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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 IX. The reigns of Richard the third, and Henry the seventh, abound  
in obscure versifiers. Bertram Walton. Benedict Burgh translates Cato's  
Latin Distichs. History of that work. Julian Barnes. ...

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## S E C T. IX.

THE subsequent reigns of Richard the third, Edward the fifth, and Henry the seventh, abounded in obscure versifiers.

A mutilated poem which occurs among the Cotton manuscripts in the British museum, and principally contains a satire on the nuns, who not less from the nature of their establishment, than from the usual degeneracy which attends all institutions, had at length lost their original purity, seems to belong to this period<sup>a</sup>. It is without wit, and almost without numbers. It was written by one Bertram Walton, whose name now first appears in the catalogue of English poets; and whose life I calmly resign to the researches of some more laborious and patient antiquary.

About the year 1480, or rather before, Benedict Burgh, a master of arts of Oxford, among other promotions in the church, archdeacon of Colchester, prebendary of saint Paul's, and canon of saint Stephen's chapel at Westminster<sup>b</sup>, translated Cato's MORALS into the royal stanza, for the use of his pupil lord Bouchier son of the earl of Essex<sup>c</sup>. Encou-

<sup>a</sup> Disadvantageous suspicions against the chastity of the female religious were pretended in earlier times. About the year 1250, a bishop of Lincoln visited the nunneries of his diocese: on which occasion, says the continuator of Matthew Paris, "ad domos religiosarum veniens, fecit ex-PRIMI MAMILLAS earendem, ut sic physice, si esset inter eas corruptela, ex-periretur." Matt. Paris. Hist. p. 789. HENRICUS III. edit. Tig. 1589. fol. An anecdote, which the historian relates with indignation; not on account of the nuns, but of the bishop.

<sup>b</sup> See Newcourt, Repertor. i. 90. ii. 517.

The university sealed his letters testimonial, jul. 3. A. D. 1433. Registr. Univ. Oxon. supr. citat. T. f. 27. b. He died A. D. 1483.

<sup>c</sup> Gascoigne says that "rithme royal is a verse of ten syllables, and ten such verses make a staffe, &c." *Instructions for verse, &c.* Sign. D. i. ad calc. WORKE, 1587. [See supr. vol. i. p. 464. Notes, <sup>a</sup>.] Burgh's stanza is here called *balade royall*: by which, I believe, is commonly signified the *octave stanza*. All those pieces in Chaucer, called *Certaine Ballads*, are in this measure. In Chaucer's *LEGEND OF GOOD WOMEN*, written in long verse, a song of three

raged by the example and authority of so venerable an ecclesiastic, and tempted probably by the convenient opportunity of pilfering phraseology from a predecessor in the same arduous task, Caxton translated the same Latin work; but from the French version of a Latin paraphrase, and into English prose, which he printed in the year 1483. He calls, in his preface, the measure, used by Burgh, the BALAD ROYAL. Caxton's translation, which superseded Burgh's work, and with which it is confounded, is divided into four books, which comprehend seventy-two heads.

I do not mean to affront my readers, when I inform them, without any apology, that the Latin original of this piece was not written by Cato the censor, nor by Cato Uticensis<sup>d</sup>: although it is perfectly in the character of the former, and Aulus Gellius has quoted Cato's poem DE MORIBUS<sup>e</sup>. Nor have I the gravity of the learned Boxhornius, who in a prolix and elaborate dissertation has endeavoured to demonstrate, that these distichs are undoubtedly supposititious, and that they could not possibly be written by the very venerable Roman whose name they bear. The title is DISTICHA DE MORIBUS AD FILIUM, which are distributed into four books, under the name of Dionysius Cato. But he is frequently called MAGNUS CATO.

This work has been absurdly attributed by some critics to

three octave stanzas is introduced; beginning, *Hide Absolon thy gilte tressis clere.* v. 249. p. 340. Urr. Afterwards, Cupid says, v. 537. p. 342.

— a ful grete negligence

Was it to thee, that ilke time thou made,  
*Hide Absolon thy tressis,* IN BALADE.

In the British Museum there is a *Kalandre* in Englyshe, made in BALADE by *Dann John Lydgate* monk of Bury. That is, in this stanza. MSS. Harl. 1706. 2. fol. 10. b. The reader will observe, that whether there are eight or seven lines, I have called it the *octave* stanza. Lydgate has, most commonly, only seven lines. As in his poem on Guy earl of Warwick, MSS.

Laud. D. 31, fol. 64. *Here ginneth the liff of Guy of Warawyk.* [Pr. From Criste's birth compleat nine 100 yere.] He is speaking of Guy's combat with the Danish giant Colbrand, at Winchester.

Without the gate remembered as I rede,  
The place callyd of antiquyte  
In Inglysh tonge named *hyde mede*,  
Or ellis *denmarch* nat far from the cyte:  
Meeting to gedre, there men myght see  
Terryble strokys, lyk the dent of thonder;  
Sparklys owt of thar harnys, &c.

<sup>d</sup> See Vignol. Marville. Miscell. tom. i. p. 56.

<sup>e</sup> Noct. Att. xi. 2.

Seneca,

Seneca, and by others to Aufonius<sup>1</sup>. It is, however, more ancient than the time of the emperor Valentinian the third, who died in 455<sup>2</sup>. On the other hand, it was written after the appearance of Lucan's PHARSALIA, as the author, at the beginning of the second book, commends Virgil, Macer<sup>3</sup>, Ovid, and Lucan. The name of Cato probably became prefixed to these distichs, in a lower age, by the officious ignorance of transcribers, and from the acquiescence of readers equally ignorant, as Marcus Cato had written a set of moral distichs. Whoever was the author, this metrical system of ethics had attained the highest degree of estimation in the barbarous ages. Among Langbain's manuscripts bequeathed to the university of Oxford by Antony Wood, it is accompanied with a Saxon paraphrase<sup>4</sup>. John of Salisbury, in his POLYCRATICON, mentions it as the favourite and established manual in the education of boys<sup>5</sup>. To enumerate no others,

<sup>1</sup> It was printed under the name of Aufonius, Rosoch. 1572. 8vo.

<sup>2</sup> Ex Epistol. Vindiciani Medici, ad Valent. They are mentioned by Notkerus, who flourished in the tenth century, among the *Metrovum, Hymnorum, Epigrammatumque conditores*. Cap. vi. DE ILLUSTRIB. VIR. etc. printed by Fabric. M. Lat. v. p. 904.

<sup>3</sup> The poem DE VIRTUTIBUS HERBARUM, under the name of Macer, now extant, was written by Odo, or Odobonus, a physician of the dark ages. It was translated into English, by John Lelarmoner, or Lelamar, master of Hereford school, about the year 1373. MSS. Sloane. 29. Princ. "Apium, Ache is hote and drie." There is *Macer's Herbal*, *ibid.* 43. This seems to have been printed, see Ames, p. 158.

<sup>4</sup> Cod. 12. [8615.]

<sup>5</sup> Polycrat. vii. 9. p. 373. edit. Lugd. Bat. 1595. It is cited, *ibid.* p. 116. 321. 512. In the ART OF VERSIFICATION, a Latin poem, written by Eberhardus Bethuniensis, about the year 1212, there is a curious passage, in which all the classics of that age are recited; or the best authors, then in vogue, and whom he recommends

to be taught to youth. [Leyser. Poet. Med. xv. p. 825.] They are, CATO the moralist. THEODULUS, the author of a leonine Eclogue, a dialogue between Truth and Falshood, written in the tenth century, printed among the OCTO MORALES, and by Goldastus, Man. Bibl. 1620. 8vo. MSS. Harl. 3093. 4. Wynkyn de Worde printed this piece under the title of *Theodoli liber, cum commento satis prolixo autoris cujusdam Anglici qui multa Anglicana ubique miscuit*. 1515. 4to. It was from one of Theodulus's ECGLOGUES, beginning *Ethiopum terras*, that Field, master of Fotheringay college, about the year 1480, *sette the versis of the book caullid Ethiopum terras, in the glasse windowe, with figures very neatly*. Leland. ITIN. i. fol. 5. [p. 7. edit. 1745.] This seems to have been in a window of the new and beautiful cloister, built about that time. FLAVIUS AVIANUS, a writer of Latin fables, or apologues, Lugd. Bat. 1731. 8vo. ÆSOR, or the Latin fabulist, printed among the OCTO MORALES, Lugd. Bat. 1505. 4to. MAXIMIANUS, whole six elegies, written about the seventh century, pass under the name of Gallus. Chaucer cites this writer; and

it is much applauded by Ifidore the old etymologist<sup>m</sup>, Alcuine<sup>n</sup>, and Abelard<sup>o</sup>: and we must acknowledge, that the writer,

and in a manner, which shews his elegies had not then acquired the name of Gallus. COURT OF L. v. 798. "MAXIMINIAN "truely thus doeth he write." PAMPHILUS MAURILIANUS, author of the hexametrical poem *de Vetula*, and the elegies *de Arte amandi*, entitled PAMPHILUS, published by Goldastus, Catalact. Ovid. Francof. 1610. 8vo. [See supr. p. 130.] GETA, or *Hofidius Geta*, who has left a tragedy on Medea, printed in part by Pet. Scriverius, *Fragm. Vett. Tragic. Lat.* p. 187. [But see supr. vol. i. p. 234.] DARES PHRYGIUS, on the destruction of Troy. MACER. [See supr. p. 159.] MARBODEUS, a Latin poet on *Gems*. [See supr. vol. i. p. 378.] PETRUS DE RIGA, canon of Rheims, whose *AURORA*, or the *History of the Bible allegorised*, in Latin verses, some of which are in rhyme, was never printed entire. He has left also *Speculum Ecclesie*, with other pieces, in Latin poetry. He flourished about the year 1130. SEDULIUS. PROSPER. ARATOR. PRUDENTIUS. BOETHIUS. ALANUS, author of the *Anticlaudian*, a poem in nine books, occasioned by the scepticism of Claudian. [See supr. vol. i. p. 391.] VIRGIL, HORACE, OVID, LUCAN, STATIUS, JUVENAL, and PERSIUS. JOHN HANVILLE, an Englishman, who wrote the *ARCHITRENIUS*, in the twelfth century, a Latin hexameter poem in nine books. PHILIP GUALTIER, of Chatillon, who wrote, about the same period, the *ALEXANDREID*, an heroic poem on Alexander the great. SOLYMARIUS, or GUNTHER, a German Latin poet, author of the *SOLYMARIIUM*, or *Crusade*. GALFRIDUS, our countryman, whose *NOVA POETRIA* was in higher celebrity than Horace's *Art of Poetry*. [See vol. i. *Dissertat. ii.*] MATTHÆUS, of Vendosme, who in the year 1170, paraphrased the *Book of Tobit* into Latin elegiacs, from the Latin bible of saint Jerom, under the title of the *TOBIAD*, sometimes called the *THERAID*, and first printed among the *OCTO MORALES*. ALEXANDER DE VILLA DEI, whose *DOCTRINALE*, or *Grammar in Leonine verse*, superseded Priscian about the year 1200. It was first printed at Venice, fol. 1473.

And by Wynkyn de Worde, 1503. He was a French frier minor, and also wrote the *ARGUMENTS of the chapters of all the books of either Testament*, in two hundred and twelve hexameters. With some other forgotten pieces. MARCIANUS CAPELLA, whose poem on the MARRIAGE OF MERCURY WITH PHILOLOGY rivalled Boethius. [See supr. p. 75.] JOANNES DE GARLANDIA, an Englishman, a poet and grammarian, who studied at Paris about the year 1200. The most eminent of his numerous Latin poems, which crowd our libraries, seem to be his *EPITHALAMIUM on the Virgin Mary* in ten books of elegiacs. MSS. Cotton. CLAUD. A. x. And *DE TRIUMPHIS ECCLESIE*, in eight books, which contains much English history. MS. *ibid.* Some of his pieces, both in prose and verse, have been printed. BERNARDUS CARNOTENSIS, or *Sylvester*, much applauded by John of Salisbury, who styles him the most perfect Platonist of that age. *Metalog.* iv. c. 35. His *MEGACOSM* and *MICROCOSM*, a work consisting both of verse and prose, is frequently cited by the barbarous writers. He is imitated by Chaucer, *Man of L. Tale*, v. 4617. "In sterres many a winter, &c." *PHYSIOLOGUS*, or THEOBALDUS EPISCOPUS, who wrote in Latin verse *De Naturis xii. animalium*, MSS. Harl. 3093. 5. He is there called *Italicus*. There is also a *Magister FLORINUS*, styled also *PHYSIOLOGUS*, on the same subject. Chaucer quotes *PHYSIOLOGUS*, whom I by mistake have supposed to be Pliny, "For *PHYSIOLOGUS* says slykerly." *NONNES PR. TALE.* v. 15277. [See supr. vol. i. p. 420.] SIDONIUS, who wrote a metrical dialogue between a Jew and a Christian on both the Testaments. And a *SIDONIUS*, perhaps the same, *regis qui fugit praelia*. To these our author adds his own *GRECISMUS*, or a poem in hexameters on rhetoric and grammar; which, as Du Cange [*Præf. Lat. Gloss. § XLV.*] observes, was anciently a common manual in the seminaries of France, and, I suppose, of England,

<sup>m</sup> Etymol. V. OFFICIPERDA.

<sup>n</sup> Contra Elipand. lib. ii. p. 949.

<sup>o</sup> Lib. i. Theol. Christ. p. 1183.

exclusive of the utility of his precepts, possesses the merit of a nervous and elegant brevity. It is perpetually quoted by Chaucer. In the MILLER'S TALE, he reproaches the simple carpenter for having never read in Cato, that a man should marry his own likeness<sup>p</sup>: and in the MARCHAUNT'S TALE, having quoted Seneca to prove that no blessing is equal to an humble wife, he adds Cato's precept of prudently bearing a scolding wife with patience<sup>q</sup>. It was translated into Greek at Constantinople by Maximus Planudes, who has the merit of having familiarised to his countrymen many Latin classics of the lower empire, by metaphrastic versions<sup>r</sup>: and at the restoration of learning in Europe, illustrated with a commentary by Erasmus, which is much extolled by Luther<sup>s</sup>. There are two or three French translations<sup>t</sup>. That of Mathurine Corderoy is dedicated to Robert Stephens. In the British museum, there is a French translation by Helis de Guincestre, or Winchester; made, perhaps, at the time when our countrymen affected to write more in French than English<sup>u</sup>. Chaucer constantly calls this writer CATON or CATHON, which shews that he was more familiar in French than in Latin. Caxton in the preface to his aforesaid translation affirms, that Poggius Florentinus, whose library was furnished with the most valuable authors, esteemed CATHON GLOSED, that is, Cato with notes, to be the best book in his collection<sup>w</sup>. The glossarist I take to be Philip de Pergamo,

<sup>p</sup> V. 3227.

<sup>q</sup> V. 9261.

<sup>r</sup> It occurs often among the Baroccian manuscripts, Bibl. Bodl. viz. 64. 71, bis. 95. 111. 194. The first edition of Cato, soon followed by many others, I believe, is August. A. D. 1485. The most complete edition is that of Christ. Daumius, Cygn. 1672. 8vo. Containing the Greek metaphrases of Maximus Planudes, Joseph Scaliger, Matthew Zuber, and John Mylius, a German version by Martinus Apicius, with annotations and other accessions. It

Vol. II.

was before translated into German rhymes by Abraham Mörterius, of Weissenburgh, Francof. 1590. 8vo.

<sup>s</sup> Colloqu. Menfal. c. 37.

<sup>t</sup> One by Peter Grosnet, *Les mots dorees du sage Caton*. Paris. 1543.

<sup>u</sup> MSS. Harl. 4388. This manuscript is older than 1400. Du Cange quotes a CATO in French rhymes. Gl. Lat. V. LECATOR. See MSS. Ashmol. 789. 2. [6995.]

<sup>w</sup> Many of the *glossed* manuscripts, so common in the libraries, were the copies with

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a prior at Padua; who wrote a most elaborate MORALISATION on Cato, under the title of SPECULUM REGIMINIS, so early as the year 1380<sup>x</sup>. In the same preface, Caxton observes, that it is *the beste boke for to be taught to yonge children in scole*. But he supposes the author to be Marcus Cato, whom he duly celebrates with the two Scipios and other noble Romaynes. A kind of supplement to this work, and often its companion, under the title of CATO PARVUS, or Facetus, or Urbanus, was written by Daniel Church, or Ecclesiensis, a domestic in the court of Henry the second, a learned prince and a patron of scholars, about the year 1180<sup>y</sup>. This was also translated by Burghe; and in the British museum, both the CATOS of his version occur, as forming one and the same work, viz. *Liber MINORIS Catonis, et MAJORIS, translatus a Latino in Anglicum per Mag. Benet Borugh<sup>z</sup>*. Burghe's performance is too jejune for

with which pupils in the university attended their readers, or lecturers; from whose mouths paraphrastic notes were *interlined* or written in the margin, by the more diligent hearers. In a Latin translation of some of Aristotle's philosophical works, once belonging to Rochester priory, and transcribed about the year 1350, one Henry de Rewham is said to be the writer; and to have *glossed* the book, during the time he heard it explained by a public reader in the schools of Oxford. "Et *audivit* in scholis Oxonie, et emendavit et *GLOSSAVIT audiendo*." MSS. Reg. 12 G. ii. 410. In the mean time, I am of opinion, that the word *reader* originally took its rise from a paucity of books: when there was only ONE book to be had, which a professor or lecturer recited to a large audience.

<sup>x</sup> Printed, August. 1475. In Exeter college library, there is CATO MORALISATUS, MSS. 37. [837.] And again at All Souls, MSS. 9. [1410.] Compare MSS. More, 35. [9221.] And Bibl. Coll. Trin. Dublin. 651. 14. And MSS. Harl. 6294.

<sup>y</sup> MSS. Coll. Trin. Dublin. 275. And Bibl. Eccles. Vigorn sub. Tit. URBANUS,

MSS. 147. One Tedbaldus, of the same age, is called the author, from a manuscript cited, Giornal. Lett. d'Ital. iv. p. 181. In Lewis's CAXTON, in a collection of Chaucer's and Lydgate's poems by Caxton, without date, are recited 3. PARVUS CATO. 4. MAGNUS CATO. p. 104. What these translations are I know not. Beside Caxton's CATO, mentioned above, there is a separate work by Caxton, "Hic incipit PARVUS CATO," in English and Latin. No date. Containing thirty-seven leaves in quarto. I find PARVUS CATO in English rhyme, MSS. Vernon. Bibl. Bodl. fol. cccx. [See *supr.* vol. i. p. 14.] The Latin of the lesser CATO is printed among AUCTORES OCTO MORALES, Lugd. 1538. Compare MSS. Harl. 2251. iii. fol. 174. 112. fol. 175. A translation into English verses of both CATOS, perhaps by Lydgate. See also MSS. Coll. Trin. Dublin. V. 651. The PROVERBIA CATONIS are a different work from either of these, written in hexameters by Marbodeus, Opp. Hildebert. p. 1634. Paris 1708. fol.

<sup>z</sup> MSS. Harl. 116. 2. See also, 271. 2.

transcription;

transcription; and, I suspect, would not have afforded a single splendid extract, had even the Latin possessed any sparks of poetry. It is indeed true, that the only critical excellence of the original, which consists of a terse conciseness of sentences, although not always expressed in the purest latinity, will not easily bear to be transfused. Burghe, but without sufficient foundation, is said to have finished Lydgate's GOVERNANCE OF PRINCIS<sup>a</sup>.

About the year 1481, Julian Barnes, more properly Berners, sister of Richard lord Berners, and prioress of the nunnery of Sopewell, wrote three English tracts on *Hawking*, *Hunting*, and *Armory*, or *Heraldry*, which were soon afterwards printed in the neighbouring<sup>b</sup> monastery of faint Alban's<sup>c</sup>.

<sup>a</sup> See sup. LYDGATE. There is a translation of the *Wyz Cate*, and *Aesop's Fables*, into English dogrell, by one William Bulloker, for Edm. Bollifant. 1585. This W. Bulloker wrote a *Pamphlet for grammar*, for the same, 1586. 12mo.

<sup>b</sup> There was a strong connection between the two monasteries. In that of faint Alban's a monk was annually appointed, with the title of *Custos monialium de Sopewelle*. Registr. Abbat. Wallingford, [Sub an. 1480.] MSS. Bibl. Bodl. MSS. Tanner.

<sup>c</sup> In the year 1486. fol. Again, at Westminster, by W. de Worde. 1496. 4to. The barbarism of the times strongly appears in the indelicate expressions which she often uses; and which are equally incompatible with her sex and profession. The poem begins thus. [I transcribe from a good manuscript, MSS. Rawlinf. Bibl. Bodl. papyr. fol.]

Mi dere fones, where ye fare, by frith, or  
by fell<sup>\*</sup>,  
Take good hede in his tyme how Tristrem †  
wol tell;  
How many maner bestes of venery there  
were,  
Listenes now to our Dame, and ye shullen  
here.  
Ffowre maner bestes of venery there are,

The first of hem is a hart, the second is an  
hare;

The boor is one of tho,

The wolff, and no mo.

And wherefo ye comen in play † or in place,

Now shal I tel you which ben bestes of chace:

One of the a buck, another a doo,

The ffox, and the marteryn, and the wilde  
roo:

And ye shall, my dere fones, other bestes all,

Where so ye hem finde, rascall hem call,

In frith or in fell,

Or in fforrest, y yow tell,

And to speke of the hert, if ye wil hit lere,

Ye shall call him a calfe at the first yere;

The second yere a broket, so shall he be,

The third yere a spayard, lerneth this at me;

The iiiii yere calles hem a stagge be any way

The first yere a grete stagge, my dame bade  
you fay.

Among Crynes's books [911. 4to. Bibl. Bodl.] there is a bl. lett. copy of this piece, "Imprynted at London in Paul's church-  
"yarde by me Hary Tab." Again by William Copland without date, "The  
"boke of hawkyng, hunting, and fising,  
"with all the properties and medecynes  
"that are necessary to be kept." With wooden cuts. Here the tract on *armory* is omitted, which seems to have been first inserted,

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\* Wood or field.

† Sir Tristram. See OBSERVAT. SPENS. i. p. 21.

† Plain.

From an abbess disposed to turn author, we might more reasonably have expected a manual of meditations for the closet, or select rules for making salves, or distilling strong waters. But the diversions of the field were not thought inconsistent with the character of a religious lady of this eminent rank, who resembled an abbot in respect of exercising an extensive manerial jurisdiction; and who hawked and hunted in common with other ladies of distinction<sup>d</sup>. This work, however, is here mentioned, because the second of these treatises is written in rhyme. It is spoken in her own person; in which, being otherwise a woman of authority, she assumes the title of dame. I suspect the whole to be a translation from the French and Latin<sup>e</sup>.

To this period I refer William of Nassington, a proctor or advocate in the ecclesiastical court at York. He translated into English rhymes, as I conjecture, about the year 1480, a theological tract, entitled *A treatise on the Trinity and Unity with a declaration of God's Works and of the Passion of Jesus Christ*, written by John of Waldenby, an Augustine

inserted that the work might contain a complete course of education for a gentleman. The same title is in W. Powel's edit. 1550. The last edition is "The GENTLEMAN'S ACADEMY, or the book of saint Albans, concerning hawking, hunting, and armory." Lond. 1595. 4to.

<sup>d</sup> At the magnificent marriage of the princess Margaret with James the fourth, king of Scotland, in 1503, his majesty sends the new queen, "a grett tame hart, for to have a corse." Leland. Coll. APPEND. iii. 280. edit. 1770.

<sup>e</sup> This is the latter part of the colophon at the end of the saint Alban's edition. "And here now endith the boke of blasfing of armys, translatyt and compylt togedyt at saynt Albons the yere from thyncarnacyon of oure lorde Jhesu Crist MCCCCXXXVI." [This very scarce book, printed in various inks, was in the late Mr. West's library.] This part is

translated or abstracted from Upton's book *De re militari, et factis illustribus*, written about the year 1441. See the fourth book *De insignibus Anglorum nobilium*. Edit. Biss. Lond. 1654. 4to. It begins with the following curious piece of sacred heraldry. "Of the offspring of the gentleman Jafeth, come Habraham, Moyfes, Aron, and the profettys, and also the kyng of the right lyne of Mary, of whom that gentleman Jhesus was borne, very god and man: after his manhode kyng of the land of Jude and of Jues, gentleman by is moder Mary, prynce of Cote armure, &c."

Nicholas Upton, above mentioned, was a fellow of New college Oxford, about the year 1430. He had many dignities in the church. He was patronised by Humphrey duke of Gloucester, to whom he dedicates his book. This I ought to have remarked before.

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frier of Yorkshire, a student in the Augustine convent at Oxford, the provincial of his order in England, and a strenuous champion against the doctrines of Wicliffe<sup>f</sup>. I once saw a manuscript of Nassyngton's translation in the library of Lincoln cathedral<sup>g</sup>; and was tempted to transcribe the few following lines from the prologue, as they convey an idea of our poet's character, record the titles of some old popular romances, and discover antient modes of public amusement.

I warne you firste at the begynnyng,  
That I will make no vayne carpyng,  
Of dedes of armes, ne of amours,  
As does MYNSTRELLIS and GESTOURS,  
That maketh carpyng in many a place  
Of OCTOVIANE and ISENBRACE,  
And of many other GESTES,  
And namely when they come to festes;  
Ne of the lyf of BEVYS OF HAMPTOUNE,  
That was a knyght of grete renoune:  
Ne of fyr GYE OF WARWYKE, &c.

Our translator in these verses formally declares his intention of giving his reader no entertainment; and disavows all concern with secular vanities, especially those unedifying tales of love and arms, which were the customary themes of other poets, and the delight of an idle age. The romances of OCTAVIAN, sir BEVIS, and sir GUY, have already been discussed at large. That of sir ISEMBRAS was familiar in the time of Chaucer, and occurs in the RIME of SIR THOPAS<sup>h</sup>. In Mr. Garrick's curious library of chivalry, which his friends share in common with himself, there is an edition

<sup>f</sup> Wood, Ant. Univ. Oxon. i. 117.

<sup>g</sup> See also MSS. Reg. 17 C. viii. p. 2.

<sup>h</sup> V. 6. See supr. vol. i. p. 123. Notes.

by

by Copland, extremely different from the manuscript copies preserved at Cambridge<sup>1</sup>, and in the Cotton collection<sup>2</sup>. I believe it to be originally a French romance, yet not of very high antiquity. It is written in the stanza of Chaucer's first THOPAS<sup>3</sup>. The incidents are for the most part those trite expedients, which almost constantly form the plan of these metrical narratives.

I take this opportunity of remarking, that the MINSTRELS, who in this prologue of Nassyngton are named separately from the GESTOURS, or tale-tellers, were sometimes distinguished from the harpers. In the year 1374, six Minstrels, accompanied with four Harpers, on the anniversary of Alwyne the bishop, performed their *minstrelshies*, at dinner, in the hall of the convent of saint Swithin at Winchester; and during supper, sung the same GEST, or tale, in the great *arched* chamber of the prior: on which solemn occasion, the said chamber was hung with the arras, or tapestry, of THE THREE KINGS OF COLOGNE<sup>4</sup>. These minstrels and harpers belonged, partly to the royal household in Winchester castle, and partly to the bishop of Winchester.

<sup>1</sup> MSS. Caius Coll. Clafs. A. 9. (2.)

<sup>2</sup> CALIG. A. 12. f. 128.

<sup>3</sup> See Percy's BALL. i. 306.

<sup>4</sup> Registr. Priorat. S. Swithini Winton. ut supr. [vol. i. p. 89.] "In festo Alwyni episcopi . . . Et durante pietancia in aula conventus, sex MINISTRALLI, cum quatuor CITHARISATORIBUS, faciebant ministralcias suas. Et post cenam, in magna camera arcuatâ dom. Prioris, cantabant idem GESTUM, in quâ camerâ fuspendebatur, ut moris est, magnum dorsale Prioris, habens picturas trium regum Colein. Veniebant autem dicti joculariores a castello domini regis, et ex familiâ episcopi . . ." The rest is much obliterated, and the date is hardly discernible. Among the Harleian manuscripts, there is an antient song on the three kings of Cologne, in which the whole story of that favorite romance is resolved into al-

chemy. MSS. 2407. 13. fol. Wynkyn de Worde printed this romance in quarto, 1526. It is in MSS. Harl. 1704. 11. fol. 49. b. Imperf. Coll. Trin. Dublin. V. 651. 14. [C. 16.] MSS. More, 37. And frequently in other places. Barclay, in his ECGLOGES, mentions this subject, a part of the nativity, painted on the walls of a church cathedral. EGL. v. Signat. D. ii. ad calc. *Ship of foolcs*, edit. 1570.

And the *thre kinges*, with all their company,  
Their crownes glistering bright and oriently,  
With their presentes and giftes mysticall,  
All this behelde I in picture on the wall.

In an Inventory of ornaments belonging to the church of Holbech in Lincolnshire, and sold in the year 1548, we find this article. "Item, for the COATS of the iii. kyngs of Coloyne, v. s. iiii d." I suppose these coats were for dressing persons who represented

There was an annual mass at the shrine or tomb of bishop Alwyne in the church, which was regularly followed by a feast in the convent. It is probable, that the G<sup>EST</sup> here specified was some poetical legend of the prelate, to whose memory this yearly festival was instituted, and who was a Saxon bishop of Winchester about the year 1040<sup>o</sup>. Although songs of chivalry were equally common, and I believe more welcome to the monks, at these solemnities. In an accompt-roll of the priory of Bicester, in Oxfordshire<sup>o</sup>, I find a parallel instance, under the year 1432. It is in this entry. "Dat. sex Ministrallis de Bokyngham cantantibus" in refectorio MARTYRIUM SEPTEM DORMIENTIUM in festo "epiphanie, iv s." That is, the treasurer of the monastery gave four shillings to six minstrels from Buckingham, for singing in the refectory a legend called the MARTYRDOM OF THE SEVEN SLEEPERS<sup>o</sup>, on the feast of the Epiphany. In the Cotton library, there is a Norman poem in Saxon characters on this subject<sup>o</sup>; which was probably translated afterwards into English rhyme. The original is a Greek legend<sup>o</sup>, never

represented the three kings in some procession on the NATIVITY. Or perhaps for a MYSTERY on the subject, plaid by the parish. But in the same Inventory we have, *Item, for the apostylls [the apostles] coats,* and for HAROD's [Herod's] coats, &c. Stukeley's ITIN. CURIOS. pag. 19. In old accompts of church-wardens for saint Helen's at Abingdon, Berks, for the year 1566, there is an entry *For setting up ROBIN HOODE'S BOWER.* I suppose for a parish interlude. ARCHÆOL. vol. i. p. 16.

<sup>a</sup> He is buried in the north wall of the presbytery, with an inscription.

<sup>o</sup> In Theauriario Coll. Trin. Oxon. [See *supr.* vol. i. p. 90.]

<sup>p</sup> In the fourth century, being inclosed in a cave at Ephesus by the emperor Decius 372 years, they were afterwards found sleeping, and alive.

<sup>q</sup> MSS. Cott. CALIG. A. ix. iii. fol. 213. b. [See *supr.* vol. i. p. 18.] "Jei commence la vie de Seint dormanz."

La uertu deu iur tut iur y bure  
L tvt iurz eyt certein e pure.

<sup>r</sup> MSS. Lambec. viii. p. 375. Photius, without naming the author, gives the substance of this Greek legend, Bibl. Cod. ccliiii. pag. 1399. edit. 1591. fol. This story was common among the Arabians. The mussulmans borrowed many wonderful narratives from the christians, which they embellished with new fictions. They pretend that a dog, which was accidentally shut up in the cavern with the *seven sleepers*, became rational. See Herbelot, DICT. ORIENT. p. 139. a. V. ASHAB. p. 17. In the British Museum there is a poem, partly in Saxon characters, *De pueritia domini nostri Jhesu Christi.* Or, *the childhood of Christ.* MSS. Harl. 2399. 10. fol. 47. It begins thus.

Alle myzhty god yn Trynyte,  
That bowth [bought] man on rode dere;  
He gefe ows walhe to the  
A lytyl wyle that ye wylle me here.

Who

printed; but which, in the dark ages, went about in a barbarous Latin translation, by one Syrus'; or in a narrative framed from thence by Gregory of Tours'.

Henry Bradshaw has rather larger pretensions to poetical fame than William of Naffington, although scarcely deserving the name of an original writer in any respect. He was a native of Chester, educated at Gloucester college in Oxford, and at length a Benedictine monk of saint Werburgh's abbey in his native place". Before the year 1500, he wrote the LIFE OF SAINT WERBURGH, a daughter of a king of the Mercians, in English verse". This poem, beside the devout deeds and passion of the poet's patroness saint,

Who would suspect that this absurd legend had also a Greek original? It was taken, I do not suppose immediately, from an apocryphal narrative ascribed to saint Thomas the apostle, but really compiled by Thomas Israclites, and entitled, *Λόγος εις τα παιδικά η̄ μεγαλῆα τῷ κυρίῳ η̄ σῶτορι η̄μῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ*, *Liber de pueritia et miraculis domini*, &c. It is printed in part by Cotelerius, Not. ad Patr. Apostol. p. 274. Who there mentions a book of Saint Matthew the Evangelist, *De Infantia Salvatoris*, in which our Lord is introduced learning to read, &c. See Iren. lib. i. c. xvii. p. 104. Among other figments of this kind, in the Pseudo-Gelasian Decree are recited, *The history and nativity of our Saviour, and of Mary and the midwife*. And, *The history of the infancy of our Saviour*. Jur. Can. DISTINCT. can. 3. The latter piece is mentioned by Analtasius, where he censures as supposititious, the *puerile miracles of Christ*. Ody. c. xiii. p. 26.

On the same subject there is an Arabic book, probably compiled soon after the rise of Mahometanism, translated into Latin by Sikius, called *EVANGELIUM INFANTIE*, Arab. et Latin. Traject. ad Rhen. 1697. 8vo. In this piece, Christ is examined by the Jewish doctors, in astronomy, medicine, physics, and metaphysics. Sikius says, that the *PUERILE MIRACLES* of Christ were common among the Per-

fians. Ibid. in Not. p. 55. Fabricius cites a German poem, more than four hundred years old, founded on these legends. Cod. Apocryph. Nov. Test. tom. i. pag. 212. Hamburg. 1703.

At the end of the English poem on this subject above cited, is the following rubric. "Q̄od dnus Johannes Arcitenens canonius Bodminie et natus in illa." Whether this canon of Bodmin in Cornwall, whose name was perhaps Archer, or Bowyer, is the poet, or only the transcriber, I cannot say. See fol. 48. In the same manuscript volume, [8.] there is an old English poem to our Saviour, with this note. "Explicit Contemplationem bonam. Q̄od dnus Johannes Arcuarius Canonicus Bodminie." See what is said, below, of the *PSEUDO-EVANGELIUM* attributed to Nichodemus.

\* Apud Surium, ad 27 Jul.

† *Historia Septem Dormientium*. Paris. 1511. 4to. Ibid. 1640. And apud Ruinart. p. 1270. See Præf. Ruinart. §. 79. And Gregory himself *De gloria marie*, cap. 95. pag. 826. This piece is noticed and much commended by the old chronicler Albericus, ad ann. 319.

‡ Athen. Oxon. i. p. 9. Pitf. 690.

§ He declares, that he does not mean to rival Chaucer, Lydgate *sententious*, *pregnant* Barklay, and *inventive* Skelton. The two last were his cotemporaries. L. ii. c. 24.

comprehends

comprehends a variety of other subjects; as a description of the kingdom of the Mercians<sup>x</sup>, the lives of faint Etheldred and faint Sexburgh<sup>y</sup>, the foundation of the city of Chester<sup>z</sup>, and a chronicle of our kings<sup>a</sup>. It is collected from Bede, Alfred of Beverly, Malmesbury, Girardus Cambrensis, Higden's Polychronicon, and the passionaries of the female saints, Werburgh, Etheldred, and Sexburgh, which were kept for

<sup>x</sup> Lib. i. c. ii.

<sup>y</sup> Lib. i. cap. xviii. xix.

<sup>z</sup> Lib. i. cap. iii.

<sup>a</sup> Lib. ii. cap. xv. The fashion of writing metrical *Chronicles of the kings of England* grew very fashionable in this century. See *supr.* vol. i. p. 92. Many of these are evidently composed for the harp: but they are mostly mere genealogical deductions. Hearne has printed, from the Herald's office, a *PETEGREE* of our kings, from William the conqueror to Henry the sixth, written in 1448. [APPENDIX to *Rob. Gloucest.* vol. ii. p. 585, see p. 588.] This is a specimen.

Then regnyd Harry nought full wyfe,  
The son of Mold [Maud] the emperyse.  
In hys tyme then feynt Thomas  
At Caunterbury martyrd was.  
He held Rosomund the sheen,  
Gret forwe hit was for the queen:  
At Wodefoke for hure he made a toure,  
That is called ROSEMOUNDES BOURE.—  
And fithen regnyd his sone Richerd,  
A man that was never aferd:  
He werred ofte tyme and wyfe  
Worthily upon goddis enemyse.  
And fithen he was shoten, alas!  
Atte castle Gailard there he was.  
Atte Fonte Everarde he lithe there:  
He regnyd almost two yere.—  
In Johne is tyme, as y underfonde,  
Was entredyted alle Engelonde:  
He was fulle wrothe and grym,  
For prestus would nought syng before  
hym, &c.

Lydgate has left the best chronicle of the kind, and most approaching to poetry. *The regnyng of kynys after the conquest by the monk of Bury*. MSS. Fairf. Bibl. Bodl. 16. [And MSS. Ashmol. 59. ii. MSS. Vol. II.

Harl. 2251. 3. And a beautiful copy, with pictures of the kings, MSS. Cotton.] *ULIUS*. E. 5.] Never printed. [Unless printed by Wynkyn de Worde, 1530. 4to. "This myghty Wyllyam duke of Normandy." This is one of the stanzas. [See MSS. Bodl. B. 3. 1999. 6.]

RICARDUS PRIMUS.

Rychard the next by succesfyon,  
Ffirst of that name, strong, hardy, and  
notable,

Was crowned kynge, called Cur de Lyon,  
With Saryzonys hedys served atte table:  
Sleyn at Galard by death full lamentable:  
The space regned fully ix yere;  
His hert buryed in Roon, atte highe autere.

Compare MSS. Harl. 372. 5. There was partly a political view in these deductions: to ascertain the right of our kings to the crowns of France, Castile, Leon, and the dutchy of Normandy. See MSS. Harl. 326. 2.—116. 11. fol. 142. I know not whether it be worth observing, that about this time a practice prevailed of constructing long parchment-rolls in Latin, of the Pedigree of our kings. Of this kind is the *Pedigree of Britissh kings from Adam to Henry the sixth*, written about the year 1450, by Roger Alban, a Carmelite friar of London. It begins, "Considerans chroniconum prolixitatem." The original copy, presented to Henry the sixth by the compiler, is now in Queen's college library at Oxford. MSS. [22.] B. 5. 3. There are two copies in Winchester college library, and another in the Bodleian. Among bishop More's manuscripts, there is a parchment-roll of the Pedigree of our kings from Ethelred to Henry the fourth, in French, with pictures of the several monarchs.

A a

public edification in the choir of the church of our poet's monastery<sup>b</sup>. Bradshaw is not so fond of relating visions and miracles as his argument seems to promise. Although concerned with three fairs, he deals more in plain facts than in the fictions of religious romance; and, on the whole, his performance is rather historical than legendary. This is remarkable, in an age, when it was the fashion to turn history into legend<sup>c</sup>. His fabulous origin of Chester is not

narchs. MSS. 495. And, in the same collection, a Pedigree from Harold to Henry the fourth, with elegant illuminations. MSS. 479. In the same rage of genealogising, Alban abovementioned framed the Descent of Jesus Christ, from Adam through the Levitical and regal tribes, the Jewish patriarchs, judges, kings, prophets, and priests. The original roll, as it seems, on vellum, beautifully illuminated, is in MSS. More, ut *supr.* 495. But this was partly copied from Peter of Poitou, a disciple of Lombard about the year 1170, who, for the benefit of the poorer clergy, was the first that found out the method of forming, and reducing into parchment-rolls, HISTORICAL TREES of the old testament. Alberic. in *Chron.* p. 441. See MSS. Denb. 1627. 1. Rot. membr.

As to Bradshaw's history of the foundation of Chester, it may be classed with the FOUNDATION OF THE ABBEY OF GLOUCESTER, a poem of twenty-two stanzas, written in the year 1534, by the last abbot William Malverne, printed by Hearne, *Ubi sup.* p. 378. This piece is mentioned by Harpsfield, *HIST. ECCLES. ANGL.* p. 264. Princip. "In fundrie fayer volumes of antiquitie." MSS. Harl. 539. 14. fol. 111.

<sup>b</sup> For as declareth the true PASSIONARY, A boke where her holie lyfe wrytten is, Which boke remaineth in Chester monastery.

Lib. i. c. vii. Signat. C ii. And again, *ibid.*

I folow the legend and true hystory  
After an humble stile and from it lytell vary,

And in the Prologue, lib. i. Signat. A iiiii.  
Untoo this rude worke myne auctors thefe,  
Fyrst the true Legends, and the venerable Bede,  
Mayster Alfrydus, and Wyllyam Malmuf-bury,  
Gyraud, Polychronicon, and other mo in-deed.

<sup>c</sup> Even scripture-history was turned into romance. The story of Esther and Ahasuerus, or of AMON or Hamon, and MARDOCHEUS or Mordecai, was formed into a fabulous poem. MS. Vernon, ut *supr.* fol. 213.

Of AMON and MARDOCHEUS.

Mony wynter witerly  
Or Crist weore boren of vre ladi,  
A rich kyng, hizte Ahaswere,  
That stit was on stede and stere;  
Mighti kyng he was, i wis,  
He livede muchel in weolye ant blis,  
His blisse may i nat telle zou,  
How lange hit weore to schewe hit nou;  
But thing that tovcheth to vre matere  
I wol zou telle, gif ze wol here.  
The kyng lovede a knight so wele,  
That he commaunded men should knele  
Bifore him, in vche a freete,  
Over all ther men mihte him meete;  
AMON was the knihtes nome,  
On him fell muchel worldus schome,  
Ffor in this ilke kynges lande  
Was moche folke of Jewes wonande,  
Of heore kynd the kyng hym tok  
A qwene to wyve, as telleth the bok, &c.

In the British Museum, there is a long commentitious narrative of the *Creation of Adam*

so much to be imputed to his own want of veracity, as to the authority of his voucher Ranulph Higden, a celebrated chronicler, his countryman, and a monk of his own abbey<sup>a</sup>. He supposes that Chester, called by the antient Britons CAIR

*Adam and Eve, their Sufferings and Repentance, Death and Burial.* MSS. Harl. 1704. 5. fol. 18. This is from a Latin piece on the same subject, *ibid.* 495. 12. fol. 43. imperf. In the English, Peter Comestor, the *maister of floriss*, author of the *historia scholastica*, who flourished about the year 1170, is quoted. fol. 26. But he is not mentioned in the Latin, at fol. 49.

In Chaucer's MILLER'S TALE, we have this passage, v. 3538.

Haft thou not herd, quod Nicholas also,  
The forwe of Noe with his felawship,  
Or that he might get his wif to ship?

I know not whether this anecdote about Noah is in any similar supposititious book of Genesis. It occurs, however, in the *Chester Whitfun Playes*, where the authors, according to the established indulgence allowed to dramatic poets, perhaps thought themselves at liberty to enlarge on the sacred story. MSS. Harl. 2013. This alteration between Noah and his wife, takes up almost the whole third pageant of these interludes. Noah, having reproached his wife for her usual frowardness of temper, at last conjures her to come on board the ark, for fear of drowning. His wife insists on his sailing without her; and swears by *Christ* and *saint John*, that she will not embark, till some of her old female companions are ready to go with her. She adds, that if he is in such a hurry, he may sail alone, and fetch himself a new wife. At length Shem, with the help of his brothers, forces her into the vessel; and while Noah very cordially welcomes her on board, she gives him a box on the ear.

There is an apocryphal book, of the expulsion of Adam from Paradise, and of Seth's pilgrimage to Paradise, &c. &c. MSS. Eccles. Cathedr. Winton. 4.

<sup>a</sup> There is the greatest probability, that RALPH HIGDEN, hitherto known as a grave historian and theologian, was the com-

piler of the *Chester-plays*, mentioned above, vol. i. p. 243. In one of the Harleian copies [2013. 1.] under the *Proclamation* for performing these plays in the year 1522, this note occurs, in the hand of the third Randal Holme, one of the Chester antiquaries. "Sir John Arnway was mayor, A. D. 1327, and 1328. "At which tyme these playes were written by RANDALL HIGGENET, a monke of Chester abbey, &c." In a Prologue to these plays, when they were presented in the year 1600, are these lines, *ibid.* 2.

That some tymes ther was mayor of this  
citie

Sir John Arnway knight: who most worthilie

Contented hymselfe to sett out in playe.

The *Devise of one Done RONDALL*, Moonke of Chester abbaye.

*Done Rondall* is Dan [dominus] Randal. In another of the Harleian copies of these plays, written in the year 1607, this note appears, seemingly written in the year 1628. [MSS. Harl. 2124.] "The Whitfun playes first made by one *Don Rondle Heggnet*, a monke of Chester abbey: who was thrife at Rome before he could obtaine leave of the pope to have them in the English tongue." Our chronicler's name in the text, sometimes written *Hikeden*, and *Higgeden*, was easily corrupted into *Higgenet*, or *Heggnet*: and *Randal* is Ranulph or Randolph, *Ralpb*. He died, having been a monk of Chester abbey sixty-four years, in the year 1363. In *PIERS PLOWMAN*, a frier says, that he is well acquainted with the "rimes of RANDALL OF CHESTER." fol. 26. edit. 1550. I take this passage to allude to this very person, and to his compositions of this kind, for which he was probably soon famous. In an anonymous *CHRONICON*, he is styled *Ranulphus Cestrensis*, which is nothing more than RANDALL OF CHESTER. MS. Ric. James, A a 2 xi. 8.

LLEON, or *the city of Legions*, was founded by Leon Gaur, a giant, corrupted from LEON VAUR, or the *great legion*.

The founder of this citie, as fayth Polychronicon,  
Was Leon Gaur, a myghte stronge gyaunt,  
Which buildid caves and dongeons manie a one,  
No goodlie buildyng, ne proper, ne pleasant.

He adds, with an equal attention to etymology :

But kinge Leir a Britan fine and valiaunt,  
Was founder of Chester by pleasaunt buildyng,  
And was named Guar Leir by the kyng<sup>o</sup>.

But a greater degree of credulity would perhaps have afforded him a better claim to the character of a poet : and, at least, we should have conceived a more advantageous opinion of his imagination, had he been less frugal of those traditionary fables, in which ignorance and superstition had cloathed every part of his argument. This piece was first printed by Pinson in the year 1521. "Here begynneth the holy lyfe of SAYNT WERBURGE, very frutefull for all cristen people to rede<sup>f</sup>." He traces the genealogy of saint Werburg with much historical accuracy<sup>g</sup>.

xi. 8. Bibl. Bodl. And again we have, RANULPHI CESTRENSIS "*ars componendi sermones*," MSS. Bodl. sup. N. 2. Art. 10. And in many other places.

By the way, if it be true that these MYSTERIES were composed in the year 1328, and there was so much difficulty in obtaining the pope's permission that they might be presented in English, a presumptive proof arises, that all our MYSTERIES before that period were in Latin. These plays will therefore have the merit of being the first English interludes.

<sup>o</sup> Lib. ii. c. iii.

<sup>f</sup> In octavo. With a wooden cut of the Saint. Princip. "When Phebus had ronnc "his cours in Sagittari." At the beginning is an English copy of verses, by J. T. And at the end two others.

<sup>g</sup> *A descrypcyon of the geaalogy of SAYNT WERBURGE, &c.*

This noble prynces, the daughter of Syon,  
The floure of vertu, and vyrgyn glorious,  
Blessed saynt Werburge, full of devocyon,  
Descended by auncetry, and tytle famous,  
Of foure myghty kynges, noble and vyc-  
toryous,

Reynyng

The most splendid passage of this poem, is the following description of the feast made by king Ulpher in the hall of the abbey of Ely, when his daughter Werburgh was admitted to the veil in that monastery. Among other curious anecdotes of antient manners, the subjects of the tapestry, with which the hall was hung, and of the songs sung by the minstrels, on this solemn occasion, are given at large<sup>a</sup>.

Kynge Wulfer her father at this ghostly spoufage  
 Prepared great tryumphes, and solempnyte;  
 Made a royall feest, as custome is of maryage,  
 Sende for his frendes, after good humanyte  
 Kepte a noble housholde, shewed great lyberalyte  
 Both to ryche and poore, that to this feest wolde come,  
 No man was denyed, every man was wellcome.

Her uncles and aunes, were present there all  
 Ethelred and Merwalde, and Mercelly also  
 Thre blessed kynges, whome sayntes we do call  
 Saint Keneſwyd, saint Keneburg, their sisters both two  
 And of her noble lynage, many other mo  
 Were redy that season, with reverence and honour  
 At this noble tryumphe, to do all theyr devour.

Reynynge in his lande, by true successyon,  
 As her lyfe historyall\*, maketh declaracyon.

The year of our lorde, from the natyayte  
 Fyue hundreth xiiii. and iiii. score.

Whan Austyn was sende, from saynt Gre-  
 gorye,

To conuert this regyon, unto our sauoure  
 The noble kyng Cryda than reigned with  
 honoure

Upon the Mercyens, whiche kynge was  
 father

Unto kynge Wybba, and Quadriburge his  
 syller.

This Wybba gate Penda, kynge of  
 Mercyens,

\* That is, her Legend.

Which Penda subdued, fyue kynges of this  
 regyon

Reynynge thyrty yere, in worthyp and  
 reuerens

Was grauntfater to Werburge, by lynyall  
 successyon

By his quene Kyneswith, had a noble ge-  
 neracyon

Fyue valeant prynces, Penda and kynge  
 Wulfer,

Kynge Ethelred, saynt Marceyl, saynt Mar-  
 walde in fere †.

<sup>a</sup> "Of the great solempnyte kynge Wul-  
 fer made at the ghostly maryage of Saynt  
 Werburge his daughter, to all his lovers,  
 " cofyns, and frendes." Ca. xvi. L. i.

† Edit. Pinf. 1521.

Tho

Tho kynges mette them, with their company,  
 Egbrÿct kyng of Kent, brother to the quene;  
 The fecond was Aldulphe kyng of the east party,  
 Brother to faynt Audry, wyfe and mayde ferene;  
 With diuers of theyr progeny, and nobles as I wene,  
 Dukes, erles, barons, and lordes ferre and nere,  
 In theyr best array, were present all in fere <sup>l</sup>.

It were full tedyous, to make descrypçyon  
 Of the great tryumphes, and solempne royalte,  
 Belongynge to the feest, the honour and provyfyon,  
 By playne declaracyon, upon every partye;  
 But the sothe to say, withouten ambyguyte,  
 All herbes and flowres, fragraunt, fayre and swete,  
 Were strawed in halles, and layd under theyr fete.

Clothes of golde and arras, were hanged in the hall  
 Depaynted with pyctures, and hystories manyfolde,  
 Well wroughte and craftely, with precious stones all  
 Glyteryng as Phebus, and the beten golde,  
 Lyke an erthly paradyse, pleasaunt to beholde:  
 As for the sayd moynes <sup>k</sup>, was not them amonge,  
 But prayenge in her cell, as done all novice yonge.

The story of Adam, there was goodly wrought  
 And of his wyfe Eve, bytwene them the serpent,  
 How they were deceyved, and to theyr peynes brought;  
 There was Cayn and Abell, offerynge theyr present,  
 The sacryfyce of Abell, accepte full evydent:  
 Tuball and Tubalcain, were purtrayed in that place  
 The inventours of mufyke, and crafte by great grace.

<sup>l</sup> Together.

<sup>k</sup> Nun. i. e. The Lady Werburg.

Noe and his shyppe, was made there curiously  
 Sendynge forthe a raven, whiche never came again ;  
 And how the dove returned, with a braunche hastely,  
 A token of comforte and peace, to man certayne :  
 Abraham there was, standing upon the mount playne  
 To offer in sacrifice, Isaac his dere sone,  
 And how the shepe for hym was offered in oblacyon.

The twelve sones of Jacob, there were in purtrayture  
 And how into Egypt, yonge Joseph was folde,  
 There was imprisoned, by a false coniectour,  
 After in all Egypte, was ruler (as is tolde).  
 There was in pycture, Moyfes wyse and bolde,  
 Our Lorde apperynge, in bushe flammynge as fyre  
 And nothing thereof brent, lese, tree, nor spyre<sup>1</sup>.

The ten plages of Egypt, were well embost  
 The chyldren of Israel, passyng the reed see,  
 Kynge Pharoo drowned, with all his proude hooft,  
 And how the two table, at the mounte Synaye  
 Were gyven to Moyfes, and how soon to idolatry  
 The people were prone, and punyshed were therefore,  
 How Datan and Abyron, for pryde were full youre<sup>m</sup>.

Duke Josue was joyned, after them in pycture,  
 Ledyng the Israhelytes to the land of promyffyon,  
 And how the said land was divided by mesure  
 To the people of God, by equall fundry porcyon ::  
 The judges and bysshops were there everychone,  
 Theyr noble actes, and tryumphes marcyall,  
 Freshly were browdred in these clothes royall.

<sup>1</sup> Twig. Branch.<sup>m</sup> Būnt.

Nexte.

Nexte to the greate lorde, appered fayre and bryght  
 Kyng Saull and David, and prudent Solomon,  
 Roboas succedynge, whiche soone lost his myght,  
 The good kyng Ezechyas, and his generacyon,  
 And so to the Machabees, and dyvers other nacyon,  
 All these sayd storyes, so rychely done and wrought.  
 Belongyng to kyng Wulfer, agayn that tyme were brought<sup>o</sup>,

But over the hye desse<sup>o</sup>, in the pryncypall place  
 Where the sayd thre kynges fate crowned all,  
 The best hallynge<sup>p</sup> hanged, as reason was,  
 Whereon were wrought the ix. orders angelicall  
 Dyvyded in thre ierarchyfes, not cessyng to call  
*Sanctus, sanctus, sanctus*, blessed be the Trynite,  
*Dominus Deus Sabaoth*, thre persons in one deyte.

Next in order suyng<sup>q</sup>, sette in goodly purtrayture  
 Was our blessed lady, flowre of femynyte,  
 With the twelve Apostles, echeone in his figure,  
 And the foure Evangelystes, wrought most curyously:  
 Also the Dyscyples of Christ in theyr degre  
 Prechyng and techyng, unto every nacyon,  
 The faythtes<sup>r</sup> of holy chyrche, for their salvacyon.

Martyrs than folowed, right manifolde:  
 The holy Innocentes, whom Herode had slayne,  
 Blessed Saynt Stephen, the prothomartyr truly,  
 Saynt Laurence, Saynt Vyncent, sufferyng great payne;  
 With many other mo, than here ben now certayne,  
 Of which sayd martyrs exfample we may take,  
 Pacyence to observe, in herte, for Chrystes sake.

<sup>o</sup> All this tapestry, belonging to king  
 Wulfer, was brought to Ely monastery on  
 this occasion.

<sup>p</sup> Seat.

<sup>q</sup> Tapestry.

<sup>r</sup> Following.

<sup>s</sup> Feats. Facts.

Confessours approched, right convenient,  
 Fresshly enbrodred in ryche tysfhewe and fyne ;  
 Saynt Nycholas, Saynt Benedycte, and his covent,  
 Saynt Jerom, Baflylus, and Saynt Augustine,  
 Gregory the great doctour, Ambrose and Saynt Martyne :  
 All these were sette in goodly purtrayture,  
 Them to beholde was a heavenly pleasure.

Vyrgyns them folowed, crowned with the lyly,  
 Among whome our lady chefe president was ;  
 Some crowned with rooses for their great vyctory :  
 Saynt Katheryne, Saynt Margerette, Saynt Agathas,  
 Saynt Cycyly, Saynt Agnes, and Saynt Charytas,  
 Saynt Lucye, Saynt Wenefryde, and Saynt Apolyn ;  
 All these were brothered \*, the clothes of golde within.

Upon the other fyde of the hall sette were  
 Noble auncyent storyes, and how the stronge Sampson  
 Subdued his enemyes by his myghty power ;  
 Of Hector of Troye, slayne by fals treason ;  
 Of noble Arthur, kynge of this regyon :  
 With many other mo, which it is to longe  
 Playnly to expresse this tyme you amonge.

The tables were covered with clothes of dyaper,  
 Rychely enlarged with silver and with golde,  
 The cupborde with plate shynyng fayre and clere,  
 Marshalles theyr offyces fulfilled manyfolde :  
 Of myghty wyne plenty, both newe and olde,  
 All maner kynde of meetes delycate  
 (Whan grace was sayd) to them was preparate.

\* Embroidered.

To this noble feest there was fuche ordinaunce,  
 That nothyng wanted that gotten myght be  
 On see and on lande, but there was habundance  
 Of all maner pleasures to be had for monye ;  
 The bordes all charged full of meet plente,  
 And dyvers subtyltes <sup>†</sup> prepared sothly were,  
 With cordyall and spyces, <sup>‡</sup> theyr guesstes for to chere.

The joyfull wordes and sweet communycacyon  
 Spoken at the table, it were harde to tell ;  
 Eche man at lyberte, without interrupcyon,  
 Bothe sadnes and myrthes, also pryve counsell,  
 Some adulacyon, some the truth dyd tell,  
 But the great astates <sup>¶</sup> spake of theyr regyons,  
 Knyghtes of theyr chyvalry, of craftes the comons.

Certayne at eche cours of service in the hall,  
 Trumpettes blewe up, shalmes and claryons,  
 Shewyng the melody, with toynes <sup>\*</sup> musycall,  
 Dyvers other mynstrelles, in crafty proporcyons,  
 Mad fwete concordaunce and lusty dyvysyons :  
 An hevenly pleasure, fuche armony to here,  
 Rejoyfynge the hertes of the audyence full clere.

A finguler Mynstrell, all other ferre passyng,  
 Toynd <sup>\*</sup> his instrument in pleasaunte armony,  
 And sang moost swetely, the company gladyng,  
 Of myghty conquerours, the famous vyctory ;  
 Wherwith was ravysshed theyr spytes and memory :  
 Specyally he fange of the great Alexandere,  
 Of his tryumphes and honours enduryng xii yere.

<sup>†</sup> Dishes of curious cookery, so called.  
<sup>‡</sup> Kings.

<sup>\*</sup> Tunes.  
<sup>\*</sup> Tuned.

Solemply he songe the scate of the Romans,  
 Ruled under kynges by policy and wysedome,  
 Of theyr hye justice and ryghtful ordinauns  
 Dayly encreasyng in worshyp and renowne,  
 Tyll Tarquyne the proude kyng, with that great confusion,  
 Oppressed dame Lucrece, the wyfe of Colatyne,  
 Kynges never reyned in Rome fyth that tyme.

Also how the Romayns, under thre dyctatours,  
 Governed all regyons of the worlde ryght wysely,  
 Tyll Julyus Cesar, excellynge all conquerours,  
 Subdued Pompeius, and toke the hole monarchy  
 And the rule of Rome to hym selfe manfully;  
 But Cassius Brutus, the fals conspyratour,  
 Caused to be slayne the sayd noble emperour.

After the sayd Julius, succeded his syster sone,  
 Called Octavianus, in the imperyall fee,  
 And by his precepte was made descrypcyon  
 To every regyon, lande, shyre<sup>y</sup>, and cytee,  
 A tribute to pay unto his dignyte:  
 That tyme was universal peas and honour,  
 In whiche tyme was borne our blessed Savoure.

All these hystorycs, noble and auncyent,  
 Rejoyfynge the audyence, he sange with pleasuer;  
 And many mo of the Newe Testament,  
 Pleasaunt and profytable for their soules cure,  
 Whiche be omytted, now not put in ure<sup>z</sup>:  
 The mynysters were ready, theyr offyce to fullfyll,  
 To take up the tables at their lordes wyll.

<sup>y</sup> This puts one in mind of the *Sheriff*, officers of the kingdom of Babylon, DAN.  
 in our Translation of the Bible, among the iii. z. <sup>z</sup> Not mentioned here.

Whan this noble feest and great solempnyte,  
 Dayly endurynge a longe tyme and space,  
 Was royally ended with honour and royalte,  
 Eche kynge at other lysence taken hace,  
 And so departed from thens to theyr place:  
 Kyng Wulfer retourned, with worshyp and renowne,  
 From the house<sup>a</sup> of Ely to his owne manfyon.

If there be any merit of imagination or invention, to which the poet has a claim in this description, it altogether consists in the application. The circumstances themselves are faithfully copied by Bradshaw, from what his own age actually presented. In this respect, I mean as a picture of antient life, the passage is interesting; and for no other reason. The versification is infinitely inferior to Lydgate's worst manner.

Bradshaw was buried in the cathedral church, to which his convent was annexed, in the year 1513<sup>b</sup>. Balé, a violent reformer, observes, that our poet was a person remarkably pious for the times in which he flourished<sup>c</sup>. This is an indirect satire on the monks, and on the period which preceded the reformation. I believe it will readily be granted, that our author had more piety than poetry. His Prologue contains the following humble professions of his inability to treat lofty subjects, and to please light readers.

To descrybe hye hystories I dare not be so bolde,  
 Syth it is a matter for clerkes convenyent;  
 As of the seven ages, and of our parentes olde,  
 Or of the four empyres whilom most excellent;  
 Knowyng my lerning therto insuffycient:  
 As for baudy balades you shall have none of me,  
 To excyte lyght hertes to pleasure and vanity<sup>d</sup>.

<sup>a</sup> Monastery.

<sup>b</sup> Ath. Oxon. i. 9.

<sup>c</sup> Cent. ix. Numb. 17.

<sup>d</sup> Prolog. lib. i. Signat. A. iii.

A great

A great translator of the lives of the Saxon saints, from the Saxon, in which language only they were then extant, into Latin, was Goscelinus, a monk of Saint Austin's at Canterbury, who passed from France into England, with Herman, bishop of Salisbury, about the year 1058<sup>e</sup>. As the Saxon language was at this time but little understood, these translations opened a new and ample treasure of religious history: nor were they acquisitions only to the religion, but to the literature, of that era. Among the rest, were the Lives of saint Werburgh<sup>f</sup>, saint Etheldred<sup>g</sup>, and saint Sexburgh<sup>h</sup>, most probably the legends, which were Bradshaw's originals. Usher observes, that Goscelinus also translated into Latin the ancient Catalogue of the Saxon saints buried in England<sup>i</sup>. In the register of Ely it is recorded, that he was the most eloquent writer of his age; and that he circulated all over England, the lives, miracles, and G<sup>E</sup>STS, of the saints of both sexes, which he reduced into prose-histories<sup>k</sup>. The words of the Latin deserve our attention. "In historiis " in *prosa dictando mutavit.*" Hence we may perhaps infer, that they were not before in prose, and that he took them from old metrical legends: this is a presumptive proof, that the lives of the saints were at first extant in verse. In the same light we are to understand the words which immediately follow. "Hic scripsit *Prosam sanctæ Etheldredæ* <sup>l</sup>." Where the *Prose* of saint Etheldred is opposed to her *poetical* legend<sup>m</sup>. By *mutavit dictando*, we are to understand, that he

<sup>e</sup> W. Malmesbur. lib. iv. ubi infr.— Goscelin. in Prefat. ad Vit. S. Augustini. See Mabillon, ACT. BEN. SÆC. I. p. 499.

<sup>f</sup> Printed, ACT. SANCTOR. Bolland. tom. i. februar. p. 386. A part in Leland, Coll. ii. 154. Compare MSS. C. C. C. Cant. J. xiii.

<sup>g</sup> In Registr. Eliens. ut infr.

<sup>h</sup> See Leland. Coll. iii. p. 152. Compare the Lives of S. Etheldred, S. Werburgh, and S. Sexburgh, at the end of the HISTORIA AUREA of John of Tinmouth, MS. Lambeth. 12. I know not whether

they make a part of his famous SANCTOLOGIVM. He flourished about the year 1380.

<sup>i</sup> Antiquit. Brit. c. ii. p. 15. See Leland's Coll. iii. 86. seq. And Hickef. Theaur. vol. ult. p. 86. 146. 208.

<sup>k</sup> Cap. x. Vit. Ethel.

<sup>l</sup> Which is extant in this Ely register, and contains 54 heads.

<sup>m</sup> And these improved prose-narratives were often turned back again into verse, even so late as in the age before us: to which, among others I could mention, we may

translated, or reformed, or, in the most general sense, wrote anew in Latin, these antiquated lives. His principal objects were the more recent saints, especially those of this island. Malmesbury says, "Innumeras SANCTORUM VITAS RECEN-  
"TIUM *sylo extulit*, veterum vel amissas, vel *informiter editas*,  
"comptius renovavit". In this respect, the labours of Goscelin partly resembled those of Symeon Metaphrastes, a celebrated Constantinopolitan writer of the tenth century: who obtained the distinguishing appellation of the METAPHRAST,

may refer the legend of Saint Eustathius, MSS. Cotton. CALIG. A. 2.

Seynt *Euface*, a nobull knyzte,  
Of hethen law he was;  
And ere than he crystened was  
Mene callyd him *Placidus*.  
He was with *Trejan* themperor, &c.

A Latin legend on this faint is in MSS. Harl. 2316. 42.

Concerning legend-makers, there is a curious story in MSS. James, xxxi. p. 6. [ad ITER LANCASTR. num. 39. vol. 40.] Bibl. Bodl. Gilbert de Stone, a learned ecclesiastic, who flourished about the year 1380, was solicited by the monks of Holywell in Flintshire, to write the life of their patron saint. Stone applying to these monks for materials, was answered, that they had none in their monastery. Upon which he declared, that he could execute the work just as easily without any materials at all: and that he would write them a most excellent legend, after the manner of the legend of Thomas a Becket. He has the character of an elegant Latin writer; and seems to have done the same piece of service, perhaps in the same way, to other religious houses. From his EPISTLES, it appears that he wrote the life of saint *Wulfade*, patron of the priory of canons regular of his native town of Stone in Staffordshire, which he dedicated to the prior, William de Madely. Epist. iii. dat. 1399. [MSS. Bibl. Bodl. Sup. D. i. Art. 123.] He was Latin secretary to several bishops, and could possibly write a legend or a letter with equal facility. His epistles are 123 in number. The first of

them, in which he is stiled *chancellor to the bishop of Winchester*, is to the archbishop of Canterbury. That is, *secretary*. [MSS. Cotton. VITELL. E. x. 17.] This bishop of Winchester must have been William of Wykeham.

The most extraordinary composition of this kind, if we consider, among other circumstances, that it was compiled at a time when knowledge and literature had made some progress, and when mankind were so much less disposed to believe or to invent miracles, more especially when the subject was quite recent, is the LEGEND of KING HENRY the SIXTH. It is entitled, *De MIRACULIS beatissimi illius Militis Christi, Henrici sexti, etc.* That it might properly rank with other legends, it was translated from an English copy into Latin, by one Johannes, stiled *Pauperculus*, a monk, about the year 1503, at the command of John Morgan, dean of Windsor, afterwards bishop of saint David's. It is divided into two books: to both of which, prefaces are prefixed, containing proofs of the miracles wrought by this pious monarch. At the beginning, there is a hymn, with a prayer, addressed to the royal saint. fol. 72.

Salve, miles preciose,  
Rex Henrice generose, &c.

Henry could not have been a complete saint without his legend. MSS. Harl. 423. 7. And MSS. Reg. 13 C. 8. What shall we think of the judgment and abilities of the dignified ecclesiastic, who could seriously patronise so ridiculous a narrative?

<sup>n</sup> Hist. Angl. lib. iv. p. 130.

because,

because, at the command, and under the auspices of Constantine Porphyrogenitus, he modernised the more antient narratives of the miracles and martyrdoms of the most eminent eastern and western saints, for the use of the Greek church: or rather digested, from detached, imperfect, or obsolete books on the subject, a new and more commodious body of the sacred biography.

Among the many striking contrasts between the manners and characters of antient and modern life, which these annals present, we must not be surpris'd to find a mercer, a sheriff, and an alderman of London, descending from his important occupations, to write verses. This is Robert Fabyan, who yet is generally better known as an historian, than as a poet. He was esteem'd, not only the most facetious, but the most learned, of all the mercers, sheriffs, and aldermen, of his time: and no layman of that age is said to have been better skill'd in the Latin language. He flourish'd about the year 1494. In his CHRONICLE, or *Concordance of histories*, from Brutus to the year 1485, it is his usual practice, at the division of the books, to insert metrical prologues, and other pieces in verse. The best of his metres is the COMPLAINT of king Edward the second; who, like the personages in Boccaccio's FALL OF PRINCES, is very dramatically introduced, reciting his own misfortunes°. But this soliloquy is nothing more than a translation from a short and a very poor Latin poem attributed to that monarch, but probably written by William of Wyrcester, which is preserved among the manuscripts of the college of arms, and entitled, *Lamentatio gloriosi regis Edvardi de Karnarvon quam edidit tempore suæ incarcerationis*. Our author's transitions

° Fol. 171. tom. ii. edit. 1533. See Hearne's Lib. Nig. Scacc. p. 425. And Præfat. p. xxxviii. Fabyan says, "they are reported to be his own makynge, in the tyme of his emprysonment." *ibid.* By the way, there is a passage in this

chronicler which points out the true reading of a controverted passage in Shakespeare, "Also children were christened thorough all the land, and menne bouste-  
"led and anealed, excepte fuche, &c." tom. ii. p. 30. col. 2.

from

from prose to verse, in the course of a prolix narrative, seem to be made with much ease; and, when he begins to verify, the historian disappears only by the addition of rhyme and stanza. In the first edition of his *CHRONICLE*, by way of epilogues to his seven books, he has given us *The seven joys of the Blessed Virgin in English Rime*. And under the year 1325, there is a poem to the virgin; and another on one Badby, a Lollard, under the year 1409<sup>p</sup>. These are suppressed in the later editions. He has likewise left a panegyric on the city of London; but despairs of doing justice to so noble a subject for verse, even if he had the eloquence of Tully, the morality of Seneca, and the harmony of that *faire Lady Calliope*<sup>q</sup>. The reader will thank me for citing only one stanza from king Edward's COMPLAINT.

When Saturne, with his cold and isye face,  
The ground, with his frostes, turneth grene to white;  
The time winter, which treès doth deface,  
And causeth all verdure to avoyde quite:  
Then fortune, which sharpe was, with stormes not lite  
Hath me assaulted with her froward wyll,  
And me beclipped with daungers ryght yll<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>p</sup> Edit. Lond. 1516. fol.

<sup>q</sup> Fol. 2. tom. ii. ut supr.

<sup>r</sup> In the British Museum there is a poem on this subject, and in the same stanza. MSS. Harl. 2393. 4to. 1. The ghost of Edward the second, as here, is introduced speaking. It is addressed to queen Elizabeth, as appears, among other passages, from ff. 92. 242. 243. 305. It begins thus.

Whie should a wasted spirit spent in woe  
Disclose the wounds receyved within his  
brest?

It is imperfect, having only 352 stanzas. Then follows the same poem; with many alterations, additions, and omissions. This is addressed to James the first, as appears from ff. 6. 259. 260. 326, &c. It contains

581 stanzas. There is another copy in the same library, Num. 558. At the end the poet calls himself *INFORTUNIO*. This is an appellation which, I think, Spenser sometimes assumed. But Spenser was dead before the reign of James: nor has this piece any of Spenser's characteristic merit. It begins thus.

I sing thy sad disaster, fatal king,  
Carnarvon Edward, second of that name.

The poem on this subject in the addition to the *MIRROUR OF MAGISTRATES*, by William Niccols, is a different composition. *A WINTER NIGHT'S VISION*. Lond. 1610. p. 702. These two manuscript poems deserve no further mention: nor would they have been mentioned at all, but from their  
reference

As an historian, our author is the dullest of compilers. He is equally attentive to the succession of the mayors of London, and of the monarchs of England: and seems to have thought the dinners at guildhall, and the pageantries of the city-companies, more interesting transactions, than our victories in France, and our struggles for public liberty at home. One of Fabian's historical anecdotes, under the important reign of Henry the fifth, is, that a new weathercock was placed on the cross of Saint Paul's steeple. It is said, that cardinal Wolsey commanded many copies of this chronicle to be committed to the flames, because it made too ample a discovery of the excessive revenues of the clergy. The earlier chapters of these childish annals faithfully record all those fabulous traditions, which generally supply the place of historic monuments in describing the origin of a great nation.

Another poet of this period is John Watson, a priest. He wrote a Latin theological tract entitled *SPECULUM CHRISTIANI*, which is a sort of paraphrase on the decalogue and the creed'. But it is interspersed with a great number of wretched English rhymes: among which, is the following hymn to the virgin Mary\*.

reference to the text, and on account of their subject. Compare, MSS. Harl. 2251. 119. fol. 254. An unfinished poem on Edward the second, perhaps by Lydgate. Princ. "Beholde this greate prince Edward the secunde."

\* MSS. C. C. C. Oxon. 155. MSS. Laud. G. 12. MSS. Thoresb. 530. There is an abridgement of this work, [MSS. Harl. 2250. 20.] with the date 1477. This is rather beyond the period with which we are at present engaged.

Compare a hymn to the holy virgin, *supr.* vol. i. p. 314. Mathew Paris relates, that Godrich, a hermit, about the year 1150, who lived in a solitary wild on the banks of the river Ware near Durham, had a vision, in his oratory, of the virgin Mary, who taught him this song.

Vol. II.

Seint Marie clene virgine,  
Moder Jesu Christe Nezarine,  
On so scild thir Godrich  
On fang bringe haeli with the in godes rich.  
Seinte Marie, Christes bur,  
Maidenes clenhad, moderes flur,  
Delle mine fennen, rixe in mine mod,  
Bringe me to winne widh self god.

Matt. Parif. Hist. Angl. [HENRIC. ii.] p. 115. edit. Tig. 1589.

In one of the Harleian manuscripts, many very antient hymns to the holy virgin occur. MS. 2253. These are specimens. 66. fol. 80. b.

Blessed be þou [thou] levedy, ful of heo-  
vene blisse,  
Swete flur of parays, moder of mildenesse,  
Praye

C c

Mary Moder, wel thou be ;  
 Mary Moder thenke on mee :  
 Mayden and moder was never none  
 Togeder, lady, safe thou allone<sup>1</sup>.  
 Swete lady, mayden clene,  
 Schilde me fro ille, schame, and tene,  
 And out of dette, for charitee, &c<sup>2</sup>.

Caxton, the celebrated printer, was likewise a poet ; and beside the rhyming introductions and epilogues with which he frequently decorates his books, has left a poem of considerable length, entitled the *WORKE OF SAPIENCE*<sup>3</sup>. It comprehends, not only an allegorical fiction concerning the two courts of the castle of Sapience, in which there is no imagination, but a system of natural philosophy, grammar, logic, rhetoric, geometry, astronomy, theology, and other

Praye ze Jhesu þy [thy] sone þat [that] he  
 me rede and wyffe  
 So my wey for to gon, þat he me nevere  
 myffe.

Ibid. 67. fol. 81. b.

As y me rod þis ender day,  
 By grene wode to feche play,  
 Mid harte y þohte al on a May [Maid],  
 Swetest of al þinge !  
 Lyþe, and ich ou telle may al of þat swete  
 þinge.

Ibid. 69. fol. 83. In French and English.

Mayden moder mild, *oyez cel oreyfoun,*  
 From thom þou me shilde, *e di la mal feloun,*  
 For love of thine childe, *me muez de tresoun,*  
 Ich wes wod and wilde, *ore sa en prisoun.*

See also ibid. 49. fol. 75. — 57. fol. 78.  
 And 372. 7. fol. 55.

In the library of Mr. Farmer, of Tufmore in Oxfordshire, are, or were lately, a collection of hymns and antiphones, paraphrased into English, by William Herbert, a Franciscan frier, and a famous preacher, about the year 1330. These,

with some other of his pieces contained in the same library, are unmentioned by Bale, v. 31. And Pitts, p. 428. [*Autogr. in pergamen.*] Pierre de Corbian, a troubadour, has left a hymn, or prayer, to the holy virgin: which, he says, he chose to compose in the romance-language, because he could write it more *intelligibly* than Latin. Another troubadour, a mendicant frier of the thirteenth century, had worked himself up into such a pitch of enthusiasm concerning the holy virgin, that he became deeply *in love* with her. It is partly owing, as I have already hinted, to the gallantry of the dark ages, in which the female sex was treated with so romantic a respect, that the virgin Mary received such exaggerated honours, and was so distinguished an object of adoration in the devotion of those times.

<sup>1</sup> These four lines are in the exordium of a prayer to the virgin, MSS. Harl. 2382. (4to.) 3. fol. 86. b. [See *supr.* p. 60.]

<sup>2</sup> Printed by William Maclyn or Machlinia. Without date.

<sup>3</sup> Printed by him, without date. fol. in thirty-seven leaves.

topics

topics of the fashionable literature. Caxton appears to be the author, by the prologue: yet it is not improbable, that he might on this occasion employ some professed versifier, at least as an assistant, to prepare a new book of original poetry for his press. The writer's design, is to describe the effects of wisdom from the beginning of the world: and the work is a history of knowledge or learning. In a vision, he meets the goddess SAPIENCE in a delightful meadow; who conducts him to her castle, or mansion, and there displays all her miraculous operations. Caxton, in the poem, invokes the *gylted goddess* and *moost facundyous lady* Clio, apologises to those *makers* who delight in *termes gay*, for the inelegancies of language which as a foreigner he could not avoid, and modestly declares, that he neither means to rival or envy Gower and Chaucer.

Among the anonymous pieces of poetry belonging to this period, which are very numerous, the most conspicuous is the KALENDAR OF SHEPHERDS. It seems to have been translated into English about the year 1480, from a French book entitled KALENDRIER DES BERGERS\*. It was printed by Wynkyn de Worde in the year 1497<sup>†</sup>. This piece was calculated for the purposes of a perpetual almanac; and seems to have been the universal magazine of every article of salutary and useful knowledge. It is a medley of verse and prose; and contains, among many other curious particulars, the fairs of the whole year, the moveable feasts, the signs of the zodiac, the properties of the twelve months, rules

\* I have seen an edition of the French, of 1500.

† I have an edition printed by John Wally, at London, without date. 4to. In the prologue it is said, "This book was first corruptly printed in France, and after that at the cost and charges of Richard Pinson newly translated and reprinted although not so faithfully as the original copy required, &c." It was

certainly first printed by de Worde, 1497. Again, ch. ii. "From the yeare this kalender was made m.cccc.xcviij. unto the yeare m.ccccc.xvi." From whence I conclude, that Worde's edition was in 1497, Wally's in 1516. Again, "This yeare of the present kalender whiche began to have course the first daye of January m.cccc.xcviij."

for blood-letting, a collection of proverbs, a system of ethics, politics, divinity, physiognomy, medicine, astrology, and geography<sup>a</sup>. Among other authors, *Cathon the great clarke*<sup>b</sup>, *Solomon*, *Ptolomeus the prince of astronomy*, and Aristotle's Epistle to Alexander, are quoted<sup>c</sup>. Every month is introduced respectively speaking, in a stanza of *balad royal*, its own panegyric. This is the speech of May<sup>c</sup>.

Of all monthes in the yeare I am kinge,  
 Flourishing in beauty excellently;  
 For, in my time, in vertue is all thinge,  
 Fieldes and medes sprede most beautiously,  
 And birdes singe with sweete harmony;  
 Rejoyfing lovers with hot love endewed,  
 With fragrant flowers all about renewed.

In the theological part, the terrors and certainty of death are described, by the introduction of Death, seated on the pale horse of the Apocalypse, and speaking thus<sup>d</sup>.

Upon this horse, blacke and hideous  
 DEATH I am, that fiercely doth fitte :

<sup>a</sup> Pieces of this sort were not uncommon. In the British museum there is an ASTROLOGICAL poem, teaching when to buy and sell, to let blood, to build, to go to sea, the fortune of children, the interpretation of dreams, with other like important particulars, from the day of the moon's age. MSS. Harl. 2320. 3. fol. 31. In the principal letter the author is represented in a studious posture. The manuscript, having many Saxon letters intermixed, begins thus.

He þat wol herkyn of wit  
 þat ys witnest in holy wryt,  
 Lystenyth to me a stonde,  
 Of a story y schal zow telle,  
 What tyme ys good to byen and to sylle,  
 In boke as hyt ys y fownde.

The reader who is curious to know the state of quackery, astrology, fortune-telling, midwifery, and other occult sciences, about the year 1420, may consult the works of one John Crophill, who practised in Suffolk. MSS. Harl. 1735. 4to. 3. feq. [See fol. 29. 36.] This *cunning-man* was likewise a poet; and has left, in the same manuscript, some poetry spoken at an entertainment of *Frere Thomas*, and five ladies of quality, whose names are mentioned: at which, two great bowls, or goblets, called MERCY and CHARITY, were briskly circulated. fol. 48.

<sup>b</sup> Epilogue.

<sup>c</sup> Cap. 42.

<sup>c</sup> Cap. 2.

<sup>d</sup> Cap. xix.

There

There is no fairenesse, but fight tedious,  
 All gay colours I do hitte.  
 My horse runneth by dales and hilles,  
 And many he smiteth dead and killes.  
 In my trap I take some by every way,  
 By towns [and] castles I take my rent.  
 I will not respite one an houre of a daye,  
 Before me they must needes be present.  
 I flea all with my mortall knife,  
 And of duety I take the life.  
 HELL knoweth well my killing,  
 I sleepe never, but wake and warke;  
 It<sup>d</sup> followeth me ever running,  
 With my darte I flea weake and starke:  
 A great number it hath of me,  
 Paradyse hath not the fourth parte, &c.

In the eighth chapter of our KALENDER are described the seven visions, or the punishments in hell of the seven deadly sins, which Lazarus saw between his death and resurrection. These punishments are imagined with great strength of fancy, and accompanied with wooden cuts boldly touched, and which the printer Wynkyn de Worde probably procured from some German engraver at the infancy of the art. The PROUD are bound by hooks of iron to vast wheels, like mills, placed between craggy precipices, which are incessantly whirling with the most violent impetuosity, and sound like thunder. The ENVIOUS are plunged in a lake half frozen, from which as they attempt to emerge for ease, their naked limbs are instantly smote with a blast of such intolerable keenness, that they are compelled to dive again into the lake. To the WRATHFULL is assigned a gloomy cavern, in which their bodies are butchered, and their limbs man-

<sup>d</sup> That is, HELL.    <sup>e</sup> Compare the torments of Dante's hell, INFERN. Cant. v. vi. seq. gled

gled by demons with various weapons. The SLOTHFULL are tormented in a *horrible hall dark and tenebrous*, swarming with innumerable flying serpents of various shapes and sizes, which sting to the heart. This, I think, is the Hell of the Gothic EDDA. The COVETOUS are dipped in cauldrons filled with boiling metals. The GLUTTONOUS are placed in a vale near a loathsome pool, abounding with venomous creatures, on whose banks tables are spread, from which they are perpetually crammed with toads by devils. CONCUISCENCE is punished in a field full of immense pits or wells, overflowing with fire and sulphur. This visionary scene of the infernal punishments seems to be borrowed from a legend related by Matthew Paris, under the reign of king John: in which the soul of one Thurkhill, a native of Tidstude in Essex is conveyed by saint Julian from his body, when laid asleep, into hell and heaven. In hell he has a sight of the torments of the damned, which are presented under the form and name of the INFERNAL PAGEANTS, and greatly resemble the fictions I have just described. Among the tormented, is a knight, who had passed his life in shedding much innocent blood at tilts and tournaments. He is introduced, completely armed, on horseback; and couches his lance against the demon, who is commissioned to seize and to drag him to his eternal destiny. There is likewise a priest who never said mass, and a baron of the exchequer who took bribes. Turkhill is then conducted into the mansions of the blessed, which are painted with strong oriental colouring: and in Paradise, a garden replenished with the most delicious fruits, and the most exquisite variety of trees, plants, and flowers, he sees Adam, a personage of gigantic proportion, but the most beautiful symmetry, reclined on the side of a fountain which sent forth four streams of different water and colour, and under the shade of a tree of immense size and height, laden with fruits of every kind, and breathing the richest odours. Afterwards saint Julian conveys the soul of Turkhill back to his

his

his body; and when awakened, he relates this vision to his parish-priest<sup>f</sup>. There is a story of a similar cast in Bede<sup>g</sup>, which I have mentioned before<sup>h</sup>.

As the ideas of magnificence and elegance were enlarged, the public pageants of this period were much improved: and beginning now to be celebrated with new splendour, received, among other advantages, the addition of *SPEAKING PERSONAGES*. These spectacles, thus furnished with speakers, characteristically habited, and accompanied with proper scenery, co-operated with the *MYSTERIES*, of whose nature they partook at first, in introducing the drama. It was customary to prepare these shews at the reception of a prince, or any other solemnity of a similar kind: and they were presented on moveable theatres, or occasional stages, erected in the streets. The speeches were in verse; and as the procession moved forward, the speakers, who constantly bore some allusion to the ceremony, either conversed together in the form of a dialogue, or addressed the noble person whose presence occasioned the celebrity. Speakers seem to have been admitted into our pageants about the reign of Henry the sixth.

<sup>f</sup> Matt. Paris. Hist. pag. 206. seq. Edit. Tig. Much the same sort of fable is related, *ibid.* p. 178. seq. There is an old poem on this subject, called *OWAYNE MILES*, MSS. Cott. Calig. A. 12. f. 90.

<sup>g</sup> See DISSERTATION II. Signat. E. The *DEAD MAN'S SONG* there mentioned, seems to be more immediately taken from this fiction as it stands in our *SHEPHERD'S KALENDER*. It is entitled, *The DEAD MAN'S SONG, whose Dwelling was near Basingball in London*. Wood's *BALLADS*, Mus. Ashmol. Oxon. It is worthy of doctor Percy's excellent collection, and begins thus.

Sore sicke, dear frienns, long tyme I was,  
And weakly laid in bed, &c.

See also the legend of saint Patrick's cave, Matt. Paris. p. 84. And MSS. Harl. 2385. 82. *De quodam ducto videtur ponus Inferni.* fol. 56. b.

<sup>h</sup> I chuse to throw together in the Notes many other anonymous pieces belonging to this period, most of which are too minute to be formally considered in the series of our poetry. The *CASTELL OF HONOUR*, printed in quarto by Wynkyn de Worde, 1506. The *PARLYAMENT OF DEUVYLLS*. Princip. "As Mary was great with Gabriel, &c." For the same, in quarto, 1509. The *HISTORIE OF JACOB AND HIS TWELVE SONS*. In stanzas. For the same, without date. I believe about 1500. Princ. "Al yonge and old that lyst to here." A *LYTEL TREATYSE called the Dysputacyon or Complaynt of the Heart thorughe perced with the lokinge of the eye*. For the same, in quarto, perhaps before 1500. The first stanza is elegant, and deserves to be transcribed.

In

In the year 1432, when Henry the sixth, after his coronation at Paris, made a triumphal entry into London, many stanzas, very probably written by Lydgate, were addressed to his majesty, amidst a series of the most splendid allegorical spectacles, by a giant representing religious fortitude, Enoch and Eli, the holy Trinity, two Judges and eight *Serjeants of the coife, dame Clennesse, Mercy, Truth*, and other personages of a like nature<sup>1</sup>.

In the year 1456, when Margaret wife of Henry the sixth, with her little son Edward, came to Coventy, on the feast of the exaltation of the holy crosse, she was received with the

In the fyrst weke of the season of Maye,  
Whan that the wodes be covered in grene,  
In which the nyghtyngale lyft for to playe  
To shewe his voys among the thornes kene,  
Them to rejoyce which loves seruaunts bene,  
Which fro all comforte thynke them fast  
behynd;

My pleasyr was as it was after fene  
For my dysport to chafe the harte and hynde.

THE LYFE OF SAINT JOSEPH OF ARIMATHEA. For Pinson, in quarto. 1520.

THE LYFE OF PETRONYLLA. In stanzas, for the same, without date, in quarto.

THE CASTLE OF LABOURE. In stanzas. For the same, in quarto, without date, with neat wooden cuts.

THE LYFE OF SAINT RADEGUNDA. In quarto, for the same.

THE A. B. C. E. OF ARISTOTILLE, MSS. Harl. 1304. 4. Proverbial verses in the alliterative manner, viz.

Wofe wil be wife and worship desyreth,  
Lett him lerne one letter, and loke on another, &c.

Again, *ibid.* 541. 19. fol. 213. [Compare, *ibid.* 913. 10. fol. 15. b. 11. fol. 15. b.] See also some satyrical Ballads written by *Frere Michael Kildare*, chiefly on the *Religious orders, Saints, the White Friars of Drogheda, the vanity of riches*, &c. &c. *A divine poem on death*, &c. MSS. Harl. 913. 3. fol. 7. 4. fol. 9. 5. fol. 10. 13. fol. 16. [He has left a Latin poem in rhyme on the abbot and prior of

Gloucester, *ibid.* 5. fol. 10. And burlesque pieces on some of the divine offices, *ibid.* 6. fol. 12. 7. fol. 13. b.] Hither we may also refer a few pieces written by one Whyting, not mentioned in Tanner, MSS. Harl. 541. 14. fol. 207. seq. Undoubtedly many other poems of this period, both printed and manuscript, have escaped my enquiries, but which, if discovered, would not have repaid the research.

Among Rawlinson's manuscripts there is a poem, of considerable length, on the antiquity of the Stanley family, beginning thus.

I entende with true reporte to praise  
The valiaunte actes of the stoute Standelais,  
Ffrom whence they came, &c.

It comes down no lower than Thomas earl of Derby, who was executed in the reign of Henry the seventh. This induced me to think at first, that the piece was written about that time. But the writer mentions king Henry the eighth, and the suppression of Monasteries. I will only add part of a Will in verse, dated 1477. MSS. Langb. Bibl. Bodl. vi. fol. 176. [M. 13. Th.]

Fleshly lustes and festes,  
And fures of divers bestes,  
(A fend was hem fonde;)  
Hole clothe cast on shredys,  
And wymen with thare hyc hedys,  
Have almost lost thys londe!

<sup>1</sup> Fabyan, *ubi sup.* fol. 382. seq.

presentation

presentation of pageants, in one of which king Edward the confessor, saint John the Evangelist, and saint Margaret, each speak to the queen and the prince in verse<sup>k</sup>. In the next reign in the year 1474, another prince Edward, son of Edward the fourth, visited Coventry, and was honoured with the same species of shew: he was first welcomed, in an octave stanza, by Edward the confessor; and afterwards addressed by saint George, completely armed: a king's daughter holding a lamb, and supplicating his assistance to protect her from a terrible dragon, the lady's father and mother, standing in a tower above, the conduit on which the champion was placed, "renning wine in four places, and "minstralcy of organ playing<sup>l</sup>." Undoubtedly the Franciscan friars of Coventry, whose sacred interludes, presented on Corpus Christi day, in that city, and at other places, make so conspicuous a figure in the history of the English drama<sup>m</sup>, were employed in the management of these devises: and that the Coventry men were famous for the arts of exhibition, appears from the share they took in the gallant entertainment of queen Elizabeth at Kenelworth-castle, before whom they played their *old storial show*<sup>n</sup>.

At length, personages of another cast were added; and this species of spectacle, about the period with which we are

<sup>k</sup> LEET-BOOK of the city of Coventry. MS. fol. 168. Stowe says, that at the reception of this queen in London, in the year 1445, several pageants were exhibited at *Paul's-gate*, with verses written by Lydgate, on the following lemmata. *In-gredimini et replete terram. Non amplius irascar super terram. Madam Grace eban-celler de dieu. Five wise and five foolish virgins. Of saint Margaret, &c.* HIST. ENGL. pag. 385. edit. Howes. I know not whether these poems were spoken, or only affixed to the pageants. Fabian says, that in those pageants there was *resemblance of dyverse olde bystories*. I suppose tapestry. CHRON. tom. ii. fol. 398. edit. 1533. See the ceremonies at the corona-

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tion of Henry the sixth, in 1430. Fab. ibid. fol. 378.

<sup>l</sup> Ibid. fol. 221.

<sup>m</sup> See supr. vol. i. p. 293. The friars themselves were the actors. But this practice being productive of some enormities, and the laity growing as wise as the clergy, at least as well qualified to act plays; there was an injunction in the MEXICAN COUNCIL, ratified at Rome in the year 1589, to prohibit all clerks from playing in the Mysteries, *even on CORPUS CHRISTI-DAY*. "Neque in Comœdiis personam agat, etiam in festo corporis christi." SACROSANCT. CONCIL. fol. per Labb. tom. xv. p. 1268. edit. Paris. 1672.

<sup>n</sup> See supr. vol. i. p. 91.

D d concerned,

concerned, was enlivened by the admission of new characters, drawn either from profane history, or from profane allegory<sup>o</sup>, in the application of which, some degree of learning and invention appeared.

I have observed in a former work, and it is a topic which will again be considered in its proper place, that the frequent and familiar use of allegoric personifications in the public pageants, I mean the general use of them, greatly contributed to form the school of Spenser<sup>p</sup>. But moreover from what is here said, it seems probable, that the PAGEAUNTS, which being shewn on civil occasions, derived great part of their decorations and actors from historical fact, and consequently made profane characters the subject of public exhibition, dictated ideas of a regular drama, much sooner than the MYSTERIES: which being confined to scripture stories, or rather the legendary miracles of fainted martyrs, and the no less ideal personifications of the christian virtues, were not calculated to make so quick and easy a transition to the representations of real life and rational action.

In the year 1501, when the princess Catharine of Spain came to London, to be married to prince Arthur, her procession through the city was very magnificent. The pageants were numerous, and superbly furnished; in which the principal actors, or speakers, were not only God the father, saint Catharine, and saint Ursula, but king Alphonfus the astronomer and an ancestor of the princess, a Senator, an Angel, Job, Boethius, Nobility, and Virtue. These personages sustained a sort of action, at least of dialogue. The

<sup>o</sup> Profane allegory, however, had been applied in pageants, somewhat earlier. In the pageants, abovementioned, presented to Henry the sixth, the seven liberal sciences personified are introduced, in a *tabernacle of curious worke*, from which their queen *dame Sapience* speaks verses. At entering the city he is met, and saluted in metre by

three ladies, *richly cladde in golde and filkes* with coronets, who suddenly issue from a stately tower hung with the most splendid arras. These are the Dames, NATURE, GRACE, and FORTUNE. Fabyan, ut *supr.* fol. 382. seq. But this is a rare instance so early.

<sup>p</sup> See Obs. FAIRY QUEEN, ii. 90.

lady

lady was compared to Hesperus, and the prince to Arcturus; and Alphonfus, from his skill in the stars, was introduced to be the fortune-teller of the match<sup>9</sup>. These machineries were contrived and directed by an ecclesiastic of great eminence, bishop Fox; who, says Bacon, "was not only a grave counsellor for war or peace, but also a good surveyor of works, and a good master of ceremonies, and any thing else that was fit for the active part, belonging to the service of court, or state of a great king." It is probable, that this prelate's dexterity and address in the conduct of a court-rearshow procured him more interest, than the gravity of his counsels, and the depth of his political knowledge: at least his employment in this business presents a striking picture of the importance of those popular talents, which even in an age of blind devotion, and in the reign of a superstitious monarch, were instrumental in paving the way to the most opulent dignities of the church. "Whosoever, adds the same penetrating historian, had these toys in compiling, they were not altogether PEDANTICAL<sup>10</sup>." About the year 1487, Henry the seventh went a progress into the north; and at every place of distinction was received with a pageant; in which he was saluted, in a poetical oration, not always religious, as, at York by Ebranck, a British king and the founder of the city, as well as by the holy virgin, and king David: at Worcester by Henry the sixth his uncle: at Hereford by saint George, and king Ethelbert, at entering the cathedral there: at Bristol, by king Bremmius, Prudence, and Justice. The two latter characters were personated by young girls<sup>11</sup>.

In the mean time it is to be granted, that profane characters were personated in our pageants, before the close of the fourteenth century. Stowe relates, that in the year

<sup>9</sup> Chron. MS.

<sup>10</sup> Bacon's HENRY THE SEVENTH. Compl. Hist. Engl. vol. i. p. 628.

<sup>11</sup> From a manuscript in the Cotton library, printed in Leland. COLLECTAN. ad calc. vol. iii. p. 185.

1377, for the entertainment of the young prince Richard, son of Edward the black prince, one hundred and thirty citizens rode disguised from Newgate to Kennington where the court resided, attended with an innumerable multitude of waxen torches, and various instruments of music, in the evening of the Sunday preceding Candlemas-day. In the first rank were forty-eight, habited like esquires, with visors; and in the second the same number, in the character of knights. "Then followed one richly arrayed like an EM-  
 "PEROR, and after him, at some distance, one stately-tyred  
 "like a POPE, whom followed twenty-four CARDINALLS,  
 "and after them eyght or tenne with blacke visors not  
 "amiable, as if they had been LEGATES from some forrain  
 "princes." But this parade was nothing more than a DUMB  
 SHEW, unaccompanied with any kind of interlocution. This appears from what follows. For our chronicler adds, that when they entered the hall of the palace, they were met by the prince, the queen, and the lords; "whom the said mum-  
 "mers did salute, *shewing by a pair of dice their desire to play*  
 "*with the prince,*" which they managed with so much complaisance and skill, that the prince won of them a bowl, a cup, and a ring of gold, and the queen and lords, each, a ring of gold. Afterwards, having been feasted with a sumptuous banquet, they had the honour of dancing with the young prince and the nobility, and so the ceremony was concluded'. Matthew Paris informs us, that at the magnificent marriage of Henry the third with Eleanor of Provence, in the year 1236, certain strange pageants, and wonderful devises, were displayed in the city of London; and that the number of HISTRIONES on this occasion was in-

\* Stowe's SURV. LOND. pag. 71. edit. 1599. 4to. It will perhaps be said, that this shew was not properly a PAGEANT but a MUMMERY. But these are frivolous

distinctions: and, taken in a general view, this account preserves a curious specimen of early PERSONATION, and proves at least that the practice was not then in its infancy.

finite.

finite". But the word HISTRIO, in the Latin writers of the barbarous ages", generally comprehends the numerous tribe

" I will cite the passage more at large, and in the words of the original. " Con-  
" venerunt autem vocata ad convivium  
" nuptiale tanta nobilium multitudo utri-  
" usque sexus, tanta religiosorum nume-  
" rofitas, tanta plebium populofitas, tanta  
" HISTRIUM Varietas, quod vix eos  
" civitas Londoniarum sinu suo capaci  
" comprehenderet. Ornata est igitur ci-  
" vitas tota olofericis, et vexillis, coronis,  
" et palliis, cereis et lampadibus, et qui-  
" budam prodigijs ingenijs et portentis,  
" &c." HIST. p. 406. edit. Tig. 1589.  
" sub HENRICO III. Here, by the way, the  
" expression Varietas histrionum plainly im-  
" plies the comprehensive and general mean-  
" ing of the word HISTRIO; and the multi-  
" farious performances of that order of men.  
" Yet in the Injunctions given by the Barons  
" to the religious houses, in the year 1258,  
" there is an article which seems to shew,  
" that the Histriones were sometimes a par-  
" ticular species of public entertainers.  
" HISTRIUM LUDI non videantur vel  
" audiantur, vel permittantur fieri, coram  
" abbate vel monasticis." Annal. Burton.  
" p. 437. Oxon. 1684. Whereas minstrels,  
" harpers, and jugglers, were notoriously per-  
" mitted in the monasteries. We cannot  
" ascertain whether LUDI here means plays,  
" then only religious: LUDI theatrales in  
" churches and church-yards, on vigils and  
" festivals, are forbidden in the Synod of  
" Exeter, dat. 1287. cap. xiii. CONCIL.  
" MAGN. BRIT. per Wilkins. tom. ii. p.  
" 140. col. 2. edit. 1737. fol.

" I cannot omit the opportunity of adding  
" a striking instance of the extraordinary  
" freedom of speech, permitted to these peo-  
" ple, at the most solemn celebrities. About  
" the year 1250, king Henry the third,  
" passing some time in France, held a most  
" magnificent feast in the great hall of the  
" knights-templars at Paris; at which, be-  
" side his own suite, were present the kings  
" of France and Navarre, and all the nobility  
" of France. The walls of the hall were  
" hung all over with shields, among which  
" was that of our king Richard the first.

" Just before the feast began, a JOCLATOR,  
" or minstrel, accosted king Henry thus.  
" My lord, why did you invite so many  
" Frenchmen to feast with you in this  
" hall? Behold, there is the shield of  
" Richard, the magnanimous king of Eng-  
" land!—All the Frenchmen present will  
" eat their dinner in fear and trembling!"  
" Matt. Paris. p. 871. sub HENR. III. edit.  
" Tigur. 1589. fol. Whether this was a  
" preconcerted compliment, previously sug-  
" gested by the king of France, or not, it is  
" equally a proof of the familiarity with  
" which the minstrels were allowed to address  
" the most eminent personages.

" There is a passage in John of Salis-  
" bury much to our purpose, which I am  
" obliged to give in Latin, " At eam [desi-  
" diam] nostris prorogant HISTRIONES.  
" Admissa sunt ergo SPECTACULA, et in-  
" finita lenocinia vanitatis.—Hinc mimi,  
" salii vel siliarii, balatrones, æmiliani,  
" gladiatores, palaestritæ, gignadii, præsti-  
" giatores, malefici quoque multi, et tota  
" JOCLATORUM SCENA procedit. Quo-  
" rum adeo error invaluit, ut a præclaris  
" domibus non arceantur etiam illi, qui  
" obscænis partibus corporis, oculis omnium  
" eam ingerunt turpitudinem, quam eru-  
" bescent videre vel cynicus. Quodque  
" magis mirere, nec tunc ejiciuntur, quan-  
" do TUMULTUANTES INFERIUS crebro  
" sonitu ærem fœdant, et turpiter inclu-  
" sum turpius produnt. Veruntamen quid in  
" singulis possit aut deceat, animus sapien-  
" tis advertit, nec APOLOGOS refugit, aut  
" NARRATIONES, aut quæcunque SPEC-  
" TACULA, dum virtutis, &c." POLY-  
" CRAT. lib. i. cap. viii. p. 28. edit. Lugd.  
" Bat. 1595. Here, GIGNADII, a word  
" unexplained by Du Cange, signifies wrest-  
" lers, or the performers of athletic exercises:  
" for gignasium was used for gymnasium in the  
" barbarous Latinity. By apologos, we are  
" perhaps to understand an allegorical story  
" or fable, such as were common in the Pro-  
" vincial poetry; and by narrationes, tales of  
" chivalry: both which were recited at festi-  
" vity by these HISTRIONES. Spectacula I  
" need

of mimics, jugglers, dancers, tumblers, musicians, minstrels, and the like public practitioners of the recreative arts, with which those ages abounded: nor do I recollect a single instance in which it precisely bears the restrained modern interpretation.

As our thoughts are here incidentally turned to the rudiments of the English stage\*, I must not omit an anecdote, entirely new, with regard to the mode of playing the MYSTERIES at this period, which yet is perhaps of much higher antiquity. In the year 1487, while Henry the seventh kept his residence at the castle at Winchester, on occasion of the birth of prince Arthur, on a Sunday, during the time of dinner, he was entertained with a religious drama called CHRISTI DESCENSUS AD INFEROS, or *Christ's descent into hell*†. It was represented by the PUERI ELEEMOSYNARI, or choir-boys, of Hyde abbey, and saint Swithin's priory, two large monasteries at Winchester. This is the only proof I have ever seen of choir-boys acting in the old MYSTERIES: nor

need not explain: but here seems to be pointed out the whole system of antient exhibition or entertainment. I must add another pertinent passage from this writer, whom the reader will recollect to have flourished about the year 1140. "Non facile tamen crediderim ad hoc quemquam impelli posse litteratorem, ut HISTRIONEM profiteatur. — GESTUS siquidem EXPRIMUNT, rerum utilitate deducta." Ibid. lib. viii. cap. xiii. p. 514. [Compare Blount's ANT. TENURES, p. 11. HEMINGSTON.]

With regard to APOLOGI, mentioned above, I have farther to observe, that the Latin metrical apologues of the dark ages, are probably translations from the Provençal poetry. Of this kind is Wircker's SPECULUM STULTORUM, or BURNELL'S ASS, See *supr.* vol. i. p. 419. And the ASINUS PÉNITENTIARIUS, in which an ass, wolf, and fox, are introduced, confessing their sins, &c. See Matt. Flacius, Catal. Test. Verit. pag. 903. edit. 1556. In the British museum there is an antient

thin folio volume on vellum, containing upwards of two hundred short moral tales in Latin prose, which I also class under the APOLOGI here mentioned by John of Salisbury. Some are legendary, others romantic, and others allegorical. Many of them I believe to be translations from the Provençal poetry. Several of the Esopian fables are intermixed. In this collection is Parnell's HERMIT, *De ANGELO et Heremita Peregrinum occisum sepelientibus*, Rubr. 32. fol. 7. And a tale, I think in Fontaine, of the king's son who never saw a woman. Rubr. 8. fol. 2. The stories seem to have been collected by an Englishman, at least in England: for there is, the tale of one Godfrey, a priest of Suffex. Rubr. 40. fol. 8. MSS. Harl. 463. The story of Parnell's HERMIT is in *Gesta Romanorum*, MSS. Harl. 2270. ch. lxxx.

\* See *supr.* vol. i. p. 236. seq.  
† Registr. Priorat. S. Swithin. Winton. MS. ut *supr.*

do I recollect any other instance of a royal dinner, even on a festival, accompanied with this species of diversion.<sup>a</sup> The story of this interlude, in which the chief characters were Christ, Adam, Eve, Abraham, and John the Baptist, was not uncommon in the ancient religious drama, and I believe made a part of what is called the *LUDUS PASCHALIS*, or *Easter Play*.<sup>b</sup> It occurs in the Coventry plays acted on Corpus Christi day<sup>c</sup>; and in the Whitsun-plays at Chester, where it is called the *HARROWING OF HELL*.<sup>d</sup> The representation is Christ entering hell triumphantly, delivering our first parents, and the most sacred characters of the old and new testaments, from the dominion of Satan, and conveying them into Paradise. There is an ancient poem, perhaps an interlude, on the same subject, among the Harleian manuscripts; containing our saviour's dialogues in hell with Sathanas, the Janitor, or porter of hell, Adam, Eve, Abraham, David, Johan *Baptist*, and Moyfes. It begins,

Alle herkneþ to me nou :  
A strif wolle y tellen ou  
Of Jhesu ant of Sathan  
þo Jhesus was to hell y-gan<sup>e</sup>.

<sup>a</sup> Except, that on the first Sunday of the magnificent marriage of king James of Scotland with the princess Margaret of England, daughter of Henry the seventh, celebrated at Edinburgh with high splendour, "after dynnar a *MORALITE* was played by the said master Inglyshe and his companyons in the presence of the kyng and qwene." On one of the preceding days, "After soupper the kyng and qwene beyng togader in hyr grett chamber, John Inglysh and his companyons *plaid*." This was in the year 1503. *Apud Leland*, coll. iii. p. 300. 299. *APPEND.* edit. 1770.

<sup>b</sup> The Italians pretend that they have a

*LUDUS PASCHALIS* as old as the twelfth century. *TEATRO ITALIANO*, tom. i. See *Un Istoria del Teatro*, &c. prefixed, p. ii. Veron. 1723. 12mo.

<sup>c</sup> [See *supr.* vol. i.] "Nunc dormiunt milites, et veniet anima Christi de inferno cum Adam et Eva, Abraham, Joh. Baptiste, et aliis."

<sup>d</sup> MSS. Harl. 2013. *PAGEAUNT XVII.* fol. 138.

<sup>e</sup> MSS. Harl. 2253. 21. fol. 55. b. There is a poem on this subject, *MS. Bodl.* 1687.

How Jesu Crist *harrowed helle*  
Of hardi gestes ich wille telle.

[See *supr.* vol. i. p. 18.]

The

The composers of the MYSTERIES did not think the plain and probable events of the new testament sufficiently marvellous for an audience who wanted only to be surpris'd. They frequently selected their materials from books which had more of the air of romance. The subject of the MYSTERIES just-mentioned was borrowed from the PSEUDO-EVANGELIUM, or the FABULOUS GOSPEL, ascribed to Nicodemus<sup>c</sup>: a book, which, together with the numerous apocryphal narratives, containing infinite innovations of the evangelical history, and forged at Constantinople by the early writers of the Greek church, gave birth to an endless variety of legends concerning the life of Christ and his apostles<sup>f</sup>; and which, in the barbarous

<sup>c</sup> In Latin. A Saxon translation, from a manuscript at Cambridge, coeval with the conquest, was printed at Oxford, by Thwaites, 1699. In an English translation by Wynkyn de Worde, the prologue says, "Nicodemus, which was a worthy prynce, dydde wryte thys blefyd storye in Hebrew. And Theodosius, the emperour, dyde it translate out of Hebrew into Latin, and byshoppe Turpyn dyde translate it out of Latyn into Frenshe." With wooden cuts, 1511. 4to. There was another edition by Wynkyn de Worde, 1518. 4to. and 1532. See a very old French version, MSS. Harl. 2253. 3. fol. 33. b. There is a translation into English verse, about the fourteenth century. MSS. Harl. 4196. 1. fol. 206. See also, 149. 5. fol. 254. b. And MSS. coll. Sion. 17. The title of the original is, NICODEMI DISCIPULI de Jesu Christi passione et resurrectione EVANGELIUM. Sometimes it is entitled GESTA SALVATORIS nostri Jesu Christi. Our lord's Descent into hell is by far the best invented part of the work. Redit. apud ORTHODOX. PATR. Jac. Greyn. [Basl. 1569. 4to.] pag. 653. seq. The old Latin title to the pageant of this story in the *Chester plays* is, "DE DESCENSU AD INFERNAM, et de his que ibidem fiebant secundum EVANGELIUM NICODEMI," fol. 138. ut supr. Hence the first line in the old interlude, called HICKSCORNER, is illustrated.

Now Jesu the gentyll that brought Adam from hell.

There is a Greek homily on *Saint John's Descent into Hell*, by Eusebius Alexandrinus. They had a notion that saint John was our Saviour's precursor, not only in this world, but in hades. See Allat. de libr. eccles. Græcor. p. 303. seq. Compare the *Legend of Nicodemus, Christ's descent into hell, Pilate's exile, &c.* MSS. Bodl. B. 5. 2021. 4. seq.

<sup>f</sup> In the manuscript register of saint Swinthin's priory at Winchester, it is recorded, that Leofric, bishop of Exeter, about the year 1150, gave to the convent, a book called GESTA BEATISSIMI APOSTOLI PETRI cum Glosa. This is probably one of these commentitious histories. By the way, the same Leofric was a great benefactor in books to his church at Exeter. Among others, he gave Boetii Liber ANGLICUS, and, Magnus liber ANGLICUS omnino METRICE descriptus. What was this translation of Boethius, I know not; unless it is Alfred's. It is still more difficult to determine, what was the other piece, the GREAT BOOK OF ENGLISH VERSE, at so early a period. The grant is in Saxon, and, if not genuine, must be of high antiquity. Dugdal. MONAST. tom. i. p. 222. I have given Dugdale's Latin translation. The Saxon words are, "Boetier boc on englysc.—And 1. mycel englysc boc be zehpelicum þingum on leodþran zepopþr." ages,

ages, was better esteemed than the genuine gospel, on account of its improbabilities and absurdities.

But whatever was the source of these exhibitions, they were thought to contribute so much to the information and instruction of the people on the most important subjects of religion, that one of the popes granted a pardon of one thousand days to every person who resorted peaceably to the plays performed in the Whitsun week at Chester, beginning with the creation, and ending with the general judgment; and this indulgence was seconded by the bishop of the diocese, who granted forty days of pardon: the pope at the same time denouncing the sentence of damnation on all those incorrigible finners, who presumed to disturb or interrupt the due celebration of these pious sports<sup>1</sup>. It is certain that they had their use, not only in teaching the great truths of scripture to men who could not read the bible, but in abolishing the barbarous attachment to military games, and the bloody contentions of the tournament, which had so long prevailed as the sole species of popular amusement. Rude and even ridiculous as they were, they softened the manners of the people, by diverting the public attention to spectacles in which the mind was concerned, and by creating a regard for other arts than those of bodily strength and savage valour.

<sup>1</sup> MSS. Harl. 2124. 2013.