



UNIVERSITÄTS-
BIBLIOTHEK
PADERBORN

Universitätsbibliothek Paderborn

The History Of English Poetry

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

Warton, Thomas

London, 1781

Section XXXVII. English language begins to be cultivated. Earliest book of Criticism in English. Examined. Soon followed by others. Early critical systems of the French and Italians. New and superb ...

[urn:nbn:de:hbz:466:1-51323](https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:hbz:466:1-51323)

S E C T. XXXVII.

IT appears, however, that the cultivation of an English style began to be now regarded. At the general restoration of knowledge and taste, it was a great impediment to the progress of our language, that all the learned and ingenious, aiming at the character of erudition, wrote in Latin. English books were written only by the superficial and illiterate, at a time when judgment and genius should have been exerted in the nice and critical task of polishing a rude speech. Long after the invention of typography, our vernacular style, instead of being strengthened and refined by numerous compositions, was only corrupted with new barbarisms and affectations, for want of able and judicious writers in English. Unless we except sir Thomas More, whose *DIALOGUE ON TRIBULATION*, and *HISTORY OF RICHARD THE THIRD*, were esteemed standards of style so low as the reign of James the first, Roger Ascham was perhaps the first of our scholars who ventured to break the shackles of Latinity, by publishing his *TOXOPHILUS* in English; chiefly with a view of giving a pure and correct model of English composition, or rather of shewing how a subject might be treated with grace and propriety in English as well as in Latin. His own vindication of his conduct in attempting this great innovation is too sensible to be omitted, and reflects light on the revolutions of our poetry. “As for the Latine or Greeke tongue, euery thing is so excellently done in Them, that none can do better. In the Englishe tongue contrary, euery thing in a maner so meanlye, both for the matter and handeling, that no man can do worse. For therein the learned for the most

T t 2

“ part

“ part haue bene alwayes most redye to write. And they which
 “ had leaft hope in Lattine haue bene most bould in Engliſhe:
 “ when ſurelye euerye man that is moſt ready to talke, is not
 “ moſt able to write. He that will write well in any tongue,
 “ muſt folow this counſell of Ariſtotele; to ſpeake as the com-
 “ mon people do, to thinke as wiſe men do. And ſo ſhoulde
 “ euerye man vnderſtand him, and the iudgement of wiſe men
 “ alowe him. Manye Engliſhe writers haue not done ſo; but
 “ vſinge ſtraunge wordes, as Lattine, French, and Italian, do
 “ make all thinges darke and harde. Ones I communed with a
 “ man, which reaſoned the Engliſhe tongue to be enriched and
 “ encreaſed thereby, ſayinge, Who will not prayſe that feaſt
 “ where a man ſhall drincke at a dinner both wyne, ale, and
 “ beere? Truly, quoth I, they be al good, euery one taken by
 “ himſelfe alone; but if you put Malmesye and ſacke, redde
 “ wyne and white, ale and beere, and al in one pot, you ſhall
 “ make a drinke neither eaſye to be knowen, nor yet hollſome
 “ for the bodye. Cicero in folowing Iſocrates, Plato, and De-
 “ moſthenes, encreaſed the Lattine tongue after another ſort.
 “ This way, becauſe diuers men that write do not know, they
 “ can neyther folow it becauſe of their ignoraunce, nor yet will
 “ prayſe it for uery arrogancy: two faultes ſeldome the one out
 “ of the others companye. Engliſhe writers by diuerſitie of
 “ tyme haue taken diuers matters in hand. In our fathers time
 “ nothing was red, but bookes of fayned cheualrie, wherein a
 “ man by readinge ſhould be led to none other ende but only
 “ to manſlaughter and baudrye. If anye man ſuppoſe they
 “ were good enough to paſſe the time withall, he is deceiued.
 “ For ſurely vaine wordes do worke no final thinge in vaine,
 “ ignorant, and yong mindes, ſpecially if they be geuen any
 “ thing thervnto of their owne nature. Theſe bookes, as I
 “ haue heard ſay, were made the moſt part in abbayes and mo-
 “ naſteries, a very likely and fit fruite of ſuch an ydle and blind
 “ kind

“ kind of living ^a. In our time now, whan euery man is geuen
 “ to know much rather than liue wel, very many do write, but
 “ after such a fashon as very many do shoote. Some shooters
 “ take in hande stronger bowes than they be able to maintaine.
 “ This thinge maketh them sometime to ouershoote the marke,
 “ sometime to shoote far wyde and perchance hurt some that
 “ loke on. Other, that neuer learned to shoote, nor yet know-
 “ eth good shaft nor bowe, will be as busie as the best ^b.

Ascham's example was followed by other learned men. But the chief was Thomas Wilson, who published a system of LOGIC and RHETORIC both in English. Of his LOGIC I have already spoken. I have at present only to speak of the latter, which is not only written in English, but with a view of giving rules for composing in the English language. It appeared in 1553, the first year of queen Mary, and is entitled, *THE ARTE OF RHETORIKE for the vse of all suche as are studious of Eloquence, sette forth in Englishe by THOMAS WILSON* ^c. Leonarde Cox, a schoolmaster, patronised by Farringdon the last abbot of Reading, had published in 1530, as I have observed, an English tract on rhetoric, which is nothing more than a technical and elementary manual. Wilson's treatise is more liberal, and discursive; illustrating the arts of eloquence by example, and examining and ascertaining the beauties of composition with the speculative skill and sagacity of a critic. It may therefore be justly considered as the first book or system of criticism in our language. A few ex-

^a He says in his *SCHOOLEMASTER*, written soon after the year 1563, “ There be
 “ more of these vngracious bookes set out
 “ in print within these few monethes, than
 “ have bene seene in England many score
 “ years before.” B. i. fol. 26. a. edit.
 1589. 4to.

^b *To all the Gentlemen and Yomen of ENGLAND.* Prefixed to *TOXOPHILUS, The Schole or partition of shooting*, Lond. 1545. 4to.

^c Lond. 1553. 4to. Dedicated to John Dudley, earl of Warwick. In the Dedication he says, that he wrote great part of

this treatise during the last summer vacation in the country, at the house of sir Edward Dimmoke. And that it originated from a late conversation with his lordship, “ e-
 “ monge other talke of learnyng.” It was reprinted by Jhon Kynston in 1570. Lond. 4to. With “ A Prologue to the Reader,” dated Dec. 7. 1560. Again, 1567. 4to. And 1585. 4to. In the *PROLOGUE*, he mentions his escape at Rome, which I have above related: and adds, “ If others
 “ neuer gette more by bookes than I have
 “ doen, it wer better be a carter than a
 “ scholar, for worldlie profite.”

tracts

tracts from so curious a performance need no apology; which will also serve to throw light on the present period, and indeed on our general subject, by displaying the state of critical knowledge, and the ideas of writing, which now prevailed.

I must premise, that Wilson, one of the most accomplished scholars of his times, was originally a fellow of King's College^d, where he was tutor to the two celebrated youths Henry and Charles Brandon dukes of Suffolk. Being a doctor of laws, he was afterwards one of the ordinary masters of requests, master of saint Katharine's hospital near the Tower, a frequent ambassador from queen Elisabeth to Mary queen of Scots, and into the Low countries, a secretary of state and a privy counsellor, and at length, in 1579, dean of Durham. He died in 1581. His remarkable diligence and dispatch in negotiation is said to have resulted from an uncommon strength of memory. It is another proof of his attention to the advancement of our English style, that he translated seven orations of Demosthenes, which, in 1570, he dedicated to sir William Cecill^e.

Under that chapter of his third book of RHETORIC which treats of the four parts belonging to elocution, Plainnesse, Aptnesse, Compoficion, Exornacion, Wilson has these observations on simplicity of style, which are immediately directed to those who write in the English tongue. "Among other lessons this
 " should first be learned, that we neuer affect any straunge ynke-
 " horne termes, but to speake as is commonly receiued: neither
 " seking to be ouer fine, nor yet liuing ouer carelesse, vsing our
 " speache as moſte men do, and ordering our wittes as the fewest
 " haue doen. Some seke so farre for outlandishe Englishe, that
 " they forget altogether their mothers language. And I dare

^d Admitted scholar in 1541. A native of Lincolnshire. MS. Hatcher.

^e Which had been also translated into Latin by Nicholas Carr. To whose version Hatcher prefixed this distich. [MSS. More, 102. Carr's Autograph. MS.]

Hæc eadem patrio Thomas sermone polivit

Wilsonus, patrii gloria prima soli.

Wilson published many other things. In Gabriel Harvey's SMITHUS, dedicated to sir Walter Mildmay, and printed by Binneman in 1578, he is ranked with his learned cotemporaries. See SIGNAT. D. ij.—E. ij.—I. j.

" sweare

" sweare this, if some of their mothers were aliue, thei were
 " not able to tel what thei saie: and yet these fine Englishe
 " clerkes wil saie thei speake in their mother tongue, if a man
 " should charge them for counterfeityng the kinges Englishe.
 " Some farre iournied gentlemen at their returne home, like as
 " thei loue to go in forrein apparel, so thei will pouder their
 " talke with ouersea language. He that cometh lately out of
 " Fraunce will talke Frenche Englishe, and neuer blushe at the
 " matter. Another choppes in with Englishe Italianated, and
 " applieth the Italian phraise to our Englishe speakyng: the
 " whiche is, as if an Oration that professeth to vtter his mynde
 " in plaine Latine, would needes speake Poetrie, and farre
 " fetched colours of straunge antiquitie. The lawier will store
 " his stomacke with the prating of pedlers. The auditour, in
 " makyng his accompt and reckenyng, cometh in with *sise sould*,
 " and *cater denere*, for vj. s. and iiij. d. The fine courtier will
 " talke nothyng but CHAUCER. The misticall wisemen, and
 " poetical clerkes, will speake nothyng but quainte prouerbes,
 " and blinde allegories; delightyng muche in their owne dark-
 " nesse, especially when none can tel what thei do saie. The
 " vnlearned or folishe phantafticall, that smelles but of learnyng
 " (svche fellowes as haue seene learned men in their daies) will
 " so Latine their tongues, that the simple cannot but wonder at
 " their talke, and thinke surely thei speake by some reuelacion.
 " I know Them, that thinke RHETORIKE to stande wholie
 " vpon darke wordes; and he that can catche an ynkehorne
 " terme by the taile, hym thei compt to be a fine Englishman
 " and a good rhetorician^f. And the rather to set out this folie,

^f Puttenham, in THE ARTE OF ENGLISH POESIE, where he treats of style and language, brings some illustrations from the practice of oratory in the reign of queen Mary, in whose court he lived: and although his book is dated 1589, it was manifestly written much earlier. He refers to sir Nicholas Bacon, who began to be high in the departments of the law in queen Mary's time, and died in 1579.

Having told a story from his own knowledge in the year 1553, of a ridiculous oration made in parliament by a new speaker of the house, who came from Yorkshire, and had more knowledge in the affairs of his county, and of the law, than gracefulness or delicacy of language, he proceeds, " And though graue and wise counsellours in their consultations do not vie much superstitious eloquence, and
 " also

“ I will adde here s^vche a letter as William Sommer * himself,
 “ could not make a better for that purpose, — deuifed by a Lin-

“ also in their iudiciall hearings do much
 “ mislike all scholasticall rhetoricks: yet
 “ in such a case as it may be (and as this
 “ parliament was) if the lord chancelour
 “ of England or archbishop of Canter-
 “ bury himselfe were to speke, he ought
 “ to do it cunningly and eloquently, which
 “ cannot be without the vse of figures:
 “ and neuertheleffe, none impeachment or
 “ blemish to the grauitie of their persons
 “ or of the cause: wherein I report me
 “ to them that knew sir Nicholas Bacon
 “ lord Keeper of the great seale, or the
 “ now lord treasurer of England, and haue
 “ bene conseruant in their speeches made in
 “ the parliament house and starre chamber.
 “ From whose lippes I haue scene to pro-
 “ ceede more graue and naturall eloquence,
 “ than from all the oratours of Oxford
 “ and Cambridge.—I haue come to the
 “ lord Keeper sir Nicholas Bacon, and
 “ found him fitting in his gallery alone,
 “ with the workes of Quintilian before
 “ him. In deede he was a most eloquent
 “ man and of rare learning and wisdom
 “ as euer I knew England to breed, and
 “ one that ioyed as much in learned men
 “ and men of good witts.” Lib. iii. ch. ii.
 “ pag. 126. seq. What follows soon after-
 “ wards is equally apposite. “ This part in
 “ our maker or poet must be heedly look-
 “ ed vnto, that it [his language] be natu-
 “ rall, pure, and the most vsuall of all his
 “ countray: and for the same purpose, ra-
 “ ther that which is spoken in the kinges
 “ court, or in the good townes and cities
 “ within the land, than in the marches
 “ or frontiers, or in port townes where
 “ strangers haunt for traffike take, or yet
 “ in vniuersities where schollars vse much
 “ peevish affectation of words out of the
 “ primitiue languages; or finally, in any
 “ vplandish village or corner of the realme,
 “ &c. But he shall follow generally the
 “ better brought vp sort, such as the
 “ Greekes call *charientes*, men ciuill and
 “ graciously behauored and bred. Our
 “ maker therefore at these dayes shall not
 “ follow PIERES FLOWMAN, nor Gower,

“ nor Lydgate, nor yet Chancer, for their
 “ language is now out of vse with vs:
 “ neither shall he take the termes of nor-
 “ theme men, such as they vse in daily
 “ talke, whether they be noblemen or gen-
 “ tlemen, or of their best clarkes, all is a
 “ matter, &c. Ye shall therefore take the
 “ vsuall speech of the court, and that of
 “ London, and the shires lying about Lon-
 “ don within lx myles, and not mych a-
 “ boue. I say not this, but that in euery
 “ shyre of England there be gentlemen
 “ and others that speke, but specially
 “ write, as good Southerne as we of Mid-
 “ dlessex and Surrey do, but not the com-
 “ mon people of euery shire, to whom
 “ the gentlemen, and also their learned
 “ clarkes, do for the most part condescend:
 “ but herein we are ruled by the English
 “ Dictionaries, and other bookes written
 “ by learned men. Albeit peradventure
 “ some small admonition be not imperti-
 “ nent; for we finde in our English wri-
 “ ters many wordes and speeches amenda-
 “ ble, and ye shall see in some many in-
 “ horne termes so ill affected brought in
 “ by men of learning, as preachers and
 “ schoolemasters, and many strange termes
 “ of other languages by secretaries and
 “ marchaunts and traueillours, and many
 “ darke wordes and not vsuall nor well
 “ sound ng, though they be daily spoken
 “ at court.” Ibid. Ch. iii. fol. 120, 121.

* King Henry's Jester. In another place
 he gives us one of Sommer's jells. “ Wil-
 “ liam Sommer seying muche adoe for ac-
 “ comptes making, and that Henry the
 “ eight wanted money, such as was due
 “ to him, And please your grace, quoth
 “ he, you haue so many Frauditours, so
 “ many Conueighers, and so many Decei-
 “ uers, to get vp your money, that thei
 “ get all to themselves.” That is, Au-
 “ ditors, Surveyors, and Receivers. fol. 102.
 b. I haue seen an old narrative of a pro-
 gress of king Henry the eighth and queen
 Katharine, to Newbery in Berkshire, where
 Somner, who had accompanied their majes-
 ties as court-buffoon, fell into disgrace
 with

“ colneshire man for a voide benefice¹.” This point he illustrates with other familiar and pleafant instances¹.

In enforcing the application and explaining the nature of fables, for the purpose of amplification, he gives a general idea of the Iliad and Odyssey. “ The saying of poetes, and al their fables, are not to be forgotten. For by them we maie talke at large, and win men by perfwasion, if we declare before hand, that these tales wer not fained of fuche wisemen without cause, neither yet continued vntill this time, and kept in memorie without good confideracion, and therevpon declare the true meanyng of all fuche writynge. For vndoubtedly, there is no one Tale among all the poetes, but vnder the same is comprehended somethyng that perteyneth either to the amendement of maners, to the knowledge of truthe, to the setting forth natures worke, or els to the vnderstanding of some notable thing doen. For what other is the painful trauaile of Vliffes, described so largely by Homere, but a liuely picture of mans miserie in this life? And as Plutarche saith, and likewise Basilius Magnus, in the ILIADES are described strength and valiauntnesse of bodie: in ODISSEA, is set forthe a liuely paterne of the mynde. The Poetes are Wisemen, and wisshed in harte the redresse of thinges, the which when for feare thei durst not openly rebuke, they did in colours paint them out, and tolde men by shadowes what thei shold do in good sothe: or els, because the wicked were vnworthy to heare the truth, thei spake so

with the people for his impertinence, was detained, and obliged to submit to many ridiculous indignities: but extricated himself from all his difficulties by comic expedients and the readines of his wit. On returning to court, he gave their majesties, who were inconsolable for his long absence, a minute account of these low adventures, with which they were infinitely entertained. What shall we think of the manners of such a court?

¹ Viz. “ Pondering, expending, and

“ reuoluyng with myself, your ingent affabilitie, and ingenious capacitie, for “ mundane affaires, I cannot but celebrate and extoll your magnificall dexteritie above all other. For how could “ you have adapted fuche illustrate prerogative, and dominiall superioritie, if the “ fecunditie of your ingenie had not been “ so fertile and wonderfull pregnaunt, &c.” It is to the lord Chancellor. See what is said of A. Bordes’s style, supr. p. 71.

¹ B. iii. fol. 82. b. edit. 1567.

VOL. III.

U u

“ that

“ that none might vnderstande but those vnto whom thei please
 “ to vtter their meanyng, and knewe them to be men of honest
 “ conuerfacionⁱ.”

Wilson thus recommends the force of circumstantial description, or, what he calls, *An euident or plaine setting forth of a thing as though it were presently doen.* “ An example. If our
 “ enemies shal inuade and by treason win the victory, we shal
 “ all die euery mothers sonne of vs, and our citee shal be destroyed,
 “ sticke and stone: I se our children made slaues, our daughters
 “ rauished, our wiues carried away, the father forced to kill his owne
 “ sonne, the mother her daughter, the sonne his father, the sucking
 “ childe slain in his mothers bosom, one standyng to the knees in
 “ anothers blood, churches spoiled, houses plucte down, and al set
 “ on fire round about vs, euery one cursing the daie of their
 “ birth, children cryng, women wailing, &c. Thus, where I might
 “ haue said, *We shal al be destroyed,* and say [no] more, I haue
 “ by description set the euill forth at large^k.” It must be owned that
 “ this picture of a sacked city is literally translated from Quintilian.
 “ But it is a proof, that we were now beginning to make the beauties
 “ of the antients our own.

On the necessity of a due preservation of character he has the following precepts, which seem to be directed to the writers of Historical Plays. “ In describyng of persons, there ought al-
 “ waies a comelineffe to be vsed, so that nothing be spoken
 “ which may be thought is not in them. As if one shold describe
 “ Henry the sixt, He might call hym gentle, milde of nature, ledde
 “ by perswacion, and ready to forgiue, carelesse for wealth, sus-
 “ pecting none, mercifull to al, fearful in aduersitie, and without
 “ forecast to espie his misfortvne. Againe, for Richarde the
 “ thirde, I might brynge him in cruell of harte, ambitious by
 “ nature, enuious of minde, a deepe dissembler, a close man
 “ for weightie matters, hardie to reuenge and feare-

ⁱ Lib. iii. fol. 99. b.

^k Fol. 91. a.

“ full to lose hys high estate, trustie to none, liberal for a purpose, casting still the worste, and hoping euer for the best¹.
 “ By this figure^m also, we imagine a talke for some one to speake, and accordyng to his persone we frame the oration.
 “ As if one shoulde bryng in noble Henry the eight of famous memory, to enuegh against rebelles, thus he might order his oration. *What if Henry the eight were aliue, and sawe suche rebellion in the realme, would he not saie thus and thus? Yea methinkes I heare hym speake euen nowe. And so sette forthe suche wordes as we would haue hym to say.*” Shakespeare himself has not delineated the characters of these English monarchs with more truth. And the first writers of the MIRROR OF MAGISTRATES, who *imagine a talke for some one to speake, and according to his person frame the oration*, appear to have availed themselves of these directions, if not to have caught the notion of their whole plan from this remarkable passage.

He next shews the advantages of personification in enlivening a composition. “ Some times it is good to make God, the Countray, or some one Towne, to speake; and looke what we would saie in our owne persone, to frame the whole tale to them. Such varietie doeth much good to auoide tediousnesse. For he that speaketh all in one sorte, though he speake thinges neuer so wittillie, shall sone weary his hearers. Figures therefore were inuented, to auoide satietie, and cause delite: to refresh with pleasure and quicken with grace the dulnesse of mans braine. Who will looke on a white wall an houre together where no workmanship is at all? Or who will eate still one kynde of meate and neuer desire change^o?”

¹ Richard the third seems to have been an UNIVERSAL character for exemplifying a cruel disposition. Our author, meaning to furnish a chamber with persons famous for the greatest crimes, says in another place. “ In the bedstede I will set Richarde the third kinge of Englande, or somelike notable murtherer.” fol.

109. b. Shakespeare was not the first that exhibited this tyrant upon the stage. In 1586, a ballad was printed called a “ tragicke report of kinge Richarde the iii.” REGISTR. STATION. B. fol. 210. b.

^m Lively Description.

^a Fol. 91. b.

^o Fol. 91. b. 92. a.

Prolix Narratives, whether jocose or serious, had not yet ceased to be the entertainment of polite companies: and rules for telling a tale with grace, now found a place in a book of general rhetoric^p. In treating of *pleasaunt sporte made rehearfing of a whole matter*, he says, “Thei that can liuely tell pleasaunt tales
“and mery dedes doen, and set them out as wel with gesture as
“with voice, leauing nothing behinde that maie serue for beau-
“tifying of their matter, are most mete for this purpose,

^p Yet he has here also a reference to the utility of tales both at the Bar and in the Pulpit. For in another place, professedly both speaking of Pleadings and Sermons, he says, “If tyme maie so serue, it were
“good when menne be wearied, to make
“them somewhat merie, and to begin with
“some pleasaunte tale, or take occasion
“to iesse wittellie, &c.” fol. 55. b. Again,
“Men commonlie tariē the ende of a me-
“rie Plaie, and cannot abide the half
“hearyng of a sower checkyng Sermon.
“Therefore euen these aunciente preach-
“ers muste nowē and then plaie the fooles
“in the pulpite to serue the tickle eares
“of their fletyng audience, &c.” fol. 2. a. I know not if he means Latimer here, whom he commends, “There is no better
“preacher among them al except Hugh
“Latimer the father of al preachers.” fol. 63. a. And again, “I would thinke
“it not amisse to speake muche accord-
“yng to the nature and phansie of the ig-
“norant, that the rather they might be
“wonne through fables to learne more
“weightie and graue matters. For al
“men cannot brooke sage causes and aun-
“cient collations, but will like earnest
“matters the rather, if some be spoken
“there among agreeing to their natures.
“The multitude, as Horace doth saie, is
“a beast or rather a monster that hath
“many heddes, and therefore, like vnto
“the diuersitie of natvres, varietie of in-
“vention must alwaies be vsed. Talke
“altogether of moste graue matters, or
“deppely searche out the ground of
“thynges, or vse the quiddities of Duns
“[Scotus] to set forth Gods milteries, you
“shal se the ignorant, I warrant you, ci-

“ther fall aslepe, or els bid you farewell.
“The multitude must nedes be made mer-
“ry; and the more foolish your talke is,
“the more wise will thei compt it to be.
“And yet it is no foolishnes but rather
“wisdomē to win men, by telling of fa-
“bles to heare Gods goodnes.” fol. 101.
a. See also fol. 52. a. 69. a. Much to
the same purpose he says, “Euen in this
“our tyme, some offende muche in te-
“dioufnesse, whose parte it were to com-
“fort all men with cherefulnesse. Yea,
“the preachers of God mind so muche
“edifying of soules, that thei often for-
“gette we have any bodies. And there-
“fore, some doe not so muche good with
“tellyng the truthe, as thei doe harme
“with dullyng the hearers; beyng so
“farre gone in their matters, that osten-
“times thei cannot tell when to make an
“ende.” fol. 70. a. Yet still he allows
“much praise to the preachers in ge-
“neral of his age. “Yea, what tell I
“nowe of suche lessons, seeyng God hath
“raised suche worthy preachers in this
“our tyme, that their godlie and learned
“doynge maie be a most iuste example
“for all other to followe.” fol. 55. b. By
the way, although a zealous gospeller, in
another place he obliquely censures the ra-
pacity with which the reformation was
conducted under Edward the sixth. [See
supr. vol. ii. p. 452.] “I had rather,
“said one, make my child a cobler than
“a preacher, a tankard-bearer than a scho-
“ler. For what shall my sonne feke for
“learnynge, when he shall neuer get there-
“by any livyng? Set my sonne to that
“whereby he maie get somewhat. Doe
“you not see, how euery one catcheth and
“pulleth

" whereof assuredly ther are but fewe. And whatsoeuer he is,
 " that can aptlie tell his tale, and with countenance, voice, and
 " gesture, so temper his reporte, that the hearers may still take
 " delite, hym coompte I a man worthie to be highlie esteemed.
 " For vndoubtedly no man can doe any such thing excepte that
 " thei haue a greate mother witte, and by experience confirmed
 " suche their comelinesse, whervnto by nature thei were most
 " apte. Manie a man readeth histories, heareth fables, seeth
 " worthie actes doen, euen in this our age; but few can set
 " them out accordinglie, and tell them liuelie, as the matter
 " selfe requireth to be tolde. The kyndes of delityng in this
 " fort are diuers: whereof I will set forth many.—*Sporte moued*
 " *by tellyng of olde tales.* — If there be any olde tale or straunge
 " historie, well and wittelic applied to some man liuyng, all
 " menne loue to heare it of life. As if one were called Ar-
 " thure, some good felowe that were wel acquainted with KING
 " ARTHURES BOOKE and the Knightes of his Rounde Table,
 " would want no matter to make good sport, and for a nede
 " would dubbe him knight of the Rounde Table, or els proue
 " hym to be one of his kynne, or else (which were muche)
 " proue him to be Arthur himself. And so likewise of other
 " names, merie panions³ would make madde pastyme. Often-
 " tymes the deformitie of a mannes body giueth matter enough
 " to be right merie, or elles a picture in shape like another
 " manne will make some to laugh right hartelye², &c." This
 is no unpleasing image of the arts and accomplishments, which
 seasoned the mirth, and enlivened the conversations of our fore-
 fathers. Their wit seems to have chiefly consisted in mimicry¹.

" pulleth from the churche what thei can?
 " I feare me, one daie they will plucke
 " downe churche and all. Call you this
 " the GOSPEL, when men seke onlie for
 " to prouide for their bellies, and care
 " not a groate though their soules go to
 " helle? A patrone of a benefice will
 " haue a poore yngrame soule, to beare
 " the name of a parson for twentie marke,

" or tenne pounce: and the patrone hym-
 " self will take vp, for his snapshare, as
 " good as an hundred marke. Thus, God
 " is robbed, learnyng decaied, England
 " dishonoured, and honestie not regarded."
 fol. 9. a.

¹ Companions. A cant word.

² Fol. 74. a.

³ See fol. 70. a.

He

He thus describes the literary and ornamental qualifications of a young nobleman which were then in fashion, and which he exemplifies in the characters of his lamented pupils, Henry duke of Suffolk and lord Charles Brandon his brother'. "I maie
 " commende hym for his learnyng, for his skill in the French
 " or in the Italian, for his knowlege in cosmographie, for his
 " skill in the lawes, in the histories of al countrees, and for
 " his gift of enditing. Againe, I maie commende him for
 " playing at weapons, for running vpon a great horse, for char-
 " gyng his staffe at the tilt, for vaulting, for plaiyng upon in-
 " strumentes, yea and for painting, or drawing of a plat, as in
 " olde time noble princes muche delited therin^a." And again,
 " Suche a man is an excellent fellowe, saithe one, he can speake
 " the tongues well, he plaies of instrumentes, fewe men better,
 " he feigneth to the lute marveilous sweetlie^b, he endites ex-
 " cellentlie: but for al this, the more is the pitee, he hath his
 " faultes, he will be dronke once a daie, he loues women
 " well, &c^c."

The following passage acquaints us, among other things, that many now studied, and with the highest applause, to write elegantly in English as well as in Latin. "When we haue learned
 " vsuall and accvstomable wordes to set forthe our meanyng,
 " we ought to ioyne them together in apte order, that the eare
 " maie delite in hearyng the harmonie. I knowe some Eng-
 " lishemen, that in this poinct haue suche a gift in the Englishe
 " as fewe in Latin haue the like; and therefore delite the Wise
 " and Learned so muche with their pleasaunte composition,

^a He gives a curious reason why a young nobleman had better be born in London than any other place. "The shire or
 " towne helpeth somewhat towards the
 " encrease of honour. As, it is much bet-
 " ter to be borne in Paris than in Picardie,
 " in Loudon than in Lincolne. For that
 " bothe the aire is better, the people more
 " ciuil, and the wealth much greater, and

" the menne for the most parte more wise."
 fol. 7. a.

^b Fol. 7. a.

^c He mentions the Lute again, "The
 " tongue giueth a certaine grace to euery
 " matter, and beautifieth the cause, in like
 " maner as a sweete soundyng lute muche
 " setteth forth a meane deuised ballade."
 fol. 111. a.

^d Fol. 67. a.

" that

“ that many reioyce when thei maie heare suche, and thinke
 “ muche learnyng is gotte when thei maie talke with them’.”
 But he adds the faults which were sometimes now to be found
 in English composition, among which he censures the excess of
 alliteration.—“ Some will bee so shorte, and in such wise cur-

7 This work is enlivened with a variety of little illustrative stories, not ill told, of which the following is a specimen. “ An Italian havynge a sute here in Englande to the archbushoppe of Yorke that then was, and commynge to Yorke when one of the Prebendaries there brake his bread, as they terme it, and thereupon made a solemne longe diner, the whiche perhaps began at eleuen and continued well nigh till fower in the afternoone, at the whiche dinner this bishoppe was: It fortuned that as they were sette, the Italian knockt at the gate, vnto whom the porter, perceiuing his errand, answered, that my lorde bishoppe was at diner. The Italian departed, and returned betwixte twelve and one; the porter answered they were yet at diinner. He came againe at two of the clocke; the porter tolde hym thei had not half dined. He came at three a clocke, vnto whom the porter in a heate answered neuer a worde, but churlishlie did shutte the gates vpon him. Wherevpon, others told the Italian, that ther was no speaking with my Lord, almoste all that daie, for the solemne diner sake. The gentelman Italian, wonderynge muche at suche a long sitting, and greatly greued because he could not then speake with the archbushoppes grace, departed straight towardes London; and leauynge the dispatche of his matters with a dere frende of his, toke his iourney towardes Italie. Three yeres after, it hapened that an Englishman came to Rome, with whom this Italian by chance fallynge acquainted, asked him if he knewe the archbushoppe of Yorke? The Englishman said, he knewe hym right well. I praie you tell me, quoth the Italian, *what that archbushop yet dined?*” The Italian explaining himself, they both laughed heartily. fol. 78. b. 79. a.

He commends Dr. Haddon's latinity, which is not always of the purest cast. “ There is no better Latine man within England, except Gualter Haddon the lawier.” fol. 63. a. Again, he commends a prosopopeia of the duchess of Suffolk, in Haddon's *Oratio de vita et obitu fratrum Suffolciensium Henrici et Caroli Brandon.* [edit. Hatcher, Lond. 1577. 4to. p. 89. viz. LUCUBRATIONES G. Haddon.] fol. 94. a.

He mentions John Heiwood's PROVERBS. [See supr. p. 91.] “ The English Proverbes gathered by Jhon Heiwoode helpe well in this behaulfe [allegory], the which commonlie are nothyng els but Allegories, and dark deuised sentences.” fol. 90. a. Again, for furnishing similitudes, “ The Prouerbes of Heiwood helpe wonderfull well for thys purpose.” fol. 96. b.

He condemns, in an example, the growing practice of mothers who do not suckle their own children, which he endeavours to prove to be both against the law of nature and the will of God. fol. 56. a. Here is an early proof of a custom, which may seem to have originated in a more luxurious and delicate age.

To these miscellaneous extracts I shall only add, that our author who was always esteemed a sincere advocate for protestantism, and never suspected of leaning to popery, speaking of an artificial memory, has this theory concerning the use of images in churches. “ When I see a lion, the image thereof abideth faster in my minde, than if I should heare some reporte made of a lion. Emong all the fences, the iye [eye] fight is most quicke, and containeth the impression of thinges more assuredlie than any of the other fences doc. And the rather, when a manne both heareth and seeth a thing, (as by artificiall memorie he doeth almost see thinges,

" tall their sentences, that thei had neede to make a commen-
 " tary immediatelie of their meanyng, or els the moſte that
 " heare them ſhal be forced to kepe counſaile. Some wil ſpeake
 " oracles, that a man can not tell, which waie to take them.
 " Some will be ſo fine, and ſo poetically withall, that to their
 " ſeming there ſhall not ſtande one heare [hair] amiſſe, and yet
 " euery bodie els ſhall think them meter [fitter] for a ladies
 " chamber, than for an earneſt matter in any open aſſembly.
 " —Some uſe overmuch repetition of one letter, as *pitifull*
 " *povertie prayeth for a penie, but puffed preſumpcion paſſeth not*
 " *a point, pamperying his panche with peſtilent pleaſure, procurying*
 " *his paſſeport to poſte it to hell pitte, there to be puniſhed with*
 " *paines perpetuall.*" Others, he blames for the affectation of
 ending a word with a vowel and beginning the next with another.
 " Some, he ſays, ende their ſentences al alike, making their
 " talke [ſtyle] rather to appere rimed meter, than to ſeme plaine
 " ſpeache.—I heard a preacher² delityng muche in this kinde
 " of compoſicion, who uſed ſo often to ende his ſentence with
 " wordes like vnto that which went before, that in my iudge-
 " mente, there was not a dozen ſentences in his whole ſermon
 " but thei ended all in rime for the moſte parte. Some, not
 " beſt diſpoſed, wiſhed the Preacher a Lute, that with his
 " rimed ſermon he might uſe ſome pleaſaunte melodie, and ſo
 " the people might take pleaſure diuers waies, and daunce if
 " thei liſte." Some writers, he obſerves, diſturbed the natural
 arrangement of their words: others were copious when they
 ſhould be concife. The moſt frequent fault ſeems to have been,
 the rejection of common and proper phraſes, for thoſe that were
 more curious, refined, and unintelligible³.

" things liuely,) he doeth remember it
 " muche the better. The ſight printeth
 " things in a mans memorie as a ſeale
 " doeth printe a mans name in waxe. And
 " therefore, heretofore Images were ſette
 " vp for remembraunce of ſainctes, to be
 " LAIE-MENNES BOOKES, that the rather
 " by ſeying [ſeeing] the pictures of ſuche
 " men, thei might be ſtirred to followe

" their good living. — Marry, for this
 " purpoſe whereof we now write, this would
 " haue ſerued gallie well." fol. 111. a.

² Preaching and controverſial tracts oc-
 caſioned much writing in Engliſh after the
 reformation.

³ Fol. 85. a. b. 86. a. One Thomas
 Wiſſon tranſlated the *DIANA* of Monte-
 mayer, a paſtoral Spaniſh romance, about
 the

The English RHETORIC of Richard Sherry, school-master of Magdalene college at Oxford, published in 1555^b, is a jejune and a very different performance from Wilfon's, and seems intended only as a manual for school-boys. It is entitled, "A treatise of the figures of grammar and rhetorike, profitable to all that be studious of eloquence, and in especiall for such as in grammar scholes doe reade moste eloquente poetes and oratours. Wherevnto is ioyned the Oration which Cicero made to Cesar, geuing thanks vnto him for pardonyng and restoring again of that noble man Marcus Marcellus. Sette fourth by Richarde Sherrye Londonar, 1555^c." William Fullwood, in his *Enemie of idleness, teaching the manner and style howe to endyte and write all sorts of epistles and letters, set forth in English by William Fullwood merchant*, published in 1571^d, written partly in prose and partly in verse, has left this notice. "Whoso will more circumspectly and narrowly entreat of such matters, let them read the retorique of maister doctour Wilfon, or of maister Richard Rainolde^e." I have never seen Richard Rainolde's RHETORIC, nor am I sure that it was ever printed. The

the year 1595, which has been assigned as the original of the TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA. He could hardly be our author, unless that version was one of his early juvenile exercises. This translator Wilfon I presume is the person mentioned by Meres as a poet, "Who for learning and extemporall witte in this facultie is without compare or compeere, as to his great and eternall commendations he manifested in his challenge at the Swanne on the Bank side." WITS TREAS. edit. 1598. 12mo. ut supr. fol. 285. p. 2. Again, he mentions one Wilfon as an eminent dramatic writer, perhaps the same. Ibid. fol. 282. There is, by one Thomas Wilfon, an EXPOSITION ON THE PSALMS, Lond. 1591. 4to. And an EXPOSITION ON THE PROVERBS, Lond. 1589. 4to. Among the twelve players sworn the queen's servants in 1583, were "two rare men, viz. Thomas Wilfon for a quicke, delicate, refi-

ned extemporall witte, and Richard Tarleton, &c." Stowe's ANN. edit. 1615. fol. 697.

^b But there seems to have been a former edition by Richard Day, 1550, in octavo.

^c For Richard Tottell. 12mo. In 74 leaves.

^d In four books, 12mo. It is dedicated to the master, wardens, and company of Merchant Taylors London. "Think not Apelles painted picce." PR. "The ancient poet Lucanus." The same person translated into English, THE CASTLE OF MEMORIE, from William Gratarol, dedicated to lord Robert Dudley, master of the horse to the queen, Lond. for W. Howe in Fleetstreet, 1573. 8vo. DEP. begins, "Syth noble Maximilian kyng."

^e Fol. 7. a. In 1562, "the Booke of Retoryke," of which I know no more, is entered to John Kyngeston, REGISTR. STATION, A. fol. 87. b.

The author, Rainolde, was of Trinity college in Cambridge, and created doctor of medicine in 1567^f. He wrote also a Latin tract dedicated to the duke of Norfolk, on the condition of princes and noblemen^g: and there is an old CRONICLE in quarto by one Richard Reynolds^h. I trust it will be deemed a pardonable anticipation, if I add here, for the sake of connection, that Richard Mulcaster, who from King's college in Cambridge was removed to a Studentship of Christ-church in Oxford about the year 1555, and soon afterwards, on account of his distinguished accomplishments in philology, was appointed the first master of Merchant-Taylor's school in Londonⁱ, published a book which contains many judicious criticisms and observations on the English language, entitled, "The first part of the ELEMENTARIE, which entreateth chiefly of the right writing of the English tung, sett forth by Richard Mulcaster, Lond. 1582^k." And, as many of the precepts are delivered in metre, I take this opportunity of observing, that William Bullokar published a "Bref grammar for English, Imprinted at

^f MSS. Cat. Graduat. Univ. Cant.

^g MSS. Stillingfl. 160. "De statu nobilitatis virorum et principum."

^h Of the Emperors, from Julius Cæsar to Maximilian. Licenced to T. Marthe, in 1566. REGISTR. STATION. A. fol. 154. b.

ⁱ In 1561. It was then just founded as a profeminary for saint John's college Oxford, in a house called the Manour of the Rose in saint Lawrence Pounteney, by the company of Merchant-Taylors. Saint John's college had been then established about seven years, which Mulcaster soon filled with excellent scholars till the year 1586. In the Latin plays acted before queen Elizabeth and James the first at Oxford, the students of this college were distinguished. This was in consequence of their being educated under Mulcaster. He was afterwards, in 1596, master of saint Paul's school. He was a prebendary of Salisbury, and at length was rewarded by the queen with the opulent rectory of Standford-Rivers in Essex, where he died in

1611. He was elected scholar of King's college Cambridge in 1548. MSS. Hatcher. And Contin. Hatch. Celebrated in its time was his CATECHISMUS PAULINUS in usum Scholæ Paulinæ conscriptus, Lond. 1601. 8vo. &c. It is in long and short verse. Many of Mulcaster's panegyrics in Latin verse may be seen prefixed to the works of his cotemporaries. A copy of his Latin verses was spoken before queen Elizabeth at Kenilworth-castle in 1575. See G. Gascoyne's NARRATIVE, &c. Signat. A. iij.

^k Most elegantly printed, in the white letter, by Thomas Vautrollier in quarto. It contains 272 pages. The second part never appeared. His "POSITIONS, wherein those primitive circumstances be examined which are necessary for the training up of children either for skill in their booke or health in their bodies," [Lond. 1581. 1587. 4to.] have no connection with this work.

" London

“ London by Edmund Bollifant, 1586¹.” This little piece is also called, “ W. Bullokar’s abbreviacion of his Grammar for English extracted out of his Grammar at larg for the speedie parcing of English spech, and the eazier coming to the knowledge of grammar for other langages^m.” It is in the black letter, but with many novelties in the type, and affectations of spelling. In the preface, which is in verse, and contains an account of his life, he promises a dictionary of the English language, which, he adds, will make his third workⁿ. His first work I apprehend to be “ A Treatise of Orthographie in English by William Bullokar,” licenced to Henry Denham in 1580^o. Among Tanner’s books is a copy of his *bref grammar* abovementioned, interpolated and corrected with the author’s own hand, as it appears, for a new impression. In one of these manuscript insertions, he calls this, “ the first grammar for English that euer waz, except my *grammar at large*^v.”

The French have vernacular critical and rhetorical systems at a much higher period. I believe one of their earliest is “ Le JARDIN de plaisir et FLEUR de rhétorique, contenant plusieurs beaux livres.” It is in quarto, in the gothic type with wooden cuts, printed at Lyons by Olivier Arnoullet for Martin Boullon, and without date. But it was probably printed early in 1500^s. In one of its poems, *LA PIPEE ou chasse de dieu d’amour*, is cited the year 1491^t. Another edition, in the same letter,

¹ Coloph. “ Qd W. Bullokar.” 12mo. It contains 68 pages.

^m Fol. 1.

ⁿ Here he says also, that he has another volume lying by him *of more fame*, which is not to see the light till christened and called forth by the queen.

^o Jun. 10. REGISTR. STATION. B. fol. 169. a. But I must not forget, that in 1585, he published, “ Esop’s fables in true orthography, with grammar notz. Her-unto ar also coioned the thorte sentencez of the wyz Cato, imprinted with lyke form and order: both of which

“ authorz ar translated out of Latin into English by William Bullokar.” 12mo.

^p Fol. 68. In his metrical preface he says, that he served in the army under sir Richard Wingfield in queen Mary’s time. There is “ A petee schole of spellinge and writinge English,” licenced to Butter, Jul. 20. 1580. REGISTR. B. fol. 171. a.

^q There is another, I suppose a second, edition, without date, in black letter, with wooden cuts, in folio, containing two hundred and forty-eight leaves, exclusive of the tables. This has some improvements.

^r Stance, 22. fol. 134.

but in octavo, appeared at Paris in 1547, *Veuve de Jehan Tréperel et Jehan Jebannot*. Beside the System of Rhetoric, which is only introductory, and has the separate title of *L'ART DE RHETORIQUE, de ses couleurs, figures et e'peces*¹, it comprehends a miscellaneous collection of *Balades, rondeaux, chansons, dictiés, comedies*, and other entertaining little pieces², chiefly on the subject of the sentimental and ceremonious love which then prevailed. The whole, I am speaking of the oldest edition, contains one hundred and ninety leaves. The RHETORIC is written in the short French rhyme: and the tenth chapter consists of rules for composing Moralities, Farces, Mysteries, and other ROMANS. That chapter is thus introduced, under the Latin rubric PROSECUTIO.

Expediez font neuf chapitres,
Il faut un dixième exposer:
Et comme aussi des derniers titers,
Qu'on doit a se propos poser,
Et comme l'on doit composer
Moralités, Farces, Misteres;
Et d'autres Rommans disposer
Selon les diverses matieres.

The Latin rubrics to each species are exceedingly curious. "Decimum Capitulum pro forma compilandi MORALITATES. — Pro COMEDIS". — Pro MISTERIIS compilandis." Receipts to make poems have generally been thought dull. But what shall we think of dull receipts for making dull poems? Gratian du Pont, a gentleman of Thoulouse, printed in 1539 the "Art et Science de Rhetorique metrisée". It must be

¹ From fol. 2. a. to fol. 14. a.

² But the compiler has introduced "Le DONNET, traité de grammaire baillé au feu roi Charles viii." fol. 20. a. One of the pieces is a MORISQUE, in which the actors are Amoreuse grace, Enuieuse

jalouise, Espoir de parvenir, Tout habandonne, Sot penser. fol. 32. b.

³ The farce, or comedy, must have,

"Chose qui soit mélodieuse,
"Matiere qui soit comédieuse, &c."

⁴ Par N. Viellard, 4to.

remembered,

remembered, that there had been an early establishment of prizes in poetry at Tholoufe, and that the seven troubadours or rhetoricians at Tholoufe, were more famous in their time than the seven sages of Greece*. But the "Grand et vrai Art de

* See Verdier ii. 649. From an ingenious correspondent, who has not given me the honour of his name, and who appears to be well acquainted with the manners and literature of Spain, I have received the following notices relating to this institution, of which other particulars may be seen in the old French History of Languedoc. "At the end of the second volume of Mayan's *ORIGINES DE LA LINGUA ESPANOLA*, printed in duodecimo at Madrid in 1737, is an extract from a manuscript entitled, *Libro de la Arte de Trovar*, & *Gaya Sciencia*, por Don Enrique de Villena, said to exist in the library of the cathedral of Toledo, and perhaps to be found in other libraries of Spain. It has these particulars.—The *TROVADORES* had their origin at Tholoufe, about the middle of the twelfth century. A *CONSISTORIO de la Gaya Sciencia* was there founded by Ramon Vidal de Besalin, containing more than one hundred and twenty celebrated poets, and among these, princes, kings, and emperors. Their art was extended throughout Europe, and gave rise to the Italian and Spanish poetry, *Servio el Garona de Hippocrene*. To Ramon Vidal de Besalin succeeded Jofre de Foza, Monge negro, who enlarged the plan, and wrote what he called *Continuacion de trovar*. After him Belenguer de Troya came from Majorca, and compiled a treatise *de Figuras y Colores Rhetoricos*. And next Gul. Vedal of Majorca wrote *La Suma Vitulina*. To support the *GAYA SCIENCIA* at the poetical college of Tholoufe, the king of France appropriated privileges and revenues: appointing seven *Mantenedores*, que liciesen *Leyes*. These constituted the *LAW OF LOVE*, which were afterwards abridged by Guill. Moluier under the title *Tratado de las Flores*. Next Fray Ramon framed a system called *Doctrinal*, which was censured by Castillon. From thence nothing was written in Spanish on the subject, till the time of

Don Enrique de Villena.—So great was the credit of the *GAY SCIENCE*, that Don Juan the first king of Arragon, who died 1393, sent an embassy to the king of France, requesting that some *Troubadours* might be transmitted to teach this art in his kingdom. Accordingly two *Mantenedores* were dispatched from Tholoufe, who founded a college for poetry in Barcelona, consisting of four *Mantenedores*, a Cavalier, a Master in Theology, a Master in Laws, and an honourable Citizen. Disputes about Don Juan's successor occasioned the removal of the college to Tortosa. But Don Ferdinand being elected King, Don Enrique de Villena was taken into his service: who restored the college, and was chosen principal. The subjects he proposed, were sometimes, the Praises of the Holy Virgin, of Arms, of Love, y de *buenas Costumbres*. An account of the ceremonies of their public Acts then follows, in which every composition was recited, being written *en papeles Damasquinos de diversas colores, con letras de oro y de plata, et iluminaduras formosas, lo mayor qua cada una podia*. The best performance had a crown of gold placed upon it: and the author, being presented with a *jeya*, or prize, received a licence to *cantar y decir in publico*. He was afterwards conducted home in form, escorted among others by two *Mantenedores*, and preceded by minstrels and trumpets, where he gave an entertainment of confects and wine."—[See *supr.* vol. i. 149. 467.]

There seems to have been a similar establishment at Amsterdam, called *Rhetorischer camer*, or the *CHAMBER OF RHETORICIANS*, mentioned by Isaacus Pontanus. Who adds, "Sunt autem hi rhetores viri amani et poetici spiritus, qui lingua vernacula, aut prosa aut versa oratione, comedias, tragedias, subindeque et multas personas, et facta maiorum notantes, magna spectantium voluptate exhibent."

RER.

“plein Rhetorique” in two books, written by Pierre Fabri, properly Le Fevre, an ecclesiastic of Rouen, for teaching elegance in prose as well as rhyme, is dated still higher. Goujet mentions a Gothic edition of this tract in 1521⁷. It contains remarks on the versification of mysteries and farces, and throws many lights on the old French writers.

But the French had even an ART OF POETRY so early as the year 1548. In that year Thomas Sibilet published his *Art poetique* at Paris, *Veuve François Regnault*⁸. This piece preserves many valuable anecdotes of the old French poetry: and, among other particulars which develop the state of the old French drama, has the following sensible strictures. “The French farce contains little or nothing of the Latin comedy. It has neither acts nor scenes, which would only serve to introduce a tedious prolixity: for the true subject of the French farce, or SOTTIE, is every sort of foolery which has a tendency to provoke laughter. — The subject of the Greek and Latin comedy was totally different from every thing on the French stage. For it had more morality than drollery, and often as much truth as fiction. Our MORALITIES hold a place differently between tragedy and comedy: but our farces are

RER. ET URB. AMST. Lib. ii. c. xvi. pag. 118. edit. 1611. fol. In the preceding chapter, he says, that this fraternity of rhetoricians erected a temporary theatre, at the solemn entry of prince Maurice into Amsterdam in 1594, where they exhibited in DUMB SHOW the history of David and Goliath. Ibid. c. xv. p. 117.

Meteranus, in his Belgic history, speaks largely of the annual prizes, assemblies, and contests, of the guilds or colleges of the rhetoricians, in Holland and the Low Countries. They answered in rhyme, questions proposed by the dukes of Burgundy and Brabant. At Ghent in 1539, twenty of these colleges met with great pomp, to discuss an ethical question, and each gave a solution in a moral comedy, magnificently presented in the public theatre. In 1561,

the rhetorical guild of Antwerp, called the VIOLET, challenged all the neighbouring cities to a decision of the same sort. On this occasion, three hundred and forty rhetoricians of Brussels appeared on horseback, richly but fantastically habited, accompanied with an infinite variety of pageantries, sports, and shows. These had a garland, as a reward for the superior splendor of their entry. Many days were spent in determining the grand questions: during which, there were feasting, bonfires, farces, tumbling, and every popular diversion. BELG. HISTOR. UNIVERSAL. fol. 1597. Lib. i. pag. 31, 32.

⁷ BIBL. FR. 361. He mentions another edition in 1539. Both at Paris, 12mo.

⁸ In 16mo.

“really

“ really what the Romans called mimes, or *Priapées*, the intended end and effect of which was excessive laughter, and on that account they admitted all kinds of licentiousness, as our farces do at present. In the mean time, their pleasantries does not derive much advantage from rhymes, however flowing, of eight syllables^a.” Sibilet’s work is chiefly founded on Horace. His definitions are clear and just, and his precepts well explained. The most curious part of it is the enumeration of the poets who in his time were of most repute. Jacques Pelletier du Mans, a physician, a mathematician, a poet, and a voluminous writer on various subjects both in prose and verse, also published an *ART POËTIQUE* at Lyons, in 1555^b. This critic had sufficient penetration to perceive the false and corrupt taste of his cotemporaries. “ Instead of the regular ode and sonnet, our language is sophisticated by *ballads*, *roundeaux*, *lays*, and *triolet*s. But with these we must rest contented, till the farces which have so long infatuated our nation are converted into comedy, our martyr-plays into tragedy, and our romances into heroic poems^c.” And again, “ We have no pieces in our language written in the genuine comic form, except some affected and unnatural *MORALITIES*, and other plays of the same character, which do not deserve the name of comedy. The drama would appear to advantage, did it but resume its proper state and antient dignity. We have, however, some tragedies in French learnedly translated, among which is the *HECUBA* of Euripides by Lazare de Baif, &c^d.” Of rhyme the same writer says, “ S’il n’etoit question que de parler ornement, il ne faudroit sinon écrire en prose, ou s’il n’etoit question que de rimer, il ne faudroit, sinon rimer en farceur; mais en poësie, il faut faire tous les deux, et BIEN DIRE, et

^a Liv. ii. ch. viii. At the end of Sibilet’s work is a critical piece of Quintil against Ch. Fontaine, first printed separately at Paris, 1538. 16mo.

^b By Jean de Tournes. 8vo.

^c Ch. de l’ODE.

^d Ch. DE LA COMEDIE ET DE LA TRAGEDIE. See also, to the same purpose, Colletet *Sur la poësie morale*, and Guillaume des Autels, *Repos d’un plus grand travail*.

“ BIEN

“BIEN RIMER.” His chapters on IMITATION and TRANSLATION have much more philosophy and reflection than are to be expected for his age, and contain observations which might edify modern critics^f. Nor must I forget, that Pelletier also published a French translation of Horace’s ART OF POETRY at Paris in 1545^g. I presume, that Joachim du Bellay’s *Déffense et Illustration de la LANGUE FRANÇOISE* was published at no great distance from the year 1550. He has the same just notion of the drama. “As to tragedies and comedies, if kings and states would restore them in their antient glory, which has been usurped by farces and MORALITIES, I am of opinion that you would lend your assistance; and if you wish to adorn our language, you know where to find models^h.”

The Italian vernacular criticism began chiefly in commentaries and discourses on the language and phraseology of Dante, Petrarch, and Boccace. I believe one of the first of that kind is, “Le tre Fontane di Nicolò Liburnio sopra la grammatica, e l’eloquenza di Dante, del Petrarca, e del Boccaccio. In Venezia, per Gregorio Gregori, 1526ⁱ.” Numerous expositions, lectures, annotations, and discourses of the same sort, especially on Dante’s *Inferno*, and the Florentine dialect, appeared soon afterwards. Immediately after the publication of their respective poems, Ariosto, whose *ORLANDO FURIOSO* was styled the *nuova poesia*, and Tasso, were illustrated or expounded by commentators more intricate than their text. One of the earliest of these is, “Spofizione de Simon Fornari da Reggio sopra l’Orlando Furioso di Lodovico Ariosto. In Firenze per Lorenzo Torrentino 1549^k.” Perhaps the first criticism on what the Italians call the Volgar Lingua is by Pietro Bembo, “Prose di Pietro Bembo della volgar Lingua divise in tre libri. In

^o Liv. ii. ch. i. De la RIME.

^f See Liv. i. ch. v. and vi.

^g Par Michel Vascofan. 8vo.

^h Liv. ii. ch. iv.

ⁱ In quarto. Again, per Marchio Sessa, 1534. 8vo.

^k In 8vo. The *Seconde Partie* appeared *ibid.* 1550. 8vo.

“Firenze

“ Firenze per Lorenzo Torrentino, 1549¹.” But the first edition seems to have been in 1525. This subject was discussed in an endless succession of *Regole grammaticali*, *Offervazioni*, *Avvertimenti*, and *Ragionamenti*. Here might also be mentioned, the annotations, although they are altogether explanatory, which often accompanied the early translations of the Greek and Latin classics into Italian. But I resign this labyrinth of research to the superior opportunities and abilities of the French and Italian antiquaries in their native literature. To have said nothing on the subject might have been thought an omission, and to have said more, impertinent. I therefore return to our own poetical annals.

Our three great poets, Chaucer, Gower, and Lydgate, seem to have maintained their rank, and to have been in high reputation, during the period of which we are now treating. Splendid impressions of large works were at this time great undertakings. A sumptuous edition of Gower's *CONFESSIO AMANTIS* was published by Berthelette in 1554. On the same ample plan, in 1555, Robert Braham printed with great accuracy, and a diligent investigation of the ancient copies, the first correct edition of Lydgate's *TROYBOKE*^m. I have before incidentally remarkedⁿ, that Nicholas Briggam, a polite scholar, a student at Oxford and at the Inns of Court, and a writer of poetry, in the year 1555, deposited the bones of Chaucer under a new tomb, erected at his own cost, and inscribed with a new epitaph, in the chapel of bishop Blase in Westminster abbey, which still remains^o. Wilson, as we have just seen in a citation from his *RHETORIC*, records an anecdote, that the more accomplished and elegant courtiers were perpetually quoting Chaucer. Yet

¹ In quarto.

^m Nothing can be more incorrect than the first edition in 1513.

ⁿ See *supr.* vol. ii. p. 44.

^o Undoubtedly Chaucer was originally buried in this place. Leland cites a Latin elegy, or *NÆNIA*, of thirty-four lines, which he says was composed by Stephanus Surigonus of Milan, at the request of
VOL. III.

William Caxton the printer: and which, Leland adds, was written on a white tablet by Surigonus, on a pillar near Chaucer's grave in the fourth ile at Westminster. *SCRIPT. BRIT. GALFRID. CHAUCERUS*. See Caxton's *EPILOGUE* to Chaucer's *BOOKE OF FAME*, in Caxton's *CHAUCER*. Wood says, that Briggam “exercised his
“ muse much in poetry, and took great
Y y “ delight

this must be restricted to the courtiers of Edward the sixth. And indeed there is a peculiar reason why Chaucer, exclusive of his real excellence, should have been the favorite of a court which laid the foundations of the reformation of religion. It was, that his poems abounded with satyrical strokes against the corruptions of the church, and the dissolute manners of the monks. And undoubtedly Chaucer long before, a lively and popular writer, greatly assisted the doctrines of his cotemporary Wickliffe, in opening the eyes of the people to the absurdities of popery, and exposing its impostures in a vein of humour and pleasantry. Fox the martyrologist, a weak and a credulous compiler, perhaps goes too far in affirming, that Chaucer has undeniably proved the pope to be the antichrist of the apocalypse^p.

Of the reign of queen Mary, we are accustomed to conceive every thing that is calamitous and disgusting. But when we turn our eyes from its political evils to the objects which its literary history presents, a fair and flourishing scene appears. In this prospect, the mind feels a repose from contemplating the fates of those venerable prelates, who suffered the most excruciating death for the purity and inflexibility of their faith; and whose unburied bodies, dissipated in ashes, and undistinguished in the common mass, have acquired a more glorious monument, than if they had been interred in magnificent shrines, which might have been visited by pilgrims, loaded with superstitious gifts, and venerated with the pomp of mistaken devotion.

"delight in the works of Jeffrey Chaucer: for whose memory he had so great a respect, that he removed his bones into the south cross-ile or transept of S. Peter's church, &c." АН. Охон. i. 130. I do not apprehend there was any

removal, in this case, from one part of the abbey to another. Chaucer's tomb has appropriated this aisle, or transept, to the sepulture or to the honorary monuments of our poets.

^p Tom. ii. p. 42. edit. 1684.

S E C T.