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The History Of English Poetry

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

Warton, Thomas

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Section VI. Reign of Henry the sixth continued. Hugh Campeden translates the French romance of Sidrac. Thomas Chestre's Sir Launfale. Metrical romance of the Erle of Tholouse. Analysis of its Fable. ...

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S E C T. VI.

TWO more poets remain to be mentioned under the reign of Henry the sixth, if mere translation merit that appellation. These are Hugh Campeden and Thomas Chester.

The first was a great traveller, and translated into English verse the French romance of SIDRAC^f. This translation, a book of uncommon rarity, was printed with the following title, at the expence of Robert Saltwood, a monk of saint Austin's convent at Canterbury, in the year 1510. "The Historie of king Boccus and SYDRACKE how he confoundyd his lerned men, and in the fight of them dronke stronge venyme in the name of the trinite and dyd him no hurt. Also his divynite that he lerned of the boke of Noe. Also his profesyes that he had by revelation of the angel. Also his aunsweris to the questyons of wysdom both morall and naturall with muche wysdom contayned in [the] nnumber cccclxv. Translated by Hugo of Caumpeden out of French into Englifshe, &c^h. There is no fort of elegance in the diction, nor harmony in the versification. It is in the minstrel-metreⁱ.

^f See supr. vol. i. p. 143.

^h With a wooden cut of Bocchus, and Sidracke. There is a fine manuscript of this translation, Bibl. Bodl. MSS. Laud. G. 57. pergam.

ⁱ MS. Laud. G. 57. Princip.

Men may fynde in olde bookes.

Who soo yat in them lookes

That men may mooche here

And yercfore yff yat yee wolle lere.

I shall teche yooowe a lytill jesse

That befell oonys in the este

There was a kyng that Boctus hyght

And was a man of mooche myght

His londe lay de grete Inde

Bectorye hight hit as we fynde

After the tyme of Noee even

VIIJ^o hundred yere fourty and seven.

The kyng Boctus hym be thought
That he would have a citee wrought
The rede Jewes fro hym spere
And for to mayntene his were
A yensit a kyng that was hys foo
And hath mooste of Inde longyng hym too
His name was Garaab the kyng
Bocchus tho proved all this thing
And finartly a towre begenne he
There he wolde make his citee
And it was right at the incomyng
Of Garabys londe the kyng
The mafons with grete laboure
Beganne to worke uppon the toure
And all that they wroghten on day
On night was hit done away
On morn when Boctus hit herde
Hee was wroth that hit so ferde

And:

Thomas Chestre appears also to have been a writer for the minstrels. No anecdote of his life is preserved. He has left a poem entitled Sir LAUNFALE, one of Arthur's knights; who is celebrated with other champions in a set of French metrical tales or romances, written by some Armorican bard, under the name of LANVAL^k. They are in the British Museum^l.

And dyd hyt all new begynne
At even when they shuld blynne
Off worke when they went to reste
In the night was all downe heste
Well vii monthes this thei wrought
And in the night avaylid yt nought
Boecus was wroth wonderly
And callid his folke that was hym by
Councellith me lordinges seyde hee
Howe I may beste make this citee
They sayde sir fendith a noon
Aftir your philosophers everychon
And the aftronomers of your londe
Of hem shall yee counsell fonde.
Afterwards king Traclabare is requested to send

— the booke of astronomye
That whilom Noe had in baylye,
together with his aftronomer Sidracke.
At the end.

And that Hugh of Campedene
That this boke hath thorough focht
And unto Englysh ryme hit brought.
Sidrake, who is a christian, at length builds
the tower in *Nomine S. Trinitatis*, and he
teaches Bocchus, who is an idolater, many
articles of true religion. The only manu-
script I have seen of this translation is
among MSS. Laud. G. 57. fol. ut supr.
^k It begins thus.

LAUNFAL MILES.

Le douzty Artours dawes
That held Engeland in good lawe,
Ther fell a wondyr cas,
Of a ley * that was yfette,
That hyzt LAUNFAL and hatte zette.
Now herkeneth how hyt was;
Douzty Artour some whyle
Sojournede yn Kerdenyle †,
With joye and greet solas,
And knyztz sbat wer profitable,
With Artour of the rounde table,
Never noon better ther was.
Sere Perfevall, and syr Gawyn,

* Liege. † Or, Kerdevyle. f. Caerliffe.

Syr Gyherther, and syr Agrayn,
And Lancelot du Lake,
Syr Kay, and syr Ewayn,
That well couthe fyzt yn playn,
Bateles for to take.
Kyng Ban Boort, and kyng Bos,
Of ham ther was a greet los,
Men sawe tho no wher || her † make.
Syr Galafre, and syr LAUNFALE,
Whereof a noble tale
Among us shall a wake.

With Artour ther was a bachelor
And hadde y be well many a zer,
LAUNFAL for foot § he hyzt,
He gaf gyftes largelyche
Gold and sylver and clothes ryche,
To squyer and to knyzt.
For hys largesse and hys bounte
The kinges steward made was he
Ten yer I you plyzt,
Of alle the knyztz of the table rounde
So large there was noon y founde,
Be days ne be nyzt.

So hyt befyll yn the tenth zere
Marlyn was Artours counsalare,
He radde him for to wende
To kyng Ryon of Irlond ryzt,
And fette hym ther a lady bryzt
Gwenere hys daughter hende, &c.
In the conclusion.

THOMAS CHESTER made thys tale
Of the noble knyzt syr Launfale
Good of chyvalrye:
Jesús that ys hevене kyng
Zeve us all hys blesyng
And hys moder Mariye.

EXPLICIT LAUNFALE.

Never printed. MSS. Coutn. CALIG. A.
2. f. 33. I am obliged to doctor Percy for
this transcript. It was afterwards altered
into the romance of sir LAMBWELL.

^l MSS. Harl. 978. 112. fol. i. 154.
"En Bretains l'apellent LAUNVAL."
See a note at the beginning of DISS. i.

|| Ther. † Masch. § Seth.

I think I have seen some evidence to prove, that Chrestre was also the author of the metrical romance called the ERLE OF THOLOUSE^m. This is one of the romances called LAIS by the poets of Britany, or Armorica: as appears from these lines,

In romance this gest
A LEYⁿ of BRITAYN callyd I wys, &c.

And that it is a translation, appears from the reference to an original, "The *Romans* telleth so." I will however give the outlines of the story, which is not uninteresting, nor inartificially constructed.

Dioclesian, a powerful emperour in Germany, has a rupture with Barnard earl of Tholouse, concerning boundaries of territory. Contrary to the repeated persuasions of the emprefs, who is extremely beautiful, and famous for her conjugal fidelity, he meets the earl, with a numerous army, in a pitched battle, to decide the quarrel. The earl is victorious, and carries home a great multitude of prisoners, the most respectable of which is sir Tralabas of Turkey, whom he treats as his companion. In the midst of their festivities they talk of the beauties of the emprefs; the earl's curiosity is inflamed to see so matchless a lady, and he promises liberty to sir Tralabas, if he can be conducted unknown to the emperour's court, and obtain a sight of her without discovery. They both set forward, the earl disguised like a hermit. When they arrive at the emperour's court, sir Tralabas proves false: treacherously imparts the secret to the emprefs that he has brought with him the earl

^m Never printed. MSS. Ashmol. Oxon.
45. 4to. [6926.] And MSS. More. Camb.
27. *Princip.*

Jesu Criss in trinite,
Only god in persons thre, &c.
Lefe frendys I shall you telle
Of a tale that sometyme befell

Far in unkouthe lade,
Howe a lady had grete myschese, &c.

ⁿ Perhaps *ley* in the fourth line of sir LAUNFAL may mean Lay in this sense. See note at the beginning of the FIRST DISSERTATION.

of

of Tholouſe in diſguiſe, who is enamoured of her celebrated beauty; and propoſes to take advantage of ſo fair an opportunity of killing the emperour's great and avowed enemy. She rejects the propoſal with indignation, enjoyns the knight not to communicate the ſecret any farther, and deſires to ſee the earl next day in the chapel at maſs. The next day the earl in his hermit's weeds is conveniently placed at maſs. At leaving the chapel, he aſks an alms of the emperſs; and ſhe gives him forty florins and a ring. He receives the preſent of the ring with the higheſt ſatisfaction, and although obliged to return home, in point of prudence, and to avoid detection, comforts himſelf with this reflection.

Well is me, I have thy grace,
Of the to have thys thyng!
If ever I have grace of the,
That *any love betweene us be,*
This may be a TOKENYNG.

He then returns home. The emperour is called into ſome diſtant country; and leaves his confort in the cuſtody of two knights, who attempting to gain her love without ſucceſs, contrive a ſtratagem to defame her chaſtity. She is thrown into priſon, and the emperour returns unexpectedly, in conſequence of a viſion. The tale of the two treacherous knights is believed, and ſhe is ſentenced to the flames: yet under the reſtriction, that if a champion can be found who ſhall foil the two knights in battle, her honour ſhall be cleared, and her life ſaved. A challenge is publiſhed in all

* The emperour's diſappointment is thus deſcribed.

Anon to the chamber went he,
He longyd fore his wyf to ſe,
That was ſo ſwete a wyght:
He callyd them that ſhulde her kepe,
Where is my wif is ſhe on ſlepe?

How farys that byrd ſo bryght?
The traytors anſweryd anon,
And ye wiſt how ſhe had done, &c.—
The yonge knyght fir Artour,
That was her hervour, &c.
For bale his armys abrode he ſprede,
And fell in ſwoone on his bed.

parts

parts of the world; and the earl of Tholouse, notwithstanding the animosities which still subsist between him and the emperour, privately undertakes her quarrel. He appears at the emperour's court in the habit of a monk, and obtains permission to act as confessor to the empress, in her present critical situation. In the course of the confession, she protests that she was always true to the emperour; yet owns that once *she gave a ring to the earl of Tholouse*. The supposed confessor pronounces her innocent of the charge brought against her; on which one of the traitorous knights affirms, that the monk was suborned to publish this confession, and that he deserved to be consumed in the same fire which was prepared for the lady. The monk pretending that the honour of his religion and character was affected by this insinuation, challenges both the knights to combat: they are conquered; and the empress, after this trial, is declared innocent. He then openly discovers himself to be the earl of Tholouse, the emperour's antient enemy. A solemn reconciliation ensues. The earl is appointed seneschal of the emperour's domain. The emperour lives only three years, and the earl is married to the empress.

In the execution of this performance, our author was obliged to be concise, as the poem was intended to be sung to the harp. Yet, when he breaks through this restraint, instead of dwelling on some of the beautiful situations which the story affords, he is diffuse in displaying trivial and unimportant circumstances. These popular poets are never so happy, as when they are describing a battle or a feast.

It will not perhaps be deemed impertinent to observe, that about this period the minstrels were often more amply paid than the clergy. In this age, as in more enlightened times, the people loved better to be pleased than instructed. During many of the years of the reign of Henry the sixth, particularly in the year 1430, at the annual feast of the fraternity of the HOLIE CROSSE at Abingdon, a town in
Vol. II. P Berkshire,

Berkshire, twelve priests each received four pence for singing a dirge: and the same number of minstrels were rewarded each with two shillings and four pence, beside diet and horse-meat. Some of these minstrels came only from Maydenhithe, or Maidenhead, a town at no great distance in the same county^p. In the year 1441, eight priests were hired from Coventry to assist in celebrating a yearly obit in the church of the neighbouring priory of Maxtoke; as were six minstrels, called MIMI, belonging to the family of lord Clinton, who lived in the adjoining castle of Maxtoke, to sing, harp, and play, in the hall of the monastery, during the extraordinary refection allowed to the monks on that anniversary. Two shillings were given to the priests, and four to the minstrels^q: and the latter are said to have supped in *camera picta*, or the painted chamber of the convent, with the subprior^r, on which occasion the chamberlain furnished eight massy tapers of wax^s. That the gratuities allowed to priests, even if learned, for their labours, in the same age of devotion, were extremely slender, may be collected from other expences of this priory^t. In the same year, the prior gives only sixpence^u for a sermon, to a DOCTOR PRÆDICANS, or an itinerant doctor in theology of one of the mendicant orders, who went about preaching to the religious houses.

We are now arrived at the reign of king Edward the fourth, who acceded to the throne in the year 1461^v. But

^p Hearne's Lib. Nig. Scacc. APPEND. P. 598.

^q Ex Computis Prioris Priorat. de Maxtoke. penes me. [See supr. vol. i. p. 90.]
^r "Dat. sex Mimis domini Clynton cantantibus, citharifantibus, et ludentibus, in aula in dicta Pietantia, iiii. s."

^s "Mimis cenantibus in camera picta cum supprior eodem tempore," [*the sum obliterated.*]

^t Ex comp. Camerarii, ut supr.

^u Ex comp. prædict.

^v Worth about five shillings of our present money.

^w I know not whether it is worth mentioning, that a metrical *Dialogue between God and the penitent Soul*, belonging to the preceding reign, is preserved at Caius college, Cambridge. *Pr.* "Our gracious lord prince of pite." MSS. E. 147. 6. With other pieces of the kind. The writer, William Lichfield, a doctor in theology, shone most in prose; and is said to have written, with his own hand, 3083 English sermons. See T. Gascoign, (MS.) *Diction. V. PRÆDICATOR*. He died 1447. See Stowe, Lond. 251. 386. Newcourt, i. 819.

before

before I proceed in my series, I will employ the remainder of this section in fixing the reader's attention on an important circumstance, now operating in its full extent, and therefore purposely reserved for this period, which greatly contributed to the improvement of our literature, and consequently of our poetry: I mean the many translations of Latin books, especially classics, which the French had been making for about the two last centuries, and were still continuing to make, into their own language. In order to do this more effectually, I will collect into one view the most distinguished of these versions: not solicitous about those notices on this subject which have before occurred incidentally; nor scrupulous about the charge of anticipation, which, to prepare the reader, I shall perhaps incur by lengthening this enquiry, for the sake of comprehension, beyond the limits of the period just assigned. In the mean time it may be pertinent to premise, that from the close communication which formerly subsisted between England and France, manuscript copies of many of these translations, elegantly written, and often embellished with the most splendid illuminations and curious miniatures, were presented by the translators or their patrons to the kings of England; and that they accordingly appear at present among the royal manuscripts in the British Museum. Some of these, however, were transcribed, if not translated, by command of our kings; and others brought into England, and placed in the royal library, by John duke of Bedford, regent of France.

It is not consistent with my design, to enumerate the Latin legends, rituals, monastic rules, chronicles, and historical parts of the bible, such as the *BOOK OF KINGS* and the *MACCABEES*, which were looked upon as stories of chivalry^s, translated by the French before the year 1200. These soon

^s As "Pluseurs Battailes des Roys d'Israel en contre les Philistiens et Assyriens, &c." Brit. Mus. MSS. Reg. 19 D. 1. 7.

became obsolete: and are, besides, too deeply tinctured with the deplorable superstition and barbarity of their age, to bear a recital^y. I will therefore begin with the thirteenth century. In the year 1210, Peter Comestor's *HISTORIA SCHOLASTICA*, a sort of breviary of the old and new testament, accompanied with elaborate expositions from Josephus and many pagan writers, a work compiled at Paris about the year 1175, and so popular, as not only to be taught in schools, but even to be publicly read in the churches with its glosses, was translated into French by Guiart des Moulins, a canon of Aire^z. About the same time, some of the old translations into French made in the eleventh century by Thibaud de Vernon, canon of Rouen, were retouched: and the Latin legends of many lives of saints, particularly of saint George, of Thomas a Beckett, and the martyrdom of saint Hugh, a child murdered in 1206 by a Jew at Lincoln^b, were reduced into French verse. These pieces, to which I must add a metrical version of the bible from Genesis to Hezekiah, by being written in rhyme, and easy to be sung, soon became popular, and produced the desired impression on the minds of the people^c. They were soon followed by the version of *ÆGIDIUS DE REGIMINE PRINCIPUM*^d, by Henri de

^y I must however except their *LAPIDAIRE*, a poem on precious stones, from the Latin of Marbodeus; and the *BESTIAIRE*, a set of metrical fables, from the Latin Esop. These however ought to be looked upon as efforts of their early poetry, rather than translations.

^z Or *Le Mangeur*, because he devoured the scriptures.

^b The French was first published, without date or place, in two tomes. With old wood-cuts. Vossius says that the original was abridged by Gualter Hunte, an English Carmelite, about the year 1460. Hill. Lat. lib. iii. c. 9. p. 197. edit. Amst. 1689. fol. It was translated into German rhymes about 1271. Sander. Bibl. Belg. pag. 285.

There are numerous and very sumptuous manuscripts of this work in the British Museum. One of them, with exquisite paintings, was ordered to be written by Edward the fourth at Bruges, 1470. MSS. Reg. 15 D. i. Another is written in 1382. Ibid. 19 B. xvii.

^c See Chaucer, *PRIORES*. T. p. 144. col. 2. v. 3193.

^d It is rather beside my purpose to speak particularly of some of the divine Offices now made French, and of the church-hymns.

^e See modo sup. p. 39. And MSS. Reg. 15 E. vi. 11. And ibid. 19 B. i. And ibid. 19 A. xx. "Stephanus Fortis clericus scripsit. An. 1395."

Gauchi.

Gauchi. Dares Phrygius, The SEVEN SAGES OF ROME by Hebers^e, Eutropius^f, and Aristotle's SECRETUM SECRETORUM^g, appeared about the same time in French. To say nothing of voluminous versions of PANDECTS and feudal COUTUMES^h, Michael de Harnes translated Turpin's CHARLEMAGNE in the year 1207ⁱ. It was into prose, in opposition to the practice which had long prevailed of turning Latin prose into French rhymes. This piece, in compliance with an age addicted to romantic fiction, our translator undoubtedly preferred to the more rational and sober Latin historians of Charlemagne and of France, such as Gregory of Tours, Fredegair, and Eginhart. In the year 1245, the SPECULUM MUNDI, a system of theology, the seven sciences, geography, and natural philosophy^k, was translated at the instance of the duke of Berry and Auvergne^l. Among the royal manuscripts, is a sort of system of pious tracts, partly of ritual offices, compiled in Latin by the confessors of Philip in 1279, translated into French^m; which translation queen Isabel ordered to be placed in the church of saint Innocents at Paris, for the use of the people.

The fourteenth century was much more fertile in French translation. The spirit of devotion, and indeed of this species of curiosity, raised by saint Louis, after a short intermission, rekindled under king John and Charles the fifth. I pass over the prose and metrical translations of the Latin bible in the years 1343, and 1380, by Macè, and Raoul de

^e See supr. vol. i. p. 462.

^f He was early translated into Greek at Constantinople.

^g Brit. Mus. MSS. Reg. 20 B. iv. 3.

^h See a French JUSTINIAN, &c. Brit. Mus. MSS. Reg. 20 D. ix. 2. 3. A manuscript before 1300.

ⁱ Caxton printed a life of CHARLES THE GREAT, 1485.

^k One of the most eminent astronomers in this work is the poet Virgil.

I know not when the LE LIVRE ROYALL, a sort of manual, was made French. The Latin original was compiled at the command of Philip le Bell, king of France, in 1279. Pref. to Caxton's Engl. Translat. 1484. fol.

^l See Brit. Mus. MSS. Reg. 19 A. ix. This version was translated into English, and printed, by Caxton, 1480.

^m Brit. Mus. MSS. Reg. 19 C. ii.

Prefles.

Presles. Under those reigns, saint Austin, Cassianus, and Gregory the Great, were translated into French; and they are the first of the fathers that appeared in a modern tongue. Saint Gregory's HOMELIES are by an anonymous translator. His DIALOGUES were probably translated by an English ecclesiastic. Saint Austin's DE CIVITATE DEI was translated by Raoul de Presles, who acted professedly both as confessor and translator to Charles the fifth, about the year 1374. During the work he received a yearly pension of six hundred livres from that liberal monarch, the first founder of a royal library in France, at whose command it was undertaken. It is accompanied with a prolix commentary, valuable only at present as preserving anecdotes of the opinions, manners, and literature, of the writer's age; and from which I am tempted to give the following specimen, as it strongly illustrates the antient state of the French stage, and demonstrably proves that comedy and tragedy were now known only by name in France. He observes, that Comedies are so denominated from a room of entertainment, or from those places, in which banquets were accustomed to be closed with singing, called in Greek CONIAS: that they were like those *jeux* or plays, which the minstrel, *le Chanteur*, exhibits in halls or other public places, at a feast: and that they were properly styled INTERLUDIA, as being presented between the two courses. Tragedies, he adds, were spectacles, resembling those personages which at this day we see acting in the LIFE

* See Brit. Mus. MSS. Reg. 15 D. v. 1. 2.

° Brit. Mus. MSS. Reg. 15 D. v. 1. 20 D. v.

¶ It is supposed that they were rendered by an Englishman, or one living in England, as the translator's name is marked by an A. And as there is a prayer in the manuscript to saint Bridewide, an Oxford saint. Mem. Litt. xvii. p. 735. 4to. It is very rare that we find the French translating from us. Yet Fauchett mentions a

French poetess, named Marie de France, who translated the Fables of Esop MORALISED, from English into French, about the year 1310. But this was to gratify a *comte Guillaume*, with whom she was in love, and who did not perhaps understand English. See Fauchett, RECVEN, lxxxiv. p. 163. edit. 1581. I know nothing of the fables.

§ Brit. Mus. MSS. Reg. 17 F. iii. With pictures. And 14 D. i.

¶ See *supr.* vol. i. p. 235.

and

and PASSION of a martyr*. This shews that only the religious drama now subsisted in France. But to proceed, Cassianus's COLLATIONES PATRUM, or the CONFERENCES, was translated by John Goulain, a Carmelite monk, about 1363. Two translations of that theological romance Boethius's CONSOLATION, one by the celebrated Jean de Meun, author of the ROMANCE OF THE ROSE, existed before the year 1340. Others of the early Latin christian writers were ordered to be turned into French by queen Jane, about 1332. But finding that the archbishop of Rouen, who was commissioned to execute this arduous task, did not understand Latin, she employed a mendicant friar. About the same period, and under the same patronage, the LEGENDA AUREA, written by James de Voragine, archbishop of Genoa, about the year 1260, that inexhaustible repository of religious fable, was translated by Jehan de Vignay, a monk hospitalar*. The same translator gave also a version of a famous ritual entitled SPECULUM ECCLESIAE, or the MIRROR OF THE CHURCH, of CHESS MORALISED, written by Jacobus de Cafulis*: and of Odoricus's VOYAGE INTO THE EAST*. Thomas Benoit, a prior of saint Genevieve gratified the religious with a translation into a more intelligible language of some Latin liturgic pieces about the year 1330. But his chief performance was a translation into French verse of the RULE OF SAINT AUSTIN. This he undertook merely on a principle of affection and charity, for the edification of his pious brethren who did not understand Latin.

* Ch. viii. liv. ii.

† In the year 1555, the learned Claud. Espence was obliged to make a public recantation for calling it LEGENDA FERREA. Thuan. sub. ann. Laun. Hist. Gymnaf. Navarr. p. 704. 297.

‡ Brit. Mus. MSS. Reg. 19 B. xvii. The copy was written 1382. This version seems to be the same which Caxton tran-

slated, and printed, 1483. While it was printing, William lord Arundel gave Caxton annually a buck in summer and a doe in winter.

§ Brit. Mus. MSS. Reg. 19 C. xi. 1. This version was translated in English, and printed, by Caxton, 1474.

* Ibid. 19 D. i. 4. 5.

Pour

Pour l'amour de vous, très chers freres,
En François ai traduit ce Latin.

And in the preface he says, " Or sçai-je que *plusieurs* de vous " n'entendent pas bien LATIN auquel il fut chose necessaire " de la ricle [regle] entendre." Benoit's successour in the priorate of saint Genevieve was not equally attentive to the discipline and piety of his monks. Instead of translating monkish Latin, and enforcing the salutary regulations of saint Austin, he wrote a system of rules for BALLAD-WRITING, L'ART DE DICTIER BALLADE ET RONDELS, the first Art of poetry that ever appeared in France.

Among the moral books now translated, I must not omit the SPIRITUELLE AMITIE of John of Meun, from the Latin of Aldred an English monk¹. In the same style of mystic piety was the treatise of CONSOLATION, written in Latin, by Vincent de Beauvais, and sent to saint Louis, translated in the year 1374. In the year 1340, Henri de Sufon, a German dominican and a mystic doctor, wrote a most comprehensive treatise called HOROLOGIUM SAPIENTIÆ. This was translated into French by a monk of saint François². Even the officers of the court of Charles the fifth were seized with the ardour of translating religious pieces, no less than the ecclesiastics. The most elegant tract of moral Latinity translated into French, was the celebrated book of our countryman John of Salisbury, DE NUGIS CURIALIUM. This version was made by Denis Soulechart, a learned Cordelier, about the year 1360. Notwithstanding the EPISTLES of Abelard and Eloisa, not only from the celebrity of Abelard as a Parisian theologist, but on account of the interesting history of that unfortunate pair, must have been as commonly known, and as likely to be read in the original, as any Latin

¹ It is mentioned in the catalogue of his translations, at the beginning of his *Consolation philosophique*. I am not acquainted

with the English monk.

² Englished, and printed by Caxton, very early.

book

book in France, they were translated into French in this century, by John of Meun; who prostituted his abilities when he relinquished his own noble inventions, to interpret the pedantries of monks, schoolmen, and proscribed classics. I think he also translated Vegetius, who will occur again^a. In the library of saint Genevieve, there is, in a sort of system of religion, a piece called JERARCHIE, translated from Latin into French at the command of our queen Elinor in the year 1297, by a French friar^b. I must not however forget, that amidst this profusion of treatises of religion and instruction, civil history found a place. That immense chaos of events real and fictitious, the HISTORICAL MIRROR of Vincent de Beauvais, was translated by Jehan de Vignay above mentioned^c. One is not surpris'd that the translator of the GOLDEN LEGEND should make no better choice.

The desolation produced in France^d by the victorious armies of the English, was instantly succeeded by a flourishing state of letters. King John, having indulged his devotion, and satisfied his conscience, by procuring numerous versions of books written on sacred subjects, at length turned his attention to the classics. His ignorance of Latin was a fortunate circumstance, as it produced a curiosity to know the treasures of Latin literature. He employed Peter Bercheur, prior of saint Eloi at Paris, an eminent theologian, to translate Livy into French^e; notwithstanding that author

^a There is a copy written in 1284, [1384,] Brit. Mus. MSS. Reg. 20 B. xv. Often, *ibid.* John of Meun is also said to have translated *MIRABILIA HIBERNIÆ*.

^b "Cette JERARCHIE translata frere Jehan de Pentham de Latin en François, à la requeste la reine d'Engleterre Aliénore femme le roy Edward." There is also this note in the manuscript. "Cest livre resigna frere Jordan de Kyngestone à la commune des freres Menurs de Southampton, par la volonte du graunt frere Willame Notington [f. Northington in Hampshire,] ministre d'Engle-

terre . . . l'an. de grace m.ccc.xvii."

^c Brit. Mus. MSS. Reg. 14 E. i.

^d A curious picture of the distracted state of France is recorded by Petrarch. The king, with the Dauphin, returning from his captivity in England, in passing through Picardy, was obliged to make a pecuniary bargain with the numerous robbers that infested that country, to travel unmolested. *VIE PETR.* iii. 543.

^e See Henault, *NOUVEL. ABREG. HIST. FR.* p. 229. edit. 1752. 4to. And *VIE DE PÉTRARQUE*, iii. p. 547.

had been anathematized by pope Gregory. But so judicious a choice was undoubtedly dictated by Petrarch, who regarded Livy with a degree of enthusiasm, who was now resident at the court of France, and who perhaps condescended to direct and superintend the translation. The translator in his Latin work called *REPERTORIUM*, a sort of general dictionary, in which all things are proved to be allegorical, and reduced to a moral meaning, under the word *ROMA*, records this great attempt in the following manner. " *TITUM LIVIUM, ad requisitionem domini Johannis inelyti Francorum regis, non sine labore et sudoribus, in linguam Gallicam transtuli.*" To this translation we must join those of Sallust, Lucan, and Cesar: all which seem to have been finished before the year 1365. This revival of a taste for Roman history, most probably introduced and propagated by Petrarch during his short stay in the French court, immediately produced a Latin historical compilation called *ROMULEON*, by an anonymous gentleman of France; who soon found it necessary to translate his work into the vernacular language. Valerius Maximus could not remain long untranslated. A version of that favourite author, begun by Simon de Hesdin, a monk, in 1364, was finished by Nicolas de Gonesse, a master in theology, 1401^b. Under the last-mentioned reign, Ovid's *Metamorphoses* *MORALISED*^c were translated by Guillaume de Nangis: and the same poem was translated into French verse, at the request of Jane de Bourbonne, afterwards the consort

^f This was the translation of Livy, which, with other books, the duke of Bedford, regent of France, about 1425, sent into England to Humphrey duke of Gloucester. The copy had been a present to the king of France. Mem. Litt. ii. 747. 4to. See the *SECOND DISSERTATION*. In the Sorbonne library at Paris, there is a most valuable manuscript of this version in two folio volumes. In the front of each book are various miniatures and pictures, most beautifully finished. Dan. Maichel de Bi-

bliothec. Paris. p. 79. There is a copy, transcribed about the time the translation was finished. Brit. Mus. MSS. Reg. 15 D. vi. *DES FAIS DE ROMAINS*. With pictures.

^g Brit. Mus. MSS. Reg. 18 E. iii. iv. With elegant delineations, and often in the same library.

^h Perhaps written in Latin by Joannes Grammaticus, about 1070. See the *SECOND DISSERTATION*.

of

of Charles the fifth, by Philip de Vitri, bishop of Meaux, Petrarch's friend, who was living in 1361¹. A bishop would not have undertaken this work, had he not perceived much moral doctrine couched under the pagan stories. Jean le Fevre, by command of Charles the fifth, translated the poem DE VETULA, falsely ascribed to Ovid^k. Cicero's RHE- TORICA appeared in French by master John de Antioche, at the request of one friar William, in the year 1383. About the same time, some of Aristotle's pieces were translated from Latin; his PROBLEMS by Evrard de Conti, physician to Charles the fifth: and his ETHICS and POLITICS by Nicholas d'Orefme, while canon of Rouen. This was the most learned man in France, and tutor to Charles the fifth; who, in consequence of his instructions, obtained a competent skill in Latin, and in the rules of the grammar^l. Other Greek classics, which now began to be known by being translated into Latin, became still more familiarised, especially to general readers, by being turned into French. Thus Poggius Florentinus's recent Latin version of Xenophon's CYROPE- DIA was translated into French by Vasque de Lucerie, 1370^m. The TACTICS of Vegetius, an author who frequently con- founds the military practices of his own age with those of antiquity, appeared under the title of LIVRES DES FAIS D'ARMES ET DE CHEVALLERIE, by Christina of Pifaⁿ. Pe-

¹ There was a French Ovid in duke Humphrey's library at Oxford. See *supr.* p. 45. And Brit. Mus. MSS. Reg. 17 E. iv. 1. This version, as I apprehend, is the same that Caxton translated into English prose, and printed, 1480. A manuscript is in Bibl. Pepsy. Magd. Coll. Cant. Cat. MSS. Angl. &c. tom. ii. N. 6791.

^k Polycarpus Leyferus supposes this piece to be the forgery of one Leo Protonotarius, an officer in the court at Constantinople, who writes the preface. *Hist. Poef. Med. Æv.* p. 2089. He proves the work supposititious, from its several Arabicisms and scriptural expressions, &c. Brawardine

cites many lines from it, *Advers. Pelag.* p. 33. As does Bacon, in his astrological tracts. It is condemned by Bede as heretical. In Boeth. de Trinit. Selden intended a DISSERTATION on this forgery, De Synedr. iii. 16. It is in hexameters, in three books.

^l *Christin. Vie Charles V.*

^m Brit. Mus. MSS. Reg. 17 E. v. 1. And 16 G. ix. With pictures.

ⁿ MSS. Reg. 19 B. xviii. &c. Vegetius was early translated into all the modern languages. There is an English one, probably by John Trevisa, as it is addressed to his patron lord Berkeley, A. D. 1408. MSS.

trarch DE REMEDIIS UTRIVSQUE FORTUNÆ, a set of Latin dialogues, was translated, not only by Nicholas d'Oresme, but by two of the officers of the royal household³, in compliment to Petrarch at his leaving France⁴. Many philosophical pieces, particularly in astrology, of which Charles the fifth was remarkably fond, were translated before the end of the fourteenth century. Among these, I must not pass over the QUADRIpartitum of Ptolemy, by Nicholas d'Oresme; the AGRICULTURE⁵, or LIBRI RURALIUM COMMODO- RUM, of Peter de Crescentiis, a physician of Bononia, about the year 1285, by a nameless friar preacher⁶; and the book DE PROPRIETATIBUS RERUM of Bartholomew Anglicus, the Pliny of the monks, by John Corbichon, an Augustine monk⁷. I have seen a French manuscript of Guido de Colonna's Trojan romance, the hand-writing of which belongs to this century⁸.

In the fifteenth century it became fashionable among the

MSS. Digb. 233. *Princ.* "In olde tyme "it was the manere." There is a translation of Vegetius, written at Rhodes, "die 25 Octobris, 1459, per Johannem "Newton." ad calc. Bibl. Bodl. K. 53. Laud. MSS. Christina's version was translated, and printed, by Caxton, 1489. See *supr.* p. 67.

³ See Niceron, tom. 28. p. 384.

⁴ Monf. l'Ab. Lebeuf says *Seneca* instead of *Petrarch*. Mem. Litt. xvii. p. 752.

I must not forget to observe, that several whole books in Brunetto's *TRESOR* consist of translations from Aristotle, Tully, and Pliny, into French. Brunetto was a Florentine, and the master of Dante. He died in 1295. The *TRESOR* was a sort of Encyclopede, exhibiting a course of practical and theoretic philosophy, of divinity, cosmography, geography, history sacred and profane, physics, ethics, rhetoric, and politics. It was written in French by Brunetto during his residence in France: but he afterwards translated it into Italian, and it has been translated by others into Latin. It was the model and foun-

dation of Bartholomew's of the PROPERTIES OF THINGS, of Bercheur's REPERTORIUM, and of many other works of the same species, which soon followed. See Brit. Mus. MSS. Reg. 17 E. i. It will occur again.

⁵ DES PROUFFITZ CHAMPESTRES ET RURAUX. Brit. Mus. MSS. Reg. 14 E.

⁶ In twelve books. See Jacob. Quetif. tom. i. p. 666.

⁷ Leland says, that this translation is elegant; and that he saw it in duke Humfrey's library at Oxford. Script. Brit. cap. cccxviii. See Brit. Mus. MSS. Reg. 17 E. iii. With pictures. Ibid. 15 E. ii. Where the translation is assigned to the year 1362. The writing of the manuscript, to 1482. With pictures.

⁸ Brit. Mus. MSS. Reg. 16 F. ix. A new translation seems to have been made by Raul le Feure, in 1464. Englished by Caxton, and printed, 1471. Caxton's GODEFROY OF BOLOGNE, translated from the French, and printed 1481, had a Latin original. The French, a fine copy, is in Brit. Mus. 17 F. v. MSS. Reg. *Sepius* *ibid.* [See *supr.* p. 99.]

French,

French, to polish and reform their old rude translations made two hundred years before; and to reduce many of their metrical versions into prose. At the same time, the rage of translating ecclesiastical tracts began to decrease. The latter circumstance was partly owing to the introduction of better books, and partly to the invention of printing. Instead of procuring laborious and expensive translations of the antient fathers, the printers, who multiplied greatly towards the close of this century, found their advantage in publishing new translations of more agreeable books, or in giving antient versions in a modern dress^u. Yet in this century some of the more recent doctors of the church were translated. Not to mention the epistles of saint Jerom, which Antoine Dufour, a Dominican frier, presented in French to Anne de Bretagne, consort to king Charles the eighth, we find saint Anselm's *CUR DEUS HOMO*^w, The LAMENTATIONS OF SAINT BERNARD, The SUM OF THEOLOGY of Albertus Magnus, The PRICK OF DIVINE LOVE^x of saint Bonaventure a seraphic doctor^y, with other pieces of the

^u I take this opportunity of observing, that one of these was the romance of sir LANCELOT DU LAC, translated from the Latin by Robert de Borron, at the command of our Henry the second or third. See *supr.* vol. i. p. 114. This new LANCELOT, I believe, is the same which was printed at Paris by Antony Verard, 1494. In three vast folio volumes. Another, is the romance of GYRON LE COURTOIS, translated also from Latin, at the command of the same monarch, by Lucas, or Luce, *chevalier du Chateau du Gast, or Gat, or Gal*, and printed by Verard as above. See Lenglet, *Bibl. Rom.* ii. p. 117. The old GUIRON LE COURTOIS is said to be translated by "Luce chevalier seigneur du chasteau du Gal, [perhaps *Sal.* an abbreviation for Salisbury,] voisin prochain du sire du Sablieres, par le commendement de tres noble et tres puissant prince M. le roy Henry jadis roy d'Angleterre." *Bibl. Reg. Paris. Cod.* 7586. See *supr.* vol. i. p. 115. Notes.

^w Written in 1098.

^x *Supr.* vol. i. p. 77.

^y He flourished in Italy, about the year 1270. The enormous magnificence of his funeral deserves notice, more than any anecdote of his life; as it paints the high devotion of the times, and the attention formerly paid to theological literature. There were present pope Gregory the tenth, the emperor of Greece by several Greek noblemen his proxies, Baldwin the second the Latin eastern emperor, James king of Arragon, the patriarchs of Constantinople and Antioch, all the cardinals, five hundred bishops and archbishops, sixty abbots, more than a thousand prelates and priests of lower rank, the ambassadors of many kings and potentates, the deputies of the Tartars and other nations, and an innumerable concourse of people of all orders and degrees. The sepulchral ceremonies were celebrated with the most consummate pomp, and the funeral oration was pronounced.

kind, exhibited in the French language before the year 1480, at the petition and under the patronage of many devout ducheſſes. Yet in the mean time, the lives of ſaints and ſacred hiſtory gave way to a ſpecies of narrative more entertaining and not leſs fabulous. Little more than Joſephus, and a few MARTYRDOMS, were now tranſlated from the Latin into French.

The truth is, the French tranſlators of this century were chiefly employed on profane authors. At its commencement, a French abridgement of the three firſt decads of Livy was produced by Henri Romain a canon of Tournay. In the year 1416, Jean de Courci, a knight of Normandy, gave a tranſlation of ſome Latin chronicle, a HISTORY OF THE GREEKS AND ROMANS, entitled BOUQUASSIERE. In 1403, Jean de Courteauiffe, a doctor in theology at Paris, tranſlated Seneca on the FOUR CARDINAL VIRTUES*. Under the reign of king Charles the ſeventh, Jean Coſſa tranſlated the CHRONOLOGY of Mattheus Palmerius a learned Florentine, and a writer of Italian poetry in imitation of Dante. In the dedication to Jane the third, queen of Jeruſalem, and among other titles counteſs of Provence, the tranſlator apologiſes for ſuppoſing her highneſs to be ignorant of Latin; when at the ſame time he is fully convinced, that a lady endowed with ſo much natural grace, muſt be perfectly acquainted with that language. “ Mais pour ce que le vulgar François eſt plus “ commun, j’ ai pris peine y tranſlater ladite oeuvre.” Two other tranſlations were offered to Charles the ſeventh in the year 1445. One, of the FIRST PUNIC war of Leonard of Arezzo, an anonymous writer, who does not chuſe to publiſh his name *a cauſe de ſa petiteſſe*; and the STRATAGEMS of

nounced by a future pope. Miræi Auſtar. Script. Eccleſ. pag. 72. edit. Fabric. [See ſupr. vol. i. p. 77.]

* It is ſuppoſitious. It was forged, about the year 560, by Martianus an archbiſhop

of Portugal, whom Gregory of Tours calls the moſt eminent writer of his time. Hiſt. Franc. v. 38. It was a great favourite of the theological ages.

Frontinus,

Frontinus, often cited by John of Salisbury, and mentioned in the Epistles of Peter of Blois^a, by Jean de Rouroy, a Parisian theologian. Under Louis the eleventh, Sebastian Mamerot of Soissons, in the year 1466, attempted a new translation of the ROMULEON: and he professes, that he undertook it solely with a view of improving or decorating the French language^b.

Many French versions of classics appeared in this century. A translation of Quintus Curtius is dedicated to Charles duke of Burgundy, in 1468^c. Six years afterwards, the same liberal patron commanded Cesar's COMMENTARIES to be translated by Jean du Chefne^d. Terence was made French by Guillaume Rippe, the king's secretary, in the year 1466. The following year a new translation of Ovid's METAMORPHOSES was executed by an ecclesiastic of Normandy^e. But much earlier in the century, Laurence Premierfait, mentioned above, translated, I suppose from the Latin, the OECONOMICS of Aristotle, and Tully's DE AMICITIA and DE SENECTUTE, before the year 1426^f. He is said also to have translated some pieces, perhaps the EPISTLES, of Seneca^g.

^a Epist. 94.

^b I am not sure whether this is not much the same as LE GRANDE HISTOIRE CESAR, &c. Taken from Lucan, Suetonius, Orosius, &c. Written at Bruges at the command of our Edward the fourth, in 1479. That is, ordered to be written by him. A manuscript with pictures. MSS. Reg. 17 F. ii. 1. Brit. Mus. But see ibid. ROMULEON, ou des Faits des Romains, in ten books. With pictures. MSS. Reg. 19 E. v. See also 20 C. i.

^c Brit. Mus. MSS. Reg. 17 F. i. With beautiful pictures.

^d Brit. Mus. MSS. Reg. 16 G. viii. With pictures. Another appeared by Robert Gaguin in 1485.

^e Perhaps this might be Caxton's copy. See above, p. 115.

^f The two latter versions were translated into English by William Botoner, and John

Tiptoft earl of Worcester, and printed by Caxton, 1481. Botoner presented his manuscript copy to William of Waynflete bishop of Winchester in 1473. See sup. p. 62. Caxton's English CATO, printed 1483, was from the French. As were his FABLES OF AESOP, printed 1483.

^g Crucimanius mentions a version of Seneca by Premierfait, as printed at Paris, in 1500. Bibl. Gall. p. 287. A translation of Seneca's DE QUATUOR VIRTUTIBUS CARDINALIBUS, but supposititious, is given to Premierfait, Brit. Mus. MSS. Reg. 20 A. xii. Sanders recites the EPISTLES of Seneca, translated into French by some anonymous writer, at the command of Messire Barthelemi Signulfe a nobleman of Naples. Bibl. Cathedr. Tornacens. p. 209. Pieces of Seneca have been frequently translated into French, and very early.

Encouraged

Encouraged by this example, Jean de Luxembourg, Laurence's cotemporary, translated Tully's Oration against Verres. I must not forget, that Hippocrates and Galen were translated from Latin into French in the year 1429. The translator was Jean Tourtier, surgeon to the duke of Bedford, then regent of France; and he humbly supplicates Rauoul Palvin, confessor and physician to the dukes, and John Major, first physician to the duke, and graduate *en l'estude d'Auxonford*^h, and master Roullan, physician and astronomer of the university of Paris, amicably to amend the faults of this translation, which is intended to place the science and practice of medicine on a new foundation. I presume it was from a Latin version that the *ILIAD*, about this period, was translated into French metre.

Among other pieces that might be enumerated in this century, in the year 1412, Guillaume de Tignonville, provost of Paris, translated the *DICTA PHILOSOPHORUM*ⁱ: as did Jean Gallopes dean of the collegiate church of saint Louis, of Salfoye, in Normandy, the *ITER VITÆ HUMANÆ* of Guillaume prior of Chalis^k. This version, entitled *LE PELERINAGE DE LA VIE HUMAINE*, is dedicated to Jean queen of Sicily, above mentioned; a duchess of Anjou and a countess of Provence: who, without any sort of difficulty, could make a transition from the Life of sir Lancelot to that of saint Austin, and who sometimes quitted the tribunal of the COURT OF LOVE to confer with learned ecclesiastics, in an age when gallantry and religion were of equal importance. He also translated, from the same author, a composition of the same ideal and contemplative cast, called *LE PELERIN DE L'AME*, highly esteemed by those visionaries who preferred

^h Oxonford. Oxford.

ⁱ Brit. Mus. MSS. Reg. 19 A. viii. Sæpius. *ibid.* This version was translated into English by lord Rivers, and printed by Caxton, 1477.

^k See Labb. *Bibl. MSS.* p. 317. *Bibl.*

Roman. ii. 236. And Oudin. iii. 976. Guillaum lived about 1352. Some of the French literary antiquaries suppose this to be a Latin piece. It is, however, in French verse, which was reduced into prose by Gallopes.

religious

religious allegory to romance, which was dedicated to the duke of Bedford¹. In Bennet college library at Cambridge, there is an elegant illuminated manuscript of Bonaventure's LIFE OF CHRIST, translated by Gallopes; containing a curious picture of the translator presenting his version to our Henry the fifth². About the same time, but before 1427, Jean de Guerre translated a Latin compilation of all that was marvellous in Pliny, Solinus, and the OTIA IMPERIALIA, a book abounding in wonders, of our countryman Gervais of Tilbury³. The French romance, entitled L' ASSAILLANT, was now translated from the Latin chronicles of the kings of Cologne: and the Latin tract DE BONIS MORIBUS of Jacobus Magnus, confessor to Charles the seventh, about the year 1422, was made French⁴. Rather earlier, Jean de Premierfait translated BOCCACIO DE CASIBUS VIRORUM ILLUSTRIORUM⁵. Nor shall I be thought to deviate too far from my detail, which is confined to Latin originals, when I mention here a book, the translation of which into French conduced in an eminent degree to circulate materials for poetry: this is Boccacio's DECAMERON, which Premierfait also translated, at the command of queen Jane of Navarre, who seems to have made no kind of conditions about suppressing the licentious stories, in the year 1414⁶.

I am not exactly informed, when the ENEID of Virgil was translated into a sort of metrical romance or history of Eneas,

¹ I am not certain, whether this is Caxton's PILGRIMAGE OF THE SOWLE, an English translation from the French, printed in 1483. fol. Ames says, that Antonine Gerard is the author of the French, which was printed at Paris, 1480. Hist. Print. p. 34.

² See ARCHÆOL. vol. ii. p. 194. And Brit. Mus. MSS. Reg. 16 G. iii. 20 B. iv. Englished about 1410, and printed by Caxton very early. The English translator, I believe, is John Morton, an Augustine friar.

³ He flourished about the year 1218.

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R

⁴ See supr. p. 61. There is a version of Boccacio's DE CLARIS MULIERIBUS, perhaps by Premierfait, Brit. Mus. MSS. Reg. 20 C. v.

⁵ This version was Englished, and printed, by Caxton, 1487.

⁶ See Brit. Mus. MSS. Reg. 19 E. i. Where it is said that the Decameron was first translated into Latin. It is not very literal. It was printed at Paris 1485. fol. Again, *ibid.* 1534. 8vo. It was again translated by Antoine le Macon, fol. Paris 1543. And often afterwards.

under

under the title of LIVRE D' ENEIDOS COMPILÉ PAR VIRGILE, by Guillaume de Roy. But that translation was printed at Lyons in 1483, and appears to have been finished not many years before. Among the translator's historical additions, are the description of the first foundation of Troy by Priam, and the succession of Ascanius and his descendants after the death of Turnus. He introduces a digression upon Boccacio, for giving in his FALL OF PRINCES an account of the death of Dido, different from that in the fourth book of the Eneid. Among his omissions, he passes over Eneas's descent into hell, as a tale manifestly forged, and not to be believed by any rational reader: as if many other parts of the translator's story were not equally fictitious and incredible¹.

The conclusion intended to be drawn from this long digression is obvious. By means of these French translations, our countrymen, who understood French much better than Latin, became acquainted with many useful books which they would not otherwise have known. With such assistances, a commodious access to the classics was opened, and the knowledge of antient literature facilitated and familiarised in England, at a much earlier period than is imagined; and at a time, when little more than the productions of speculative monks, and irrefragable doctors, could be obtained or were studied. Very few Englishmen, I will venture to pronounce, had read Livy before the translation of Bercœur was imported by the regent duke of Bedford. It is certain that many of the Roman poets and historians were now read in England, in the original. But the Latin language was for the most part confined to a few ecclesiastics. When these authors, therefore, appeared in a language almost as intelligible as the English, they fell into the hands of illiterate and common readers, and contributed to sow the seeds of a national erudition, and to form a popular taste.

¹ It was translated, and printed, by Caxton, 1490.

Even the French versions of the religious, philosophical, historical, and allegorical compositions of those more enlightened Latin writers who flourished in the middle ages, had their use, till better books came into vogue: pregnant as they were with absurdities, they communicated instruction on various and new subjects, enlarged the field of information, and promoted the love of reading, by gratifying that growing literary curiosity which now began to want materials for the exercise of its operations. How greatly our poets in general availed themselves of these treasures, we may collect from this circumstance only: even such writers as Chaucer and Lydgate, men of education and learning, when they translate a Latin author, appear to execute their work through the medium of a French version. It is needless to pursue this history of French translation any farther. I have given my reason for introducing it at all. In the next age, a great and universal revolution in literature ensued; and the English themselves began to turn their thoughts to translation.

These French versions enabled Caxton, our first printer, to enrich the state of letters in this country with many valuable publications. He found it no difficult task, either by himself, or the help of his friends, to turn a considerable number of these pieces into English, which he printed. Antient learning had as yet made too little progress among us, to encourage this enterprising and industrious artist to publish the Roman authors in their original language^{*}: and had not the French furnished him with these materials, it is not likely, that Virgil, Ovid, Cicero, and many other good

* It is, however, remarkable, that from the year 1471, in which Caxton began to print, down to the year 1540, during which period the English press flourished greatly under the conduct of many industrious, ingenious, and even learned artists, only the very few following classics, some of which hardly deserve that name, were printed in

England. These were, *BOETHIUS de Consolatione*; both Latin and English, for Caxton, without date. The Latin *ESOPIAN Fables*, in verse, for Wynkyn de Worde, 1503. 4to. [And once or twice afterwards.] *TERENCE*, with the Comment of Badius Ascensius, for the same, 1504. 4to. *VIRGIL'S BUCOLICS*, for the

writers, would by the means of his prefs have been circulated in the English tongue, fo early as the clofe of the fifteenth century'.

the fame, 1512. 4to. [Again, 1533. 4to.] TULLY'S OFFICES, Latin and English, the translation by Whittington, 1533. 4to. The univerfity of Oxford, during this period, produced only the firft Book of TULLY'S EPISTLES, at the charge of cardinal Wolsey, without date, or printer's name. Cambridge not a fingle claffe.

No Greek book, of any kind, had yet appeared from an English prefs. I believe the firft Greek characters used in any work printed in England, are in Linacer's translation of *Galen de Temperamentis*, printed at Cambridge in 1521, 4to. A few Greek words, and abbreviatures, are here and there introduced. The printer was John Siberch, a German, a friend of Erasmus, who ftyles himfelf *primus utriusque linguæ in Anglia impreffor*. There are Greek characters in fome of his other books of this date. But he printed no entire Greek book. In Linacer's treatife *De emendata Struaura Latini sermonis*, printed by Pinfon in 1524, many Greek characters are intermixed: In the fixth book are feven Greek lines together. But the printer apologifes for his imperfections and unskillfulnefs in the Greek types; which, he fays, were but recently caft, and not in a fufficient quantity for fuch a work. The paffage is curious. "Equo animo feras fiquæ literæ, in exemplis Hellenifmi, vel tonis vel fpiritibus careant. His enim non fatis inftruentus erat typographus, videlicet recens ab eo fufis characteribus Græcis, nec parata ei copia qua ad hoc agendum opus eft." About

the fame period of the English prefs, the fame embarrasments appear to have happened with regard to Hebrew types; which yet were more likely, as that language was fo much lefs known. In the year 1524, doctour Robert Wakefield, chaplain to Henry the eighth, published his *Oratio de laudibus et utilitate trium linguarum Arabicæ, Chaldæicæ, et Hebraicæ*, &c. 4to. The printer was Wynkyn de Worde; and the author complains, that he was obliged to omit his whole third part, becaufe the printer had no Hebrew types. Some few Hebrew and Arabic characters, however, are introduced; but extremely rude, and evidently cut in wood. They are the firft of the fort used in England. This learned orientallift was instrumental in preferring, at the diffolution of monasteries, the Hebrew manufcripts of Ramsey abbey, collected by Holbech one of the monks, together with Holbech's *Hebrew Dictionary*. Wood, *Hift. Ant. Univ. Oxon.* ii. 251. Leland, *Scriptor.* v. HOLBECCUS.

It was a circumftance favourable at laft to English literature, owing indeed to the general illiteracy of the times, that our firft printers were fo little employed on books written in the learned languages. Almost all Caxton's books are English. The multiplication of English copies multiplied English readers, and thefe again produced new vernacular writers. The exiftence of a prefs induced many perfons to turn authors, who were only qualified to write in their native tongue.

SECT.