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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 XXXVI. William Forest's poems. His Queen Catharine, an elegant manuscript, contains anecdotes of Henry's divorce. He collects and preserves antient music. Puritans oppose the study of the ...

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S E C T. XXXVI.

AMONG Antony Wood's manuscripts in the Bodleian library at Oxford, I find a poem of considerable length written by William Forrest, chaplain to queen Mary^a. It is entitled, "A true and most notable History of a right noble and famous Lady produced in Spayne entitled the second GRESIELD, practised not long out of this time in much part tragedious as delectable both to hearers and readers." This is a panegyric history in octave rhyme, of the life of queen Catharine, the first queen of king Henry the eighth. The poet compares Catharine to patient Grisild, celebrated by Petrarch and Chaucer, and Henry to earl Walter her husband^b. Catharine had certainly the patience and conjugal compliance of Grisild: but Henry's cruelty was not, like Walter's, only artificial and assumed. It is dedicated to queen Mary: and Wood's manuscript, which was once very superbly bound and embossed, and is elegantly written on vellum, evidently appears to have been the book presented by the author to her majesty. Much of its antient finery is tarnished: but on the brass bosses at each corner is still discernible AVE, MARIA GRATIA PLENA. At the end

^a In folio. MSS. Cod. A. Wood. Num. 2. They were purchased by the university after Wood's death.

^b The affecting story of PATIENT GRISILD seems to have long kept up its celebrity. In the books of the Stationers, in 1565, Owen Rogers has a licence to print "a ballat intituled the songe of pacyent Greffell vnto hyr make." REGISTER. A.

fol. 132. b. Two ballads are entered in 1565, "to the tune of pacyente Greffell." Ibid. fol. 135. a. In the same year, T. Colwell has licence to print, "The history of meke and pacyent Greffell." Ibid. fol. 139. a. Colwell has a second edition of this history in 1568. Ibid. fol. 177. a. Instances occur much lower.

is this colophon. "Here endeth the Historye of Gryfilde the
 "second, dulle meanyng Queene Catharine mother to our most
 "dread soveraigne Lady queene Mary, fynysched the xxv day
 "of June, the yeare of owre Lorde 1558. By the symple and
 "unlearned Syr Wylliam Forrest preeiste, propria manu." The poem, which consists of twenty chapters, contains a zealous condemnation of Henry's divorce: and, I believe, preserves some anecdotes, yet apparently misrepresented by the writer's religious and political bigotry, not extant in any of our printed histories. Forrest was a student at Oxford, at the time when this notable and knotty point of casuistry prostituted the learning of all the universities of Europe, to the gratification of the capricious amours of a libidinous and implacable tyrant. He has recorded many particulars and local incidents of what passed in Oxford during that transaction^c. At the end of the poem is a metrical ORATION CONSOLATORY, in six leaves, to queen Mary.

In the British Museum is another of Forrest's poems, written in two splendid folio volumes on vellum, called "The tragedious troubles of the most chaste and innocent Joseph, son to the holy patriarch Jacob," and dedicated to Thomas Howard duke of Norfolk^d. In the same repository is another of his pieces, never printed, dedicated to king Edward the sixth, "A notable warke called The PLEASANT POESIE OF PRINCELIE PRACTISE, composed of late by the simple and unlearned sir William Forrest priest, much part collected out of a booke entitled the GOVERNANCE OF NOBLEMEN, which booke the wyse philosopher Aristotle wrote to his disciple Alexander

^c In the first chapter, he thus speaks of the towardlines of the princess Catharine's younger years.

With stoole and needyl she was not to seeke,
 And other practyseingis for ladies meete;
 To pastyme at tables, ticktack, or glecke,
 Cardys, dyce, &c.

He adds, that she was a pure virgin when married to the king: and that her

first husband prince Henry, on account of his tender years, never slept with her.

^d MSS. REG. 18 C. xiii. It appears to have once belonged to the library of John Theyer of Cooperhill near Gloucester. There is another copy in University-college Library, MSS. G. 7. with gilded leaves. This, I believe, once belonged to Robert earl of Aylesbury. Pr. "In Ca-naan that country opulent."

" the

“ the Great .” The book here mentioned is Ægidius Romanus de REGIMINE PRINCIPIUM, which yet retained its reputation and popularity from the middle age^o. I ought to have observed before, that Forrest translated into English metre fifty of David’s Psalms, in 1551, which are dedicated to the duke of Somerset, the Protector². Hence we are led to suspect, that our author could accommodate his faith to the reigning powers. Many more of his manuscript pieces both in prose and verse, all professional and of the religious kind, were in the hands of Robert earl of Ailesbury¹. Forrest, who must have been living at Oxford, as appears from his poem on queen Catharine, so early as the year 1530, was in reception of an annual pension of six pounds from Christ-church in that university, in the year 1555¹. He was eminently skilled in music: and with much diligence and expence, he collected the works of the most excellent English composers, that were his cotemporaries. These, being the choicest compositions, of John Taverner of Boston, organist of Cardinal-college now Christ-church at Oxford, John Merbeck who first digested our present church-service from the notes of the Roman missal, Fairfax, Tye, Sheppard, Norman, and others, falling after Forrest’s death into the possession of doctor William Hether, founder of the musical praxis and professorship at

^o MSS. REG. 17 D. iii. In the Preface twenty-seven chapters are enumerated: but the book contains only twenty-four.

¹ See supr. vol. ii. p. 39. Not long before, Robert Copland, the printer, author of the TESTAMENT OF JULIAN OF BRENTFORD, translated from the French and printed, “The SECRETE of SECRETES of Aristotle, with the governayle of princes and euerie manner of estate, with rules of health for bodie and soule.” Lond. 1528. 4to. To what I have before said of Robert Copland as a poet (supr. vol. ii. p. 300.) may be added, that he prefixed an English copy of verses to the *Mirvour of the Church of saynt Austine of Abyngdon*, &c. Printed by himself, 1521.

4to. Another to Andrew Chertsey’s *PASSIO DOMINI*, ibid. 1521. 4to. (See supr. p. 80.) He and his brother William printed several romances before 1530.

² MSS. REG. 17 A. xxi.

³ Wood, *ATH. OXON.* i. 124. Fox says, that he paraphrased the PATER NOSTER in English verse, Pr. “Our Father which in heaven doth sit.” Also the TE DEUM, as a thanksgiving hymn for queen Mary, Pr. “O God thy name we magnific.” Fox, *MART.* p. 1139. edit. vet.

¹ MSS. Le Neve. From a long chapter in his *KATHARINE*, about the building of Christ-church and the regimen of it, he appears to have been of that college.

at Oxford in 1623, are now fortunately preserved at Oxford, in the archives of the music-school assigned to that institution.

In the year 1554, a poem of two sheets, in the spirit and stanza of Sternhold, was printed under the title, "THE VNGODLINESS OF THE HETHNICKE GODDES, or *The Down-fall of Diana of the Ephejians*, by J. D. an exile for the word, late a minister in London, MDLIV^k." I presume it was printed at Geneva, and imported into England with other books of the same tendency, and which were afterwards suppressed by a proclamation. The writer, whose arguments are as weak as his poetry, attempts to prove, that the customary mode of training youths in the Roman poets encouraged idolatry and pagan superstition. This was a topic much laboured by the puritans. Prynne, in that chapter of his *HISTRIOMASTIX*, where he exposes "the obscenity, ribaldry, amorousness, HEATHENISHNESSE, and prophanesse, of most play-bookes, Arcadias, and fained histories that are now so much in admiration," acquaints us, that the infallible leaders of the puritan persuasion in the reign of queen Elizabeth, among which are two bishops, have solemnly prohibited all christians, "to pen, to print, to sell, to read, or school-masters and others to teach, any amorous wanton Play-bookes, Histories, or Heathen authors, especially Ovid's wanton Epistles and Bookes of love, Catullus, Tibullus, Propertius, Martiall, the Comedies of Plautus, Terence, and other such amorous bookes, favoring either of Pagan Gods, of Ethnicke rites and ceremonies, of scurrility, amorousness, and prophanesse^l." But the classics were at length condemned by a much higher authority. In the year 1582, one Christopher Ocland, a schoolmaster of Cheltenham, published two poems in Latin hexameters, one entitled *ANGLORUM PRÆLIA*, the other *ELIZABETHA^m*. To these

^k Bl. Lett. 12mo.

^l Pag 913. 916.

^m Londini. Apud Rad. Neubery ex assignatione Henrici Bynneman typographi. Anno 1582. Cum priv. 12mo. The whole

title is this, "ANGLORUM PRÆLIA ab A. D. 1327, anno nimirum primo inclitissimi principis Edwardi eius nominis tertii, usque ad A. D. 1558, carmine summam perstricta. ITEM *De paratissimo*"

poems, which are written in a low style of Latin versification, is prefixed an edict from the lords of privy council, signed, among others, by Cowper bishop of Lincoln, Lord Warwick, Lord Leicester, sir Francis Knollys, sir Christopher Hatton, and sir Francis Walsingham, and directed to the queen's ecclesiastical commissioners, containing the following passage. "Forasmuche as the subject or matter of this booke is such, as is worthe to be read of all men, and especially in common schooles, where diuers HEATHEN POETS are ordinarily read and taught, from which the youth of the realme doth rather receiue infection in manners, than aduancement in uertue: in place of some of which poets, we thinke this Booke fit to read and taught in the grammar schooles: we haue therefore thought, as wel for the encouraging the said Ocklande and others that are learned, to bestowe their trauell and studies to so good purposes, as also for the benefit of the youth and the removing of such lasciuious poets as are commonly read and taught in the saide grammar-schooles (the matter of this booke being heroicall and of good instruction) to praye and require you vpon the sight hereof, as by our special order, to write your letters vnto al the Bishops throughout this realme, requiring them to giue commaundement, that in al the gramer and free schooles within their seuerall diocesses, the said Booke de ANGLORUM PRÆLIIS, and

"fimo Angliæ statu, imperante Elizabetha, compendiosa Narratio. Authore CHRIS- TOPHORO OCLANDO, primo Scholæ Southwarkiensis prope Londinum, dein Cheltenhamensis, quæ sunt a serenissima sua majestate fundata, moderatore. Hæc duo poemata, tam ob argumenti gravitatem, quam carminis facilitatem, nobis summi regis majestatis consiliarii in omnibus regni scholis prælegenda pueris præscripserunt. Hic Alexandri Neulli KERRUM, tum propter argumenti similitudinem, tum propter orationis elegantiam, adiunximus. Londini, &c." Prefixed to the ANGLORUM PRÆLIA is a Latin elegiac copy

by Thomas Newton of Cheshire: to the ELIZABETHA, which is dedicated by the author to the learned lady Mildred Burleigh, two more; one by Richard Mulcaster the celebrated master of Merchant-taylor's school, the other by Thomas Watson an elegant writer of sonnets. Our author was a very old man, as appears by the last of these copies. Whence, says bishop Hall, SAT. iii. B. iv.

Or cite olde Ocland's verse, how they did wield
The wars, in Turwin or in Turney field.

"peaceable

“ peaceable Gouernment of hir majestie, [the ELIZABETHA,] “ may be in place of some of the heathen poets receyued, and “ publicly read and taught by the scholemasters ⁿ.” With such abundant circumspection and solemnity, did these profound and pious politicians, not suspecting that they were acting in opposition to their own principles and intentions, exert their endeavours to bring back barbarism, and to obstruct the progress of truth and good sense ^o.

Hollingshead mentions Lucas Shepherd of Colchester, as an eminent poet of queen Mary's reign ^p. I do not pretend to any great talents for decyphering; but I presume, that this is the same person who is called by Bale, from a most injudicious affectation of Latinity, Lucas OPILIO. Bale affirms, that his contemporary, Opilio, was a very facetious poet: and means to pay him a still higher compliment in pronouncing him not inferior even to Skelton for his rhimes ^q. It is unlucky, that Bale, by disguising his name, should have contributed to conceal this writer so long from the notice of posterity, and even to counteract his own partiality. Lucas Shepherd, however, appears to have been nothing more than a petty pamphleteer in the cause of Calvinism, and to have acquired the character of a poet from a metrical translation of some of David's Psalms about the year 1554. Bale's narrow prejudices are well known. The puritans never suspected that they were greater bigots than the papists. I believe one or two of Shepherd's pieces in prose are among bishop Tanner's books at Oxford.

Bale also mentions metrical English versions of ECCLESIASTES, of the histories of ESTHER, SUSANNAH, JUDITH, and of the TESTAMENT OF THE TWELVE PATRIARCHS, printed and written about this period, by John Pullaine, one of the original students of Christ-church at Oxford, and at length archdeacon of Colchester. He was chaplain to the duchess of

^o Signat. A. ij. Then follows an order from the ecclesiastical commissioners to all the bishops for this purpose.

^p See supr. vol. ii. 461.

^q CHRON. vol. iii. p. 1168.

^r Par. post. p. 109.

Suffolk;

Suffolk; and, either by choice or compulsion, imbibed ideas of reformation at Geneva¹. I have seen the name of John Pullayne, affixed in manuscript to a copy of an anonymous version of Solomon's Song, or "Salomon's balads in metre," abovementioned², in which is this stanza.

She is so young in Christes truth,
That yet she hath no teates;
She wanteth brestes, to feed her youth
With sound and perfect meates³.

There were numerous versions of Solomon's Song before the year 1600: and perhaps no portion of scripture was selected with more propriety to be clothed in verse. Beside those I have mentioned, there is, "The SONG OF SONGS, that is the most excellent Song which was Solomon's, translated out of the Hebrue into Englishe meater with as little libertie in departing from the wordes as anie plaine translation in prose can vse, and interpreted by a short commentarie." For Richard Schilders, printer to the states of Zealand, I suppose at Middleburgh, 1587, in duodecimo. Nor have I yet mentioned Solomon's Song, translated from English prose into English verse by Robert Fletcher, a native of Warwickshire, and a member of Merton college, printed at London, with notes, in 1586⁴. The CANTICLES in English verse are among the lost poems of Spenser⁵. Bishop Hall, in his nervous and elegant fatires

¹ Bale ix. 83. Wood, ATH. OXON. i. 148.

² "Imprinted at London by William Baldwine seruant with Edwarde Whitchurch." Nor date, nor place. Cum privileg. 4to. This WILLIAM BALDWIN is perhaps Baldwin the poet, the contributor to the MIRROR OF MAGISTRATES. At least that the poet Baldwin was connected with Whitchurch the printer, appears from a book printed by Whitchurch, quoted above, "A treatise of mo-

ral philosophic contayning the Sayings of the Wise, gathered and Englyshed by Wylliam Baldwyn, 20 of January, "MDXLVII." Compositors at this time often were learned men: and Baldwin was perhaps occasionally employed by Whitchurch, both as a compositor and an author."

³ SIGNAT. m. iij.

⁴ In duodecimo.

⁵ A metrical commentary was written on the CANTICLES by one Dudley Fenner,

printed in 1597, meaning to ridicule and expose the spiritual poetry with which his age was overwhelmed, has an allusion to a metrical English version of Solomon's Song". Having mentioned SAINT PETER'S COMPLAINT, written by Robert Southwell, and printed in 1595, with some other religious effusions of that author, he adds,

Yea, and the prophet of the heavenly lyre,
Great Solomon, singes in the English quire;
And is become a new-found Sonnetist,
Singing his love, the holie spouse of Christ,
Like as she were some light-skirts of the rest*,
In mightiest inkhornismes he can thither wrest.
Ye Sion Muses shall by my dear will,
For this your zeal and far-admired skill,
Be straight transported from Jerusalem,
Unto the holy house of Bethlehem.

It is not to any of the versions of the CANTICLES which I have hitherto mentioned, that Hall here alludes. His censure is levelled at "The Poem of Poems, or SION'S MUSE. Contayning the diuine Song of King Salomon deuided into eight

ner, a puritan, who retired to Middleburgh to enjoy the privilege and felicity of preaching endless sermons without molestation. Middleb. 1587. 8vo.

* B. i. SAT. viii. But for this abuse of the diuine sonnetters, Marston not inelegantly retorts against Hall. CERTAYNE SATYRES, Lond. for E. Matts, 1598. 12mo. SAT. iv.

Come daunce, ye stumbling Satyres, by his side,

If he list once the SYON MUSE deride.

Ye Granta's white Nymphs come, and with you bring

Some sillabub, whilst he does sweetly sing
Gainst Peters Teares, and Maries mouing
Moane;

And like a fierce-enraged boare doth foame

At Sacred Sonnets, O daring hardiment!
At Bargas sweet Semaines^a raile impudent.
At Hopkins, Sternhold, and the Scottish
king,

At all Translators that do strive to bring
That stranger language to our vulgar
tongue, &c.

* Origen and Jerom say, that the youth of the Jews were not permitted to read SOLOMON'S SONG till they were thirty years of age, for fear they should inflame their passions by drawing the spiritual allegory into a carnal sense. Orig. Homil. in CANTIC. CANT. apud Hieronymi Opp. Tom. viii. p. 122. And Opp. Origen. ii. fol. 68. Hieron. Proem. in Ezech. iv. p. 330. D.

^a De Bargas's Divine Weeks.

“ be

“ Eclogues. *Bramo assai, poco spero, nulla chieggio.* At London, “ printed by James Roberts for Mathew Lownes, and are to “ be solde at his shop in faint Dunstones church-yarde, 1596^y.” The author signs his dedication, which is addressed to the *sacred virgin, diuine* mistress Elizabeth Sydney, sole daughter of the *euer admired* sir Philip Sydney, with the initials J. M. These initials, which are subscribed to many pieces in ENGLAND'S HELICON, signify Jarvis, or Iarvis, Markham^z.

Although the translation of the scriptures into English rhyme was for the most part an exercise of the enlightened puritans, the recent publication of Sternhold's psalms taught that mode of writing to many of the papists, after the sudden revival of the mass under queen Mary. One Richard Beearde, parson of faint Mary-hill in London, celebrated the accession of that queen in a *godly psalm* printed in 1553^a. Much about the same time, George Marshall wrote *A compendious treatise in metre, declaring the first original of sacrifice and of building churches and aultars, and of the first receiving the cristen faith here in England*, dedicated to George Wharton esquire, and printed at London in 1554^b.

In 1556, Miles Hoggard, a famous butt of the protestants, published “ a shorte treatise in meter vpon the cxxix psalme of “ David called *De profundis*. Compiled and fet forth by Miles “ Huggarde seruant to the quenes maiestic^c.” Of the opposite or heretical persuasion was Peter Moone, who wrote a metrical tract on the abuses of the mass, printed by John Oswen at

^y 16mo.

^z Some of the prefatory Sonnets to Jarvis Markham's poem, entitled, “ The most honorable Tragedie of sir Richard Grin-uile knight,” (At London, printed by J. Roberts for Richard Smith, 1595. 16mo.) are signed J. M. But the dedication, to Charles lord Montioy, has his name at length.

^a In duodecimo, viz.

A godly psalm of Mary queen, which brought us comfort all,
Thro God whom we of deuty praise that give her foes a fall.

With psalm-tunes in four parts. See Strype's ELIZ. p. 202. Newc. REP. i. 451. See what is said above of Miles Hoggard.

^b In quarto. Bl. Lett.

^c In quarto. Bl. Lett. for R. Caley. Jan. 4. with Grafton's copartment.

Ipswich, about the first year of queen Mary^e. Nearly the same period, a translation of ECCLESIASTES into rhyme by Oliver Starkey occurs in bishop Tanner's library, if I recollect right, together with his Translation of Sallust's two histories. By the way, there was another vernacular versification of ECCLESIASTES by Henry Lok, or Lock, of whom more will be said hereafter, printed in 1597. This book was also translated into Latin hexameters by Drant, who will occur again in 1572. The ECCLESIASTES was versified in English by Spenser.

I have before mentioned the SCHOOL-HOUSE OF WOMEN, a satire against the fair sex^e. This was answered by Edward More of Hambledon in Buckinghamshire, about the year 1557, before he was twenty years of age. It required no very powerful abilities either of genius or judgment to confute such a groundless and malignant invective. More's book is entitled, The DEFENCE OF WOMEN, especially English women, against a book intituled the SCHOOL-HOUSE OF WOMEN. It is dedicated to Master William Page, secretary to his neighbour and patron sir Edward Hoby of Bissham-abbey, and was printed at London in 1560^f.

^e A short treatise of certayne thinges abused,
In the popish church long used;
But now abolished to our consolation,
And God's word advanced, the light of
our salvation.

In eight leaves, quarto, Bl. Lett. Fox mentions one William Punt, author of a ballade made against the Pope and Popery under Edward the sixth, and of other tracts of the same tendency under queen Mary. MARTYR. p. 1605. edit. vet. Punt's printer was William Hyll at the sign of the hill near the west door of saint Pauls. See in Strype, an account of Underhill's sufferings in 1553, for writing a ballad against the Queen, he "being a witty and facetious gentleman." ECCL. MEM. iii. 60, 61. ch. vi. Many rhimes and Ballads were written against the Spanish match, in 1554. Strype, *ibid.* p. 127. ch. xiv.

Fox has preserved some hymns in Sternhold's metre sung by the protestant martyrs in Newgate, in 1555. MART. fol. 1539. edit. 1597. vol. ii.

^e Supr. p. 142.

^f In quarto. PRINCIP.

"Venus unto thee for help, good Lady do I call."

Our author, if I remember right, has furnished some arguments to one William Heale of Exeter college; who wrote, in 1609, AN APOLOGY FOR WOMAN, in opposition to Dr. Gager abovementioned, who had maintained at the Public Act, that it was lawful for husbands to beat their wives. Wood says, that Heale "was always esteemed an ingenious man, but weak, as being too much devoted to the female sex." ATH. OXON. i. 314.

With

With the catholic liturgy, all the pageantries of popery were restored to their antient splendour by queen Mary. Among others, the procession of the boy-bishop was too popular a mummery to be forgotten. In the preceding reign of king Edward the sixth, Hugh Rhodes, a gentleman or musician of the royal chapel, published an English poem with the title, *THE BOKE OF NURTUR for men seruants and children, or of the gouernaunce of youth*, with STANS PUER AD MENSAM². In the following reign of Mary, the same poet printed a poem consisting of thirty-six octave stanzas, entitled, "The SONG of the CHYLD-BYSSHOP, as it was songe^h before the queenes maiestie in her priuie chamber at her manour of saynt James in the ffeeldes on saynt Nicholas day and Innocents day this yeare nowe present, by the chylde byshope of Poules churchⁱ with his company. LONDINI, in ædibus Johannis Cawood typographi reginæ, 1555. Cum privilegio, &c^k." By admitting this spectacle into her presence, it appears that her majesty's bigotry condescended to give countenance to the most ridiculous and unmeaning ceremony of the Roman ritual. As to the song itself, it is a fulsome panegyric on the queen's devotion: in which she is compared to Judith, Esther, the queen of Sheba, and the

² In quarto. Bl. Lett. P. x. Prol. "There is few things to be understood." The poem begins, "Alle ye that wolde learn and wolde be called wyse."

^h In the church of York, no chorister was to be elected boy-bishop, "nisi habuerit claram vocem puerilem." Registr. Capituli. Eccles. Ebor. sub ann. 1390. MS. ut supr.

ⁱ In the old statutes of saint Pauls, are many orders about this mock-solemnity. One is, that the canon, called STAGIARIUS, shall find the boy-bishop his robes, and "equitatum honestum." MS. fol. 86. Diceto dean. In the statutes of Salisbury cathedral, it is orderd, that the boy-bishop shall not make a feast, "sed in domo communi cum sociis conversetur, nisi cum ut Choristam, ad domum Canonici, causti

"solatii, ad mensam contigerit evocari." Sub anno 1319. Tit. xlv. De STATU CHORISTARUM MS.

^k In quarto. Bl. Lett. Strype says, that in 1556, "On S. Nicolas even, Saint Nicolas, that is a boy habited like a bishop in pontificalibus went abroad in most parts of London, singing after the old fashion, and was received with many ignorant but well-disposed people into their houses; and had as much good cheer as ever was wont to be had before." ECCLES. MEM. iii. 310. ch. xxxix. See also p. 387. ch. l. In 1554, Nov. 13. an edict was issued by the bishop of London, to all the clergy of his diocese, to have a boy-bishop in procession, &c. Strype, ibid. p. 202. ch. xxv. See also p. 205, 206. ch. xxvi.

virgin Mary¹. This show of the boy-bishop, not so much for its superstition as its levity and absurdity, had been formally abrogated by king Henry the eighth, fourteen years before, in the year 1542, as appears by a "Proclamation devised by the Kings Majesty by the advys of his Highness Counsel the xxii day of Julie, 33 Hen. viij, commanding the ffeasts of faint Luke, faint Mark, faint Marie Magdalene, Inuention of the Crosse, and faint Laurence, which had been abrogated, should be nowe againe celebrated and kept holie days," of which the following is the concluding clause. "And where as heretofore dyuers and many superstitious and chyldysh obseruances have be vsed, and yet to this day are obserued and kept, in many and sundry partes of this realm, as vpon faint Nicholas",

¹ In a poem by Llodowyke Lloyd, in the *Paradise of daintie Deuises*, (edit. 1585.) on the death of sir Edward Saunders, queen Elisabeth is complimented much in the same manner. NUM. 32. SIGNAT. E. 2.

— O sacred seate, where Saba sage doth sit,
Like Sufan found, like Sara sad, with Hester's mace in hand,
With Iudithes sword, Bellona-like, to rule this noble land.

^m In Barnabie Googe's *POPISH KINGDOM*, a translation from Naogeorgius's *REGNUM ANTICHRISTI*, fol. 55. Lond. 1570. 4to.

Saint Nicholas monie vsde to give to maydens secrete lie,
Who that be still may vse his wonted liberalitie:
The mother all their children on the Eve do cause to fast,
And when they euerie one at night in senselesse sleepe are cast,
Both apples, nuts and payres they bring, and other things beside,
As cappes, and shoes, and petticoates, with kertles they hide,
And in the morning found, they say, "Saint Nicholas this brought, &c."

See a curious passage in bishop Fisher's

Sermon of the MONTHS MINDE of Margaret countess of Richmond. Where it is said, that she praised to S. Nicholas the patron and helper of all true maydens, when nine years old, about the choice of a husband: and that the saint appeared in a vision, and announced the earl of Richmond. Edit. Baker, pag. 8. There is a precept issued to the sheriff of Oxford from Edward the first, in 1305, to prohibit tournaments being intermixed with the sports of the scholars on faint Nicholas's day, Rot. Claus. 33 Edw. i. memb. 2.

I have already given traces of this practice in the colleges of Winchester and Eton. [see sup. vol. ii. p. 389.] To which I here add another. Registr. Coll. Wint. sub ann. 1427. "Crux deaurata de cupro [Copper] cum Baculo, pro EPISCOPO PVERORUM." But it appears that the practice subsisted in common grammar-schools. "Hoc anno, 1464, in festo sancti Nicolai non erat EPISCOPUS PVERORUM in schola grammaticali in civitate Cantuarie ex defectu Magistrorum, viz. J. Sidney et T. Hikson, &c." Lib. Johannis Stone, Monachi Eccles. Cant. sc. *De Obitibus et aliis Memorabilibus sui cœnobii ab anno 1415 ad annum 1467.* MS. C. C. C. C. Q. 8. The abuses of this custom in Wells cathedral are mentioned so early as Decemb. 1. 1298. Registr. Eccl. Wellens. [See sup. vol. i. 248. ii. 375. 389.]

"saint

“ faint Catharine”, faint Clement”, the holie Innocents, and
 “ and such like”, Children [boys] be strangelic decked and ap-
 “ parayled, to counterfeit Priestes, Bisshopes, and Women, and
 “ so be ledde with Songes and Dances from house to house,
 “ blessing the people, and gathering of money; and Boyes do
 “ singe masse, and preache in the pulpitt, with such other vnfit-
 “ tinge and inconuenient vsages, rather to the derysyon than
 “ anie true glorie of God, or honor of his sayntes: The Kynges
 “ maiestie therefore, myndinge nothings so moche as to aduance
 “ the true glory of God without vain superstition, wylleth and
 “ commandeth, that from henceforth all svch svperstitious ob-
 “ seruations be left and clerely extinguished throwout all this
 “ his realme and dominions, for-as moche as the same doth re-
 “ semble rather the vnlawfull superstition of gentilitie, than the
 “ pvre and sincere religion of Christe.” With respect to the
 disguisings of these young fraternities, and their processions from
 house to house with singing and dancing, specified in this edict,

^a The reader will recollect the old play of Saint Catharine, *LVDUS CATHARINÆ*, exhibited at faint Albans abbey in 1160. Strype says, in 1556, “ On Saint Katharines day, at six of the clock at night, S. Katharine went about the battlements of S. Paul’s church accompanied with fine singing and great lights. This was faint Katharine’s Procession.” *ECCL. MEM.* iii. 309. ch. xxxix. Again, her procession, in 1553, is celebrated with five hundred great lights, round faint Paul’s keepe, &c. *Ibid.* p. 51. ch. v. And p. 57. ch. v.

^o Among the church-processions revived by Queen Mary, that of S. Clement’s church, in honour of this faint, was by far the most splendid of any in London. Their procession to S. Pauls in 1557, “ was made very pompous with fourscore banners and streamers, and the waits of the city playing, and threecore priests and clarkes in copes. And divers of the Inns of Court were there, who went

“ next the priests, &c.” Strype, *ubi supr.* iii. 377. ch. xlix.

^p In the *SYNODUS CARNOTENSIS*, under the year 1526, It is ordered, “ In festo sancti Nicholai, Catharinæ, Innocentium, aut alio quovis die, prætexta recreationis, ne Scholastici, Clerici, Sacerdotesve, stultum aliquod aut ridiculum faciant in ecclesia. Denique ab ecclesia ejiciantur *VESTES FATUORUM* per *sonas SCENICAS* agentium.” See Bochellus, *Decret. ECCLES. GALL.* lib. iv. *TIT.* vii. C. 43. 44. 46. p. 586. Yet these sports seem to have remained in France so late as 1585. For in the Synod of Aix, 1585, it is enjoined, “ Cessent in die Sanctorum Innocentium ludibria omnia et *pueriles ac theatrales lusus.*” Bochell. *ibid.* C. 45. p. 586. A Synod of Thoulouse, an. 1590, removes plays, spectacles, and *histrionum circulationes*, from churches and their cemeteries. Bochell. *ibid.* lib. iv. *TIT.* i. C. 98. p. 560.

in

in a very mutilated fragment of a *COMPUTUS*, or annual Account-roll, of faint Swithin's cathedral Priory at Winchester, under the year 1441, a disbursement is made to the singing-boys of the monastery, who, together with the choristers of faint Elisabeth's collegiate chapel near that city, were dressed up like girls, and exhibited their sports before the abbess and nuns of faint Mary's abbey at Winchester, in the public refectory of that convent, on Innocent's day¹. "Pro Pueris Eleemosynariæ una cum Pueris Capellæ sanctæ Elizabethæ, ornatis more puellarum, et saltantibus, cantantibus, et ludentibus, coram domina Abbatissa et monialibus Abbathiæ beatæ Mariæ virginis, in aula ibidem in die sanctorum Innocentium²." And again, in a fragment of an Account of the Celerar of Hyde Abbey at Winchester, under the year 1490. "In larvis et aliis indumentis Puerorum visentium Dominum apud Wulsey, et Constabularium Castri Winton, in apparatu suo, necnon subintrantium omnia monasteria civitatis Winton, in festo sancti Nicholai³." That is, "In furnishing masks and dresses for the boys of the convent, when they visited the bishop at

¹ In the Register of Wodeloke bishop of Winchester, the following is an article among the *INJUNCTIONS* given to the nuns of the convent of Rumsley in Hampshire, in consequence of an episcopal visitation, under the year 1310. "Item prohibemus, ne cubent in dormitorio pueri masculi cum monialibus, vel foemellæ, nec per moniales ducantur in Chorum, dum ibidem divinum officium celebratur." fol. 134. In the same Register these *Injunctions* follow in a literal French translation, made for the convenience of the nuns.

² MS. in Archiv. Wulves. apud Winton. It appears to have been a practice for itinerant players to gain admittance into the nunneries, and to play Latin *MYSTERIES* before the nuns. There is a curious Canon of the Council of COLLOGNE, in 1549, which is to this effect.

"We have been informed, that certain Actors of Comedies, not contented with the stage and theaters, have even entered the nunneries, in order to recreate the nuns, *ubi virginibus commoveant voluptatem*, with their profane, amorous, and *secular* gesticulations. Which spectacles, or plays, although they consisted of sacred and pious subjects, can yet notwithstanding leave little good, but on the contrary much harm, in the minds of the nuns, who behold and admire the outward gestures of the performers, and understand not the words. Therefore we decree, that henceforward no Plays, *Comedias*, shall be admitted into the convents of nuns, &c." Sur. CONCIL. tom. iv. p. 852. Binius, tom. iv. p. 765.

³ MS. Ibid. See *supr.* p. 303.

"Wulvesey-

“ Wulfesey-palace, the constable of Winchester-castle, and all
 “ the monasteries of the city of Winchester, on the festival of
 “ faint Nicholas.” As to the divine service being performed
 by children on these feasts, it was not only celebrated by boys,
 but there is an injunction given to the Benedictine nunnery of
 Godstowe in Oxfordshire, by archbishop Peckham, in the year
 1278, that on Innocent’s day, the public prayers should not any
 more be said in the church of that monastery *PER PARVULAS*,
 that is, by little girls[†].

The ground-work of this religious mockery of the boy-bishop,
 which is evidently founded on modes of barbarous life, may
 perhaps be traced backward at least as far as the year 867[‡]. At
 the Constantinopolitan synod under that year, at which were
 present three hundred and seventy-three bishops, it was found to
 be a solemn custom in the courts of princes, on certain stated
 days, to dress some layman in the episcopal apparel, who should
 exactly personate a bishop both in his tonsure and ornaments:
 as also to create a burlesque patriarch, who might make sport
 for the company[§]. This scandal to the clergy was anathematized.
 But ecclesiastical synods and censures have often proved too weak
 to suppress popular spectacles, which take deep root in the public
 manners, and are only concealed for a while, to spring up afresh
 with new vigour.

After the form of a legitimate stage had appeared in England,
 MYSTERIES and MIRACLES were also revived by queen Mary,
 as an appendage of the papistic worship.

— En, iterum crudelia retro
 Fata vocant *! — — —

[†] Harpsfield, *HIST. ECCL. ANGL.* p. 441. edit. 1622. [See *supr.* vol. ii. p. 362.]

[‡] Or, 870.

[§] Surius, *CONCIL.* iii. 529. 559. Baron. *ANNAL.* Ann. 869. §. 11. See *CONCIL.*

Basil. num. xxxii. The French have a miracle-play, *BEAU MIRACLE DE S. NICOLAS*, to be acted by twenty four personages, printed at Paris, for Pierre Sergeant, in quarto, without date, Bl. Lett.

* Virgil, *Georg.* iv. 495.

In

In the year 1556, a *goodly stage-play* of the PASSION OF CHRIST was presented at the Grey friers in London, on Corpus-Christi day, before the lord mayor, the privy-council, and many great *estates* of the realm^y. Strype also mentions, under the year 1557, a stage-play at the Grey-friers, of the Passion of Christ, on the day that war was proclaimed in London against France, and in honour of that occasion^z. On faint Olave's day in the same year, the holiday of the church in Silver-street which is dedicated to that faint, was kept with much solemnity. At eight of the clock at night, began a stage-play of *goodly matter*, being the miraculous history of the life of that faint^a, which continued four hours, and was concluded with many religious songs^b.

Many curious circumstances of the nature of these miracle-plays, appear in a roll of the church-wardens of Bassingborne in Cambridgeshire, which is an accompt of the expences and receptions for acting the play of SAINT GEORGE at Bassingborne, on the feast of faint Margaret in the year 1511. They collected upwards of four pounds in twenty-seven neighbouring parishes for furnishing the play. They disbursed about two pounds in the representation. These disbursements are to four minstrels, or waits, of Cambridge for three days, v, s. vj, d. To the players, in bread and ale, iij, s. ij, d. To the *garnement-man* for *garnements*, and *propyrts*^c, that is, for dresses, decora-

^y MSS. Cott. VITELL. E. 5. STRYPE. See LIFE OF SIR THOMAS POPE, PREF. p. xii.

^z ECCL. MEM. vol. iii. ch. xlix.

^a Strype, *ibid.* p. 379. With the religious pageantries, other antient sports and spectacles also, which had fallen into disuse in the reign of Edward the sixth, began to be now revived. As thus, "On the 30th of May was a goodly May-game in Fenchurch-street, with drums, and guns, and pikes, with the NINE WORTHIES who rid. And each made his speech. There was also the Morice-

"dance, and an elephant and castle, and the Lord and Lady of the May appeared to make up this show." Strype, *ibid.* 376. ch. xlix.

^b Ludovicus Vives relates, that it was customary in Brabant to present annual plays in honour of the respective saints to which the churches were dedicated: and he betrays his great credulity in adding a wonderful story in consequence of this custom. NOT. in AUGUSTIN. DE CIVIT. DEI. lib. xii. cap. 25. C.

^c The property-room is yet known at our theatres.

tions,

tions, and implements, and for *play-books*, xx, s. To John Hobard *brotherhood preeffe*, that is, a priest of the guild in the church, for *the play-book*, ij, s. viij d. For the *crofte*, or field in which the play was exhibited, j, s. For *propyrte-making*, or furniture, j, s. iv, d. "For fish and bread, and to setting up the "stages, iv, d." For painting three *fancboms* and four *tormentors*, words which I do not understand, but perhaps phantoms and devils . . . The rest was expended for a feast on the occasion, in which are recited, "Four chicken for the gentlemen, iv, d." It appears from the manuscript of the Coventry plays, that a temporary scaffold only, was erected for these performances. And Chaucer says, of Absolon a parish-clerk, and an actor of king Herod's character in these dramas, in the MILLER'S TALE,

And for to shew his lightnesse and maistry
He playith Herawdes on a SCAFFALD HIE ^d.

Scenical decorations and machinery which employed the genius and invention of Inigo Jones, in the reigns of the first James and Charles, seem to have migrated from the masques at court to the public theatre. In the instrument here cited, the priest who wrote the play, and received only two shillings and eight pence for his labour, seems to have been worse paid in proportion than any of the other persons concerned. The learned Oporinus,

^d Mill. T. v. 275. Urr. Mr. Steevens and Mr. Malone have shewn, that the accommodations in our early regular theatres were but little better. That the old scenery was very simple, may partly be collected from an entry in a Computus of Winchester-college, under the year 1579. viz. COMP. BURS. Coll. Winton. A. D. 1573. Eliz. xv.—"CUSTUS AULÆ. Item, pro diversis expensis circa Scaffoldam erigendam et deponendam, et pro Domunculis de novo compositis cum carriagio et re-carriagio *ly joyles*, et aliorum mutuatorum ad eandem Scaffoldam, cum *vj linches* et *j* [uno] duodeno candelarum, pro lumine expensis, tribus noctibus in Ludis

"comedarum et tragediarum, xxv, s. viij, "d." Again in the next quarter, "Pro *vij ly linches* deliberatis pueris per M. Informatorem [the school-master] pro Ludis, iij, s." Again, in the last quarter, "Pro removendis Organis e templo in Aulam et preparandis eisdem *erga Ludos*, v, s." By DOMUNCULIS I understand little cells of board, raised on each side of the stage, for dressing-rooms, or retiring places. Strype, under the year 1559, says, that after a grand feast at Guildhall, "the same day was a Scaffold set up in the hall for a play." ANN. REF. i. 197. edit. 1725.

in 1547, published in two volumes a collection of religious interludes, which abounded in Germany. They are in Latin, and not taken from legends but the Bible.

The puritans were highly offended at these religious plays now revived*. But they were hardly less averse to the theatrical representation of the christian than of the gentile story. Yet for different reasons. To hate a theatre was a part of their creed, and therefore plays were an improper vehicle of religion. The heathen fables they judged to be dangerous, as too nearly resembling the superstitions of popery.

* A very late scripture-play is, "A newe merry and witte comedie or enterlude, newlie imprinted treating the history of JACOB AND ESAU, &c." for H. Bynneman, 1568. 4to. Bl. Lett. But this play had appeared in queen Mary's reign, "An enterlude vpon the history of Jacobe and Esawe, &c." Licenced to Henry Sutton, in 1557. REGISTR. STATION. A. fol. 23. a. It is certain, however, that the fashion of religious interludes was not entirely discontinued in the reign of queen Elisabeth. For, I find licenced to T. Hackett in 1561, "A newe enterlude of the ij synnes of kynge Daude." Ibid. fol. 75. a. And to Pickeringe in 1560-1, the play of queen Esther. Ibid. fol. 62. b. Again, there is licenced to T. Colwell, in 1565, "A playe of the story of kyng Darius from Esdras." Ibid. fol. 133. b. Also "A pleasaunte recytall worthy of the readinge contaynyng the effecte of iij worthy squire of Daryus the kinge of Persia," licenced to Griffiths in 1565. Ibid. fol. 132. b. Often reprinted. And in 1566, John Charlewood is licenced to print "An enterlude of the repentance of Mary Magdalen." Ibid. fol. 152. a. Of this piece I have cited an antient manuscript. Also, not to multiply instances, Colwell in 1568, is licenced to print "The playe of Sufanna." Ibid. fol. 176. a. Ballads on scripture subjects are now innumerable. Peele's DAVID AND BATHSHE-

BA is a remain of the fashion of scripture-plays. I have mentioned the play of HOLOFERNES acted at Hatfield in 1556. LIFE OF SIR THOMAS POPE, p. 87. In 1556, was printed "A ballet intituled the history of Judith and Holyfernes." REGISTR. ut supr. fol. 154. b. And Registr. B. fol. 227. In Hearne's manuscript COLLECTANEA there is a licence dated 1571, from the queen, directed to the officers of Middlesex, permitting one John Swinton Powlter, "to have and use some playes and games at or vpon nine severall fountaines," within the said county. And because greates resort of people is lyke to come thereunto, he is required, for the preservation of the peace, and for the sake of good order, to take with him four or five discreet and substantiall men of those places where the games shall be put in practice, to superintend during the continuance of the games or playes. Some of the exhibitions are then specified, such as, *Shotinge with the brade arrowes, The lepping for men, The pytyching of the barre, and the like.* But then follows this very general clause, "With all suche other games, as haue at anye time heretofore or now be lycensed, used, or played." COLL. MSS. Hearne, tom. lxi. p. 78. One wishes to know, whether any interludes, and whether religious or profane, were included in this instrument.

S E C T.