempt to revive that which had begun to cease from the nature of things, and from the growth of new manners, perhaps had but little or no lasting effect. And with respect to the Chapel, my record adds, that when the king is on journies or progresses, only six singing boys and six gentlemen of the choir shall make a part of the royal retinue; who "daylie in absence
" of *the residue* of the chapel shall have a Masse of our Ladie
" before noon, and on Sondaies and holidiaies, masse of the day
" besides our Lady-masse, and an anthempne in the afternoone :

* But at a most sumptuous Disguising in 1519, in the hall at Greenwich, the figure of FAME is introduced, who, "in French, declared the meaning of the trees, the " rocke, and turneie." But as this shew was a political compliment, and many foreigners present, an explanation was necessary. See Hall, CHRON. fol. lxxvi. This was in 1512. But in the year 1509, a more rational evening-amusement took place in the Hall of the old Westminster-palace, several foreign embassadors being present.

" After supper, his grace [the king] with
" the queene, lords, and ladies, came into
" the White Hall, which was hanged
" richlie; the hall was scaffolded and rail-
" ed on all parts. There was an ENTER-
" LUBE of the gentlemen of his chapel
" before his grace, and diverse freshe
" songes." Hall, CHRON. fol. xi. xii. [See
supr. ii. 204.]

* A new house built by Henry the eighth. Hollinsh, CHRON. iii. 852.

" for

“ for which purpose, no *great carriage* of either vestiments or “ bookes shall require .” Henry never seems to have been so truly happy, as when he was engaged in one of these progresses : in other words, moving from one seat to another, and enjoying his ease and amusements in a state of royal relaxation. This we may collect from a curious passage in Hollinhead ; who had pleased and perhaps informed us less, had he never deserted the dignity of the historian. “ From thence the whole court removed to “ Windsor, then beginning his progresse, and exercising himselfe “ dailie in shooting, singing, dancing, wrestling, casting of the “ barre, plaieing at the recorders, flute, virginals, in setting of “ songes, and making of ballades. — And when he came to “ Oking² there were kept both justes turneies .” I make no apology for these seeming digressions. The manners and the poetry of a country are so nearly connected, that they mutually throw light on each other.

The same connection subsists between the state of poetry and of the arts ; to which we may now recall the reader's attention with as little violation of our general subject.

We are taught in the mythology of the antients, that the three Graces were produced at a birth. The meaning of the fable is, that the three most beautiful imitative arts were born and grew up together. Our poetry now beginning to be divested of its monastic barbarism, and to advance towards elegance, was accompanied by proportionable improvements in Painting and Music. Henry employed many capital painters, and endeavoured to invite Raphael and Titian into England. Instead of allegorical tapestry, many of the royal apartments were adorned with historical pictures. Our familiarity with the manners of Italy, and affectation of Italian accomplishments, influenced the tones and en-

¹ “ ORDENAUNCES made for the kinges “ household and chambres.” Bibl. Bodl. MSS. LAUD. K. 48. fol. It is the original on vellum. In it, Sir Thomas More

is mentioned as Chancellour of the Duchie of Lancaster.

² Woking in Surrey, near Guildford, a royal seat.

³ Chron. iii. 806.

riched the modulation of our musical composition. Those who could read the sonnets of Petrarch must have relished the airs of Palestrina. At the same time, Architecture, like Milton's lion *pawing to get free*, made frequent efforts to disentangle itself from the massy incumbrances of the Gothic manner; and began to catch the correct graces, and to copy the true magnificence, of the Grecian and Roman models. Henry was himself a great builder; and his numerous edifices, although constructed altogether on the ancient system, are sometimes interspersed with chaste ornaments and graceful mouldings, and often marked with a legitimacy of proportion, and a purity of design, before unattempted. It was among the literary plans of Leland, one of the most classical scholars of this age, to write an account of Henry's palaces, in imitation of Procopius, who is said to have described the palaces of the emperor Justinian. Frequent symptoms appeared, that perfection in every work of taste was at no great distance. Those clouds of ignorance which yet remained, began now to be illuminated by the approach of the dawn of truth.

S E C T.