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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, 1778**

Section V. Lydgate's Troy-Boke. A paraphrase of Colonna's Historia Trojana. Homer, when, and how, first known in Europe. Lydgate's powers in rural painting. Dares and Dictys. Feudal manners, and ...

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## SECT. V.

THE third of Lydgate's poems which I proposed to consider, is the TROY BOKE, or the DESTRUCTION OF TROY. It was first printed at the command of king Henry the eighth, in the year 1513, by Richard Pinson, with this title, "THE HYSTORY SEGE AND DESTRUCCION OF TROYE. *"The table or rubricke of the content of the chapitres, &c. Here after foloweth the TROYE BOKE, otherwise called the SEGE OF TROYE. Translated by JOHN LYDGATE monke of Bury, and emprinted at the commaundement of oure soueraygne lorde the kynge Henry the eighth, by Richarde Pinson, &c. the yere of our lorde god a M.cccccc. and XIII<sup>n</sup>."* Another, and a much more correct edition followed, by Thomas Marshe, under the care of one John Braham, in the year 1555°. It was begun in the year 1414, the last year of the reign of king Henry the fourth. It was written at that prince's

\* Among other curious decorations in the title page, there are soldiers firing great guns at the city of Troy. Caxton, in his RECVYLE OF THE HYSTORIES OF TROYE, did not translate the account of the final destruction of the city from his French author Rauol le Feure, "for as muche as that worshipfull and religious man Dan John Lydgate monke of Burye did translate it but late, after whose worke I feare to take upon me, &c." At the end of B. ii.

° With this title. "The auncient historie, and only true and syncere cronicle, of the warres betwixte the Grecians and the Troyans, and subsequently of the fyrst evercyon of the auncient and famousse cyte of Troye under Laomedon the king, and of the last and fynall destruction of the same under Pryam: wrytten by Daretus a Troyan and Dictus

"a Grecian, both souldiours and present at and in all the sayd warres, and digested in Latyn by the learned Guydo de Columpnis, and sythes translated into English verse by John Lydgate moncke of Burye and newly imprinted." The colophon, "Imprinted at London in Fletestrete at the sygne of the Princes Armes by Thomas Marshe. Anno. do. M.D.L.V." This book was modernised, and printed in five-lined stanzas, under the title, "THE LIFE AND DEATH OF HECTOR, &c. written by John Lydgate monk of Berry, &c. At London, printed by Thomas Purfoot. Anno Dom. 1614." fol. But I suspect this to be a second edition. *Princip.* "In Thessalie king Peleus once did raigne." See Farmer's ESSAY, p. 39. 40. edit. 1767. This spurious TROYE-BOKE is cited by Fuller, Winstanley, and others, as Lydgate's genuine work.

Vol. II.

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command,

command, and is dedicated to his successor. It was finished in the year 1420. In the Bodleian library there is a manuscript of this poem elegantly illuminated, with the picture of a monk presenting a book to a king<sup>2</sup>. From the splendour of the decorations, it appears to be the copy which Lydgate gave to Henry the fifth.

This poem is professedly a translation or paraphrase of Guido de Colonna's romance, entitled HISTORIA TROJANA<sup>3</sup>. But whether from Colonna's original Latin, or from a French version<sup>4</sup> mentioned in Lydgate's Prologue, and which existed soon after the year 1300, I cannot ascertain<sup>5</sup>. I have before observed<sup>6</sup>, that Colonna formed his Trojan History from Dares Phrygius and Dictys Cretensis<sup>7</sup>; who perpetually occur as authorities in Lydgate's translation. Homer is however referred to in this work; particularly in the catalogue, or enumeration, of the ships which brought the

<sup>2</sup> MSS. Digb. 232.

<sup>3</sup> *Princip.* "Licet cotidie vetera recentioribus obruantur."

<sup>4</sup> Of a Spanish version, by Petro Nunez Degaldo, see Nic. Anton. Bibl. Hispan. tom. ii. p. 179.

<sup>5</sup> See *supr.* vol. i. p. 127. Notes. Yet he says, having finished his version, B. v. Signat. EE. i.

I have no more of *Latin* to translate, After Dytes, Dares, and Guydo.

Again, he despairs of translating Guido's *Latin* elegantly, B. ii. c. x. See also B. iii. Sign. R. iii. There was a French translation of Dares printed, Cadom. 1573. See WORKS OF THE LEARNED, A. 1703, p. 222.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* p. 126.

<sup>7</sup> As Colonna's book is extremely scarce, and the subject interesting, I will translate a few lines from Colonna's Prologue and Postscript. From the Prologue. "These things, originally written by the Grecian Dictys and the Phrygian Dares, (who were present in the Trojan war, and

"faithful, relators of what they saw,) are transferred into this book by Guido, of Colonna, a judge. — And although a certain Roman, Cornelius by name, the nephew of the great Sallustius, translated Dares and Dictys into Latin, yet, attempting to be concise, he has very improperly omitted those particulars of the history, which would have proved most agreeable to the reader. In my own book therefore every article belonging to the Trojan story will be comprehended."—And in his Postscript. "And I Guido de Colonna have followed the said Dictys in every particular; for this reason, because Dictys made his work perfect and complete in every thing.— And I should have decorated this history with more metaphors and ornaments of style, and by incidental digressions, which are the pictures of composition. But deterred by the difficulty of the work, &c." Guido has indeed made Dictys nothing more than the ground-work of his story. All this is translated in Lydgate's Prologue.

several

several Grecian leaders with their forces to the Trojan coast. It begins thus, on the testimony of Colonna\*.

*Myne auctor* telleth how Agamamnon,  
The worthi kyng, an hundred shippis brought.

And is closed with these lines,

Full many shippes was in this navye,  
More than GUIDO maketh rehersayle,  
Towards Troye with Grekes for to sayle:  
For as HOMER in his discrypcion  
Of Grekes shippes maketh mencion,  
Shortly affirminge the man was never borne  
That such a nombre of shippes sawe to forne<sup>†</sup>.

In another place Homer, notwithstanding *all his rbetoryke and sugred eloquence*, his *lustly songes* and *dytees swete*, is blamed as a prejudiced writer, who favours the Greeks<sup>‡</sup>: a censure, which flowed from the favorite and prevailing notion held by the western nations of their descent from the Trojans. Homer is also said to paint with colours of gold and azure<sup>§</sup>. A metaphor borrowed from the fashionable art of illumining. I do not however suppose, that Colonna, who flourished in the middle of the thirteenth century, had ever seen Homer's poems: he might have known these and many other particulars, contained in the Iliad, from those factitious his-

\* From Dict. Cretens. lib. i. c. xvii. p. 17. seq. edit. Dacer. Amstel. 1702. 4to. And Dar. Phryg. cap. xiv. p. 158. *ibid.* There is a very ancient edition of Dares in quarto, without name or place. Of Dictys at Milan, 1477. 4to. Dares is in German, with cuts, by Marcus Tattius, August. Vindel. 1536. fol. Dictys, by John Herold, at Basil, 1554. Both in Russian, at Moscow, 1712. 8vo.

† B. ii. c. xvi.

‡ B. iv. c. xxxi. And in the PROLOGUE, Virgil is censured for following *the traces*

*of HOMERIS style*, in other respects a *true* writer. We have the same complaint in our author's FALL OF PRINCIS. See *supr.* And in Chaucer's HOUSE OF FAME, Colonna is introduced, among other authors of the Trojan story, making this objection to Homer's veracity. B. iii. p. 468. col. 1. v. 389. Urr. edit.

§ One said that OMERE made lies,  
And feinyng in his poetries;  
And was to the Grekes favorable,  
And therefore held he it but fable.

‡ B. iv. c. xxxi. Signat. X. ii.

torians whom he professes to follow. Yet it is not, in the mean time, impossible, that Lydgate might have seen the Iliad, at least in a Latin translation. Leontius Pilatus, already mentioned, one of the learned Constantinopolitan exiles, had translated the Iliad into Latin prose, with part of the Odyssey, at the desire of Boccacio<sup>a</sup>, about the year 1360. This appears from Petrarch's Epistles to his friend Boccacio<sup>b</sup>: in which, among other curious circumstances, the former requests Boccacio to send him to Venice that part of Leontius's new Latin version of the Odyssey, in which Ulysses's descent into hell, and the vestibule of Erebus, are described. He wishes also to see, how Homer, blind and an Asiatic, had described the lake of Averno and the mountain of Circe. In another part of these letters, he acknowledges the receipt of the Latin Homer; and mentions with how much satisfaction and joy the report of its arrival in the public library at Venice was received, by all the Greek and Latin scholars of that city<sup>c</sup>. The Iliad was also translated into French verse, by Jacques Milet, a licentiate of laws, about the year 1430<sup>d</sup>. Yet I cannot believe that Lydgate had ever consulted these translations, although he had travelled in France and Italy. One may venture to pronounce peremptorily, that he did not understand, as he probably never had seen, the original. After the migration of the Roman emperors to Greece, Boccacio was the first European that could read Homer; nor was there perhaps a copy of either of Homer's poems existing in Europe, till about the time the Greeks were driven

<sup>a</sup> It is a slight error in Vigneul Marville, that this translation was procured by Petrarch. *Mel. Litt.* tom. i. p. 21. The very ingenious and accurate author of *MEMOIRES POUR LA VIE DE PETRARQUE*, is mistaken in saying that Hody supposes this version to have been made by Petrarch himself. *liv. vi. tom. iii. p. 633.* On the contrary, Hody has adjusted this matter

with great perspicuity, and from the best authorities. *DE GRÆC. ILLUSTR.* lib. i. c. 1. p. 2. seq.

<sup>b</sup> *SENIL.* lib. iii. Cap. 5.

<sup>c</sup> Hody, *ubi sup.* p. 5. 6. 7. 9. The Latin Iliad in prose was published under the name of Laurentius Valla, with some slight alterations, in 1497.

<sup>d</sup> *Mem. de Litt.* xvii. p. 761. ed. 4to.

by

by the Turks from Constantinople\*. Long after Boccacio's time, the knowledge of the Greek tongue, and consequently of Homer, was confined only to a few scholars. Yet some ingenious French critics have insinuated, that Homer was familiar in France very early; and that Christina of Pifa, in a poem never printed, written in the year 1398, and entitled *L'ÉPIQUE D'OTHEA A HECTOR*<sup>1</sup>, borrowed the word *Othea*, or *WISDOM*, from  $\omega \theta \epsilon \alpha$  in Homer, a formal appellation by which that poet often invokes *Minerva*<sup>2</sup>.

This poem is replete with descriptions of rural beauty, formed by a selection of very poetical and picturesque circumstances, and cloathed in the most perspicuous and musical numbers. The colouring of our poet's<sup>3</sup> mornings is often remarkably rich and splendid.

When that the rowes<sup>4</sup> and the rayes redde  
Eastward to us full early ginnen spredde,  
Even at the twylyght in the dawneynge,  
Whan that the larke of custum ginneth synge,  
For to salüè<sup>5</sup> in her heavenly laye,  
The lusty goddesse of the morowe graye,  
I meane Aurora, which afore the sunne  
Is wont t'<sup>6</sup> enchase the blackè skyès dunne,  
And al the darknesse of the dimmy night:  
And freshe Phebùs, with comfote of his light,

\* See Boccac. *GENEAL. DEOR.* xv. 6. 7. Theodorus archbishop of Canterbury in the seventh century brought from Rome into England a manuscript of Homer; which is now said to be in Bennet library at Cambridge. See the *SECOND DISSERTATION*. In it is written with a modern hand, *Hic liber quondam THEODORI archiepiscopi Cant.* But probably this *Theodore* is *THEODORE Gaza*, whose book, or whose transcript, it might have been. *Hody, ubi supr. Lib. i. c. 3. p. 59. 60.*

<sup>1</sup> In the royal manuscripts of the British

Museum, this piece is entitled *LA CHEVALERIE SPIRITUELLE de ce monde.* 17 E. iv. 2.

<sup>2</sup> *Monf. L'Abbè Sallier, Mem. Litt.* xvii. p. 518.

<sup>3</sup> Streaks of light. A very common word in Lydgate. *Chaucer, Kn. T. v. 597. col. 2. Urr. p. 455.*

And while the twilight and the rowis red-  
Of Phebus light.—

<sup>4</sup> Salute.

<sup>5</sup> Chase.

And

And with the brightnes of his bemès shene,  
 Hath overgylt the hugè hyllès grene;  
 And flourès eke, agayn the morowe-tide,  
 Upon their stalkes gan playn <sup>1</sup> their leavès wide <sup>2</sup>.

Again, among more pictures of the same subject.

When Aurorà the sylver droppès shene,  
 Her teares, had shed upon the freshè grene;  
 Complaynyng aye, in weping and in forowe,  
 Her chyldren's death on every sommer-morowe:  
 That is to sayè, when the dewe so soote,  
 Embawmed hath the floure and eke roote  
 With lustie lycour in Aprill and in Maye:  
 When that the larke, the messenger of daye,  
 Of custum aye Aurora doth salúe,  
 With fundry notes her forowe to <sup>3</sup> tranfmùè <sup>4</sup>.

The spring is thus described, renewing the buds or blossoms of the groves, and the flowers of the meadows.

And them whom winter's blastes have shaken bare  
 With sotè blofomes freshly to repare;  
 And the meaddòws of many a fundry hewe,  
 Tapitid ben with divers flourès newe  
 Of fundry motles <sup>5</sup>, lusty for to sene;  
 And holsome balm is shed among the grene.

Frequently in these florid landscapes we find the same idea differently expressed. Yet this circumstance, while it weakened the description, taught a copiousness of diction, and a variety of poetical phraseology. There is great softness and facility in the following delineation of a delicious retreat.

<sup>1</sup> Open.    <sup>2</sup> B. i. c. vi.    <sup>3</sup> Change.    <sup>4</sup> B. iii. c. xxiii.    <sup>5</sup> Colours.

Tyll at the last, amonge the bowès glade,  
 Of adventure, I caught a plefaunt shade;  
 Ful-smothe, and playn, and lusty for to sene,  
 And softe as velvette was the yongè grene:  
 Where from my hors I did alight as fast,  
 And on a bowe aloft his reynè cast.  
 So faynte and mate of werynessè I was,  
 That I me layd adowne upon the gras,  
 Upon a brinckè, shortly for to telle,  
 Besyde the river of a cristall wellè;  
 And the watèr, as I rehersè can,  
 Like quickè-sylver in his streames yran,  
 Of which the gravell and the bryghtè stone,  
 As any golde, agaynst the sun yshone<sup>2</sup>.

The circumstance of the pebbles and gravel of a transparent stream glittering against the sun, which is uncommon, has much of the brilliancy of the Italian poetry. It recalls to my memory a passage in Theocritus, which has been lately restored to its pristine beauty.

Εύρον αεανναον κραναν ὑπο λισσαδι πέτρῃ,  
 Ὑδαὶ πεπληθῦαν ἀκηραῖα· αἱ δ' ὑπενερέθεν  
 Λαλλὰι κρυσταλλῶ ἢ ἀργυρῶ ἰδαλλοντο  
 Ἐκ βυθῶ. — —

*They found a perpetual spring, under a high rock,  
 Filled with pure water: but underneath  
 The pebbles sparkled as with crystal and silver  
 From the bottom.* — —

There is much elegance of sentiment and expression in the portrait of Cressida weeping when she parts with Troilus.

<sup>2</sup> B. ii. cap. xii.

<sup>1</sup> Διοσκουρ. Idyll. xxii. v. 37.

And



And from her eyn the teare's round drops tryll,  
 That al fordewed have her blackè wede;  
 And eke untruffd her haire abroad gan sprede,  
 Lyke golden wyre, forrent and alto torn.—  
 And over this, her freshe and rosey hewe,  
 Whylom ymeynt \* with whitè lyles newe,  
 Wyth wofull wepyng pyteously disteynd;  
 And lyke the herbes in April all bereynd,  
 Or floures freshè with the dewès swete,  
 Ryght so her chekès moystè were and wete †.

The following verses are worthy of attention in another style of writing, and have great strength and spirit. A knight brings a steed to Hector in the midst of the battle.

And brought to Hector. Sothly there he stoode  
 Among the Grekes, al bathed in their bloode:  
 The which in haste ful knightly he bestrode,  
 And them amonge like Mars himselfe he rode †.

The strokes on the helmets are thus expressed, striking fire amid the plumes.

But strokys felle, that men might herden ryng,  
 On bassenets, the fieldès rounde aboute,  
 So cruelly, that the fyrè sprange oute  
 Amonge the tuftès brodè, bright and shene,  
 Of foyle of golde, of fethers white and grene †.

The touches of feudal manners, which our author affords, are innumerable: for the Trojan story, and with no great difficulty, is here entirely accommodated to the ideas of romance. Hardly any adventure of the champions of the round table

\* Mingled.  
 † B. iii. c. xxv. So again of Polyxena,  
 B. iv. c. xxx.

And aye she rentè with her fingers smale  
 Her golden heyre upon her blackè wede.  
 † B. iii. c. xxii.  
 † B. ii. c. xviii.

was more chimerical and unmeaning than this of our Grecian chiefs: and the cause of their expedition to Troy was quite in the spirit of chivalry, as it was occasioned by a lady. When Jason arrives at Cholcos, he is entertained by king Oetes in a Gothic castle. Amadis or Lancelot were never conducted to their fairy chambers with more ceremony and solemnity. He is led through many a hall and many a tower, by many a stair, to a sumptuous apartment, whose walls, richly painted with the histories of antient heroes, glittered with gold and azure.

Through many a halle, and many a riche toure,  
By many a tourne, and many divers waye,  
By many a gree \* ymade of marbyll graye.—  
And in his chambre', englofed' bright and cleare,  
That shone ful shene with gold and with asure,  
Of many image that ther was in picture,  
He hath commaunded to his offycers,  
Only' in honour of them that were straungers,  
Spyces and wyne<sup>z</sup>. — —

The siege of Troy, the grand object of the poem, is not conducted according to the classical art of war. All the military machines, invented and used in the crusades, are assembled to demolish the bulwarks of that city, with the addition of great guns. Among other implements of destruction borrowed from the holy war, the Greek fire, first discovered at Constantinople, with which the Saracens so greatly annoyed the Christian armies, is thrown from the walls of the besieged<sup>a</sup>.

\* *Græce. Degrec. Step. Stair. Gradur.*  
y Painted. Or y. Englofed. Skelton's  
CROWNE OF LAWRELL, p. 24. edit. 1736.

Wher the possis wer enbulioned with sa-  
phir's indy blewe  
Englofed glitteringe, &c.

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<sup>z</sup> B. i. c. v. See Colonna, Signat. b.

<sup>a</sup> B. ii. c. xviii. See supr. vol. i. p. 157.  
In Caxton's TROY-BOOK, Hercules is  
said to make the *fire artificall* as well as  
Cacus, &c. ii. 24.

N

Nor

Nor are we only presented in this piece with the habits of feudal life, and the practices of chivalry. The poem is enriched with a multitude of oriental fictions, and Arabian traditions. Medea gives to Jason, when he is going to combat the brazen bulls, and to lull the dragon who guarded the golden fleece asleep, a marvellous ring; in which was a gem whose virtue could destroy the efficacy of poison, and render the wearer invisible. It was the same sort of precious stone, adds our author, which Virgil celebrates, and which Venus sent her son Eneas that he might enter Carthage unseen. Another of Medea's presents to Jason, to assist him in this perilous achievement, is a silver image, or talisman, which defeated all the powers of incantation, and was framed according to principles of astronomy<sup>b</sup>. The hall of king Priam is illuminated at night by a prodigious carbuncle, placed among sapphires, rubies, and pearls, on the crown of a golden statue of Jupiter, fifteen cubits high<sup>c</sup>. In the court of the palace, was a tree made by magic, whose trunk was twelve cubits high; the branches, which overshadowed distant plains, were alternately of solid gold and silver, blossomed with gems of various hues, which were renewed every day<sup>d</sup>. Most of these extravagancies, and a thousand more, are in Guido de Colonna, who lived when this mode of fabling was at its height. But in the fourth book, Dares<sup>e</sup> Phrygius is particularly cited for a description of Priam's palace, which seemed to be founded by FAYRIE, or enchantment; and was paved with crystal, built of diamonds, sapphires, and emeralds, and supported by ivory pillars, surmounted with golden images<sup>f</sup>. This is not, however, in Dares. The warriors who came to the assistance of the Trojans, afford an ample field for invention. One of them belongs to a region of forests; amid the gloom of which wander many monstrous beasts, not real, but ap-

<sup>b</sup> Ibid.<sup>c</sup> B. ii. c. xi.<sup>d</sup> B. ii. c. xi.<sup>e</sup> Cap. xxvi.

pearances

pearances or illusive images, formed by the deceptions of necromancy, to terrify the traveller<sup>e</sup>. King Epistrophus brings from the land beyond the Amazons, a thousand knights; among which is a terrible archer, half man and half beast, who neighs like a horse, whose eyes sparkle like a furnace, and strike dead like lightning<sup>h</sup>. This is Shakespeare's DREADFUL SAGITTARY<sup>i</sup>. The Trojan horse, in the genuine spirit of Arabian philosophy, is formed of brass<sup>k</sup>; of such immense size, as to contain a thousand soldiers.

Colonna, I believe, gave the Trojan story its romantic additions. It had long before been falsified by Dictys and Dares; but those writers, misrepresenting or enlarging Homer, only invented plain and credible facts. They were the basis of Colonna: who first filled the faint outlines of their fabulous history with the colourings of eastern fancy, and adorned their scanty forgeries with the gorgeous trappings of Gothic chivalry. Or, as our author expresses himself in his Prologue, speaking of Colonna's improvements on his originals.

For he ENLUMINETH, by crafte and cadence,  
This noble story with many a FRESHE COLOURE  
Of rhetorike, and many a RYCHE FLOURE  
Of eloquence, to make it sound the bett<sup>l</sup>.

Clothed with these new inventions; this favourite tale descended to later times. Yet it appears, not only with these, but with an infinite variety of other embellishments, not fabricated by the fertile genius of Colonna, but

<sup>e</sup> B. ii. c. xviii.

<sup>h</sup> So described by Colonna, Signat. n 4. seq.

<sup>i</sup> Ibid. And B. iii. c. xxiv. The Sagittary is not in Dictys or Dares. In whom also, these warriors are but barely named, and are much fewer in number. See Dar. cap. xviii. p. 161. Dict. lib. ii. cap. xxxv. p. 51. The description of the persons of Helen, and of the Trojan and Grecian

heroes [B. ii. c. xv.] is from Dares through Colonna, Daret. Hist. c. xli. p. 156. seq.

<sup>k</sup> In Dictys "tabulatis extruitur ligneis." lib. v. c. x. p. 113. In Gower he is also a *hors of brass*. Conf. Amant. lib. i. fol. xiiii. a. col. 1. From Colonna, Signat. t 4. Here also are Shakespeare's fabulous names of the gates of Troy. Signat. d 4. seq.

<sup>l</sup> Better.

adopted from French enlargements of Colonna, and incorporated from romances on other subjects, in the French *RECYVEL OF TROY*, written by a French ecclesiastic, Rauol le Feure, about the year 1464, and translated by Caxton<sup>1</sup>.

The description of the city of Troy, as newly built by king Priam, is extremely curious; not for the capricious incredibilities and absurd inconsistencies which it exhibits<sup>m</sup>, but because it conveys anecdotes of antient architecture, and especially of that florid and improved species, which began to grow fashionable in Lydgate's age. Although much of this is in Colonna. He avoids to describe it geometrically, having never read Euclid. He says that Priam procured,

— Eche carver, and curious joyner,  
To make knottes with many a queint floure  
To fette on crestes within and eke without.—

That he sent for such as could "grave, groupe, or carve,  
"were sotyll in their fantasyc, good devyfours, marveyulous  
"of castinge, who could raise a wall with batayling and  
"crestes marciall, every imageour in entayle", and every  
"portreyour who could paynt the work with fresh hewes,  
"who could pullish alabaster, and make an ymage."

And yf I shulde reherfen by and by,  
The corvè knottes by craft of mafonry;

<sup>1</sup> As for instance, Hercules having killed the eleven giants of Cremona, builds over them a vast tower, on which he placed eleven images of metal, of the size and figure of the giants. B. ii. c. 24. Something like this, I think, is in *Amadis de Gaul*. Robert Braham, in the *EPISTLE TO THE READER*, prefixed to the edition of Lydgate's *TROY-BOOK* of 1555, is of opinion, that the fables in the French *RECYVEL* ought to be ranked with the *trifeling tales* and *barrayne Incredibles* of *ROBYN HODE* and *BEVYS OF HAMPTON*, and are not to be compared with the *sayth-*

*ful* and *trouve* reports of this history given by Dares Phrygius and Dictys Cretensis.

<sup>m</sup> It is three days journey in length and breadth. The walls are two hundred cubits high, of marble and alabaster, and machicolated. At every angle was a crown of gold, set with the richest gems. There were great guns in the towers. On each turret were figures of savage and monstrous beasts in brass. The gates were of brass, and each has a portcullis. The houses were all uniform, and of marble, sixty cubits high.

<sup>n</sup> Intaglia.

The

The fresh embowing ° with verges right as lynes,  
 And the houfyng full of bachewines,  
 The ryche coynng, the lusty tablemènts,  
 Vinettes † running in casemènts.—  
 Nor how they put, instedè of mortère,  
 In the joyntoures, coper gilt ful clere;  
 To make them joyne by levell and by lyne,  
 Among the marbell freshly for to shyne  
 Agaynst the funne, whan that his shenè light  
 Smote on the goldè that was burned bright.

The fides of every street were covered with *freshe alures* ‡ of marble, or cloisters, crowned with rich and lofty pinnacles, and fronted with tabernacular or open work †, vaulted like the dormitory of a monastery, and called *deambulatories*, for the accommodation of the citizens in all weathers.

And every house ycovered was with lead;  
 And many a gargoyle, and many a hideous head,  
 With spoutès thorough, &c.—

And again, of Priam's palace.

And the walles, within and eke without,  
 Endilong were with knottes graven clere,  
 Depeynt with asure, golde, cinople', and grene.—  
 And al the wyndowes and eche fenestrall  
 Wrought were with beryll and of clere crystall.

° Arching.

† *Vignettes*.

‡ Allies, or covert-ways. Lat. *Alura*. viz. "ALURA quæ ducit a coquina con-  
 "ventus, usque ad cameram prioris."  
 Hearne's OTTERR. Pref. Append. p. cxi.  
 Where Hearne derives it from ALA, a  
 wing, or fide. Rather from *Aller*, whence  
 Allée, Fr. *Alley*. Robert of Gloucester men-

tions the ladies standing "upe [upon]  
 "the *alurs* of the castle," to see a tourna-  
 ment. See *supr.* vol. i. p. 50. The word  
*Alura* is not in Du Cange.

† Like the latticed stone-work, or *can-*  
*celli*, of a Gothic shrine.

‡ Said to have been invented by Marchion  
 of Arezzo. Walpole, ANECD. PAINT. i.  
 p. 111.

With

With regard to the reality of the last circumstance, we are told, that in Studley castle in Shropshire, the windows, so late as the reign of Elizabeth, were of beryl<sup>1</sup>.

The account of the Trojan theatre must not be omitted, as it displays the imperfect ideas of the stage, at least of dramatic exhibition, which now prevailed; or rather, the absolute inexistence of this sort of spectacle. Our author supposes, that comedies and tragedies were first represented at Troy<sup>2</sup>. He defines a comedy to begin with complaint and to end with *gladnesse*: expressing the actions of those only who live in the lowest condition. But tragedy, he informs us, begins in prosperity, and ends in adversity: shewing the wonderful vicissitudes of fortune which have happened in the lives of kings and mighty conquerours. In the theatre of Troy, he adds, was a pulpit, in which stood a poet, who rehearsed the *noble dedes that were historial of kynges, prynces, and worthy emperours*; and, above all, related those fatal and sudden catastrophes, which they sometimes suffered by murther, poison, conspiracy, or other secret and unforeseen machinations.

And this was tolde and redde by the poete.  
And while that he in the pulpet stode  
With deadly face all devoyd of blode,  
Syngyng his dities with tresses al to rent;  
Amydde the theatre, shrowded in a tent,  
There came out men, gassfull of their cheres,  
Disfygured their faces with vyferes,

<sup>1</sup> Harrison's DESCRIPT. BRIT. Cap. xii. p. 188. The occupations of the citizens of Troy are mentioned. There were goldsmiths, jewellers, embroiderers, weavers of woollen and linen, of cloth, of gold, damask, sattin, velvet, *sendel*, or a thin silk like cypress, and double *samyte*, or satin. Smiths, who forged poll-axes, spears, and *quarrel-heads*, or cross-bow darts shaped

square. Armourers, Bowyers, Fletchers, makers of trappings, banners, standards, penons, and for the *fulde fresbe and gaye GETOURS*. I do not precisely understand the last word. Perhaps it is a sort of ornamented armour for the legs.

<sup>2</sup> All that follows on this subject, is not in Colonna.

Playing

Playing by signès in the people's syght  
 That the poete songe hathe on height<sup>u</sup>:  
 So that there was no maner discourdaunce,  
 Atween his ditees and their countenaunce.  
 For lyke as he aloftè dyd expresse  
 Wordes of joyè or of hevinessè,—  
 So craftely they<sup>w</sup> could them<sup>x</sup> transfygure<sup>r</sup>.

It is added, that these plays, or *rytes of tragedyes old*, were acted at Troy, and in the theatre halowed and yholde, when the months of April and May returned.

In this detail of the dramatic exhibition which prevailed in the ideal theatre of Troy, a poet, placed on the stage in a pulpit, and characteristically habited, is said to have recited a series of tragical adventures; whose pathetic narrative was afterwards expressed, by the dumb gesticulations of a set of masqued actors. Some perhaps may be inclined to think, that this imperfect species of theatric representation, was the rude drama of Lydgate's age. But surely Lydgate would not have described at all, much less in a long and laboured digression, a public shew, which from its nature was familiar and notorious. On the contrary, he describes it as a thing obsolete, and existing only in remote times. Had a more perfect and legitimate stage now subsisted, he would not have deviated from his subject, to communicate unnecessary information, and to deliver such minute definitions of tragedy and comedy. On the whole, this formal history of a theatre, conveys nothing more than an affected display of Lydgate's learning; and is collected, yet with apparent inaccuracy and confusion of circumstances, from what the antient grammarians have left concerning the origin of the Greek tragedy.

<sup>u</sup> "That which the poet sung, standing  
 "in the pulpit."  
<sup>w</sup> The actors.

<sup>x</sup> Themselves.  
 Lib. ii. cap. x. See also, B. iii. c.  
 xxviii.

Or



Or perhaps it might be borrowed by our author from some French paraphrastic version of Colonna's Latin romance.

Among the antient authors, beside those already mentioned, cited in this poem, are Lollius for the history of Troy, Ovid for the tale of Medea and Jason, Ulysses and Polyphemus, the Myrmidons and other stories, Statius for Polynices and Eteocles, the venerable Bede, Fulgentius the mythologist, Justinian with whose institutes Colonna as a civilian must have been well acquainted, Pliny, and Jacobus de Vitriaco. The last is produced to prove, that Philometer, a famous philosopher, invented the game of chess, to divert a tyrant from his cruel purposes, in Chaldea; and that from thence it was imported into Greece. But Colonna, or rather Lydgate, is of a different opinion; and contends, in opposition to his authority, that this game, *so sotyll and so marvaylous*, was discovered by *prudent clerkes* during the siege of Troy, and first practiced in that city. Jacobus de Vitriaco was a canon regular at Paris, and, among other dignities in the church, bishop of Ptolemais in Palestine, about the year 1230. This tradition of the invention of chess is mentioned by Jacobus de Vitriaco in his *ORIENTAL AND OCCIDENTAL HISTORY*. The anecdote of Philometer is, I think, in Egidius Romanus on this subject, above-mentioned. Chaucer calls Athalus, that is Attalus Philometer, the same person, and who is often mentioned in Pliny, the inventor of chess<sup>1</sup>.

I must not pass over an instance of Lydgate's gallantry, as it is the gallantry of a monk. Colonna takes all opportunities of satirising the fair sex; and Lydgate with great politeness declares himself absolutely unwilling to translate those passages of this severe moralist, which contain such unjust and illiberal misrepresentations of the female character. Instead of which, to obviate these injurious reflections, our translator enters upon a formal vindication of

<sup>1</sup> Colonna calls him, *ille FABULARIUS Salmonensis, — fabulose commentans, &c.* Signat. b 2.

<sup>2</sup> In three books.

<sup>3</sup> DREME, p. 408. col. 2. edit. Urr.

the ladies; not by a panegyric on their beauty, nor encomiums on those amiable accomplishments, by which they refine our sensibilities, and give elegance to life; but by a display of that religious fortitude with which some women have suffered martyrdom; or of that inflexible chastity, by means of which others have been snatched up alive into heaven, in a state of genuine virginity. Among other striking examples which the calendar affords, he mentions the transcendent grace of the eleven thousand virgins who were martyred at Cologne in Germany. In the mean time, female saints, as I suspect, in the barbarous ages were regarded with a greater degree of respect, on account of those exaggerated ideas of gallantry which chivalry inspired: and it is not improbable that the distinguished honours paid to the virgin Mary might have partly proceeded from this principle.

Among the anachronistic improprieties which this poem contains, some of which have been pointed out, the most conspicuous is the fiction of Hector's sepulchre, or tomb: which also merits our attention for another reason, as it affords us an opportunity of adding some other notices of the modes of antient architecture to those already mentioned. The poet from Colonna supposes, that Hector was buried in the principal church of Troy, near the high altar, within a magnificent oratory, erected for that purpose, exactly resembling the Gothic shrines of our cathedrals, yet charged with many romantic decorations.

With crafty archys raysyd wonder clene,  
 Embowed over all the work to cure,  
 So marveylous was the celature:  
 That al the rose, and closure envyrowne,  
 Was of <sup>b</sup> fyne goldè plated up and downe,  
 With knottès gravè wonder curyous  
 Fret ful of stony's rich and precious, &c.

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<sup>b</sup> With.

O

The

The structure is supported by angels of gold. The steps are of crystal. Within, is not only an image of Hector in solid gold; but his body embalmed, and exhibited to view with the resemblance of real life, by means of a precious liquor circulating through every part in golden tubes artificially disposed, and operating on the principles of vegetation. This is from the chemistry of the times. Before the body were four inextinguishable lamps in golden sockets. To complete the work, Priam founds a regular chantry of priests, whom he accommodates with mansions near the church, and endows with revenues, to sing in this oratory for the soul of his son Hector<sup>c</sup>.

In the Bodleian library, there is a prodigious folio manuscript on vellum, a translation of Colonna's *TROJAN HISTORY* into verse<sup>d</sup>; which has been confounded with Lydgate's *TROYE-BOKE* now before us. But it is an entirely different work, and is written in the short minstrel-metre. I have given a specimen of the Prologue, above<sup>e</sup>. It appears to me to be Lydgate's *TROYE-BOKE* divested of the octave stanza, and reduced into a measure which might more commodiously be sung to the harp<sup>f</sup>. It is not likely that Lydgate is its

<sup>c</sup> B. iii. c. xxviii. Joseph of Exeter in his Latin poem entitled *ANTIOCHEIS*, or the *CRUSADE*, has borrowed from this tomb of Hector, in his brilliant description of the mausoleum of Teuthras. lib. iv. 451. I have quoted the passage in the *SECOND DISSERTATION*. Signat. i.

<sup>d</sup> MSS. Laud. K. 76. fol.

<sup>e</sup> Supr. vol. i. p. 119. 120.

<sup>f</sup> It may, however, be thought, that this poem is rather a translation or imitation of some French original, as the writer often refers to *The Romance*. If this be the case, it is not immediately formed from the *TROYE-BOKE* of Lydgate, as I have suggested in the text. I believe it to be about Lydgate's age; but there is no other

authority for supposing it to be written by Lydgate, than that, in the beginning of the Bodleian manuscript now before us, a hand-writing, of about the reign of James the first, assigns it to that poet. I will give a few lines from the poem itself; which begins with Jason's expedition to Colcos, the constant prelude to the Trojan story in all the writers of this school.

In Colkos ile a cite was,  
That men called hanne Jaconitas;  
Ffair, and mekel\*, large, and long,  
With walles huge and wondir strong,  
Fful of toures, and heye paleis,  
Off rich knyghtes, and burgeis:  
A kyng that tyme hete † Eetes  
Gouerned than that lond in pes ‡,

With

\* Great.

† Hight, named.

‡ Peace.

author: that he should either thus transform his own composition, or write a new piece on the subject. That it was a poem in some considerable estimation, appears from the size and splendour of the manuscript: and this circumstance

With his baronage, and his meynè,  
Dwellen thanne in that cité:  
Ffor al aboute that riche toun  
Stode wodes, and parkis, enviroun,  
That were replenyched wonderful  
Of herte, and hynd, bore, and bul,  
And othir many savage bestis,  
Betwixt that wode and that forestis,  
Ther was large conray and playn,  
Ffaire wodes, and champayn  
Fful of semely-rennyng welles,  
As the ROMANÇE the sothe || telles,  
Withoute the cite that ther sprong,  
Ther was of briddes michel fong,  
Thorow al the zer § and michel cry,  
Of al joyes gret melody.  
To that cité [of] Etes  
Zode \* Jafon and Hercules,  
And al the ffelawes that he hadde  
In clothe of golde as kynges he cladde, &c.

Afterwards, the forcerefs Medea, the king's daughter, is thus characterised.

Sche couthe the science of clergy,  
And mochel of nigramauncy.—  
Sche coude with conjurifouns,  
With here schleyght †, and oresouns,  
The day, that was most fair and lyght,  
Make as darke as any nyght;  
Sche couthe also, in felcouthe wise,  
Make the wynde both blowe and rise,  
And make him so loude blowe,  
As it schold howfes overthrowe.  
Sche couth turne, verament,  
All weders †, and the firmament, &c.

The reader, in some of these lines, observes the appeal to *The romance* for authority. This is common throughout the poem, as I have hinted. But at the close,

the poet wishes eternal salvation to the soul of the author of the *Romançe*.

And he that this *romançe* wroght and made,  
Lord in heven thow him glade.

If this piece is translated from a French romance, it is not from the antient metrical one of Benoit, to whom, I believe, Colonna is much indebted; but perhaps from some later French romance, which copied, or translated, Colonna's book. This, among other circumstances, we may collect from these lines.

Dares the heraud of Troye says,  
And Dites that was of the Gregeis, &c.  
And after him cometh *maister Gy*,  
That was of Rome a notary.

This *maister Gy*, or *Guy*, that is Guido of Colonna, he adds, wrote this history,

In the *manere* I schall telle.

That is "my author, or romance, follows "Colonna." [See *supr.* vol. i. p. 127.] *Dares the heraud* is Dares Phrygius, and *Dites Dictys Cretensis*.

This poem, in the Bodleian manuscript aforesaid, is finished, as I have partly observed, with an invocation to god, to save the author, and the readers, or hearers; and ends with this line,

Seythe alle Amen for charite.

But this rubric immediately follows, at the beginning of a page. "*Hic bellum de Troys* "*ffinit et Greci transferunt versus patriam* "*suam.*" Then follow several lined pages of vellum, without writing. I have never seen any other manuscript of this piece.

† Truth. § Year. \* Came. † Slight, art. † Wetters.

induces me to believe, that it was at a very early period ascribed to Lydgate. On the other hand, it is extraordinary that the name of the writer of so prolix and laborious a work, respectable and conspicuous at least on account of its length, should have never transpired. The language accords with Lydgate's age, and is of the reign of Henry the sixth: and to the same age I refer the hand-writing, which is executed with remarkable elegance and beauty.

SECT.