



MEMOIRS

OF THE

LIFE OF FROISSART.

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WITH

AN ESSAY ON HIS WORKS,

AND

A CRITICISM ON HIS HISTORY.

Translated from the French of

M. DE LA CURNE DE ST. PALAYE,

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MEMOIRS, &c.



JOHN FROISSART, priest, canon, and treasurer of the collegiate church of Chimay, Historian and Poet, was born in Valenciennes, a town in Haynault, about the year 1337. This date, which appears contradicted by one single passage in his Chronicle, is confirmed by a number of others, as well in his Chronicle, as in his Manuscript Poems.

However attentive he may have been to inform us of the minutest particulars of his life, he does not say one word rela-

tive to his family. One can only form a conjecture from a passage in his Poems, that his father's name was Thomas, and that he was a painter of arms.

We find in his History a Froiffart Meullier, a young knight from Haynault, who signalized himself by his valour at the siege of the castle of Fighieres in Spain, which the English and Gascons attacked in 1381. His country and name induce me to believe that our Historian might be a relation of his, and like him sprung from a noble family.

Froiffart is titled knight, at the beginning of a manuscript in the abbey of St. Germain des prez; but as he has not this title in any other manuscript, though we have some of the most ancient, and most authentick; it seems probable, that

the copyist has given it to him from his own authority.

His infancy announced what he would one day be; he early manifested that eager and inquisitive mind, which during the course of his life never allowed him to remain long attached to the same occupations, and in the same place.

The different games suitable to that age, of which he gives us a picture equally curious and amusing, kept up in his mind a fund of natural dissipation, which during his early studies tried the patience and exercised the severity of his masters.

He loved hunting, musick, assemblies, feasts, dancing, dress, good living, wine, and women: all these tastes, which almost all showed themselves from twelve

years of age, being confirmed by habitude, were continued even to his old age, and perhaps never left him. The mind and heart of Froiffart being not yet sufficiently occupied, his love for history filled up that void, which his passion for pleasure left; and became to him an inexhaustible source of amusement.

He had but just left school, and was scarcely twenty years old, when at the intreaty of *his dear lord and master Sir Robert de Namur, knight, Lord of Beaufort*, he undertook to write the history of the wars of his own time, more particularly of those which ensued after the battle of Poitiers. Four years afterwards, having gone to England, he presented a part of this history to Queen Philippa of Hainault, the wife of Edward III. However
young

young he might then be, he had already travelled into the most distant provinces of France. The object of his visit to England was to tear himself from the pains of an attachment which had tormented him for a long time. This passion took possession of his heart from his infancy; it lasted ten years, and sparks of it were again rekindled in a more advanced age, *in spite of his bald head and white hairs.*

When Poets sing their loves; they are not always believed on their word; as Froissart only mentions his in poetry, one may treat all he says as pure fiction; but the portrait he draws is so natural, that one cannot prevent oneself from acknowledging the character of a young man in love, and the simple expressions of real passion.

He feigns, that when twelve years old Mercury appeared to him followed by the three Goddeffes whose difference Paris had formerly decided; that this God, calling to mind the protection he had given him from four years of age, ordered him to revise the dispute of these three divinities; that he had confirmed the judgement of Paris; and that Venus had promised him, as a recompence, a mistress more beautiful than the fair Helen, and of such high birth, that from thence to Constantinople there were not Earl, Duke, King, nor Emperor, who would not have esteemed himself fortunate to obtain her. He was to serve this beauty for ten years, and his whole life was to be devoted to the adoration of that divinity who made him such fair promises.

Froissart had been early attached to Romances; that of Cleomades was the first instrument Love made use of to captivate him. He found it in the hands of a young maiden who was reading it, and who invited him to read it with her: he readily consented, for such complaisances cost little. There was soon formed between them a literary connexion. Froissart lent her the Romance of the *Baillou d'Amours**, and took the opportunity of sending it to her, to slip into it a Ballad, in which he first spoke of his love. This spark of love became a flame which nothing could extinguish; and Froissart having experienced all that agitation

* M. de St. Palaye, in a note, says he is not acquainted with the Romance. *Bullou* signifies *Bailiff*.

which a first passion inspires, was almost reduced to despair on hearing that his mistress was on the point of being married; his excessive grief overwhelmed him, and caused him a fit of illness which lasted for three months. At last he took the resolution to travel, to dissipate his chagrin, and to recover his health. As he travelled with a large company, he was forced to be attentive to himself, in order to hide his trouble. After two days journey, during which he had never ceased making verses in honour of his mistress, he arrived at a town, which I believe to be Calais, where he embarked. During his passage the weather was so tempestuous as to threaten an immediate wreck of the vessel: this however was not capable of suspending

pending

pending the application with which he was working to finish a Rondeau to the honour of his love. The weather became calm, and the Rondeau was completed, when he found himself on a coast, where, as he says, *they love war better than peace, and where strangers are very well received.* He speaks of England; the reception they gave him, the amusements they procured him in the societies of "Lords, Ladies, and Damsels," and the careffes they loaded him with: but nothing was able to calm the melancholy which overwhelmed him; so that, not being able longer to support the pangs of absence, he resolved to return nearer the lady of his heart.

A lady, Queen Philippa of Haynault, who detained him in England, learnt
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from a Virelay, which he presented to her, the cause of his trouble; she took compassion on him, by ordering him to go back to his own country, on condition however of his promise to return, and furnished him with money and horses to perform the journey.

Love soon conducted him to the lady of his affections. Froissart let no opportunity slip of being in the same places where she might be, and of conversing with her. We have before seen that she was of such high birth, that "Kings and Emperors might have fought her;" these words taken literally are only suitable for a person of blood royal or to the issue of a sovereign prince; but how can we connect the idea of such high birth with the detail he gives us of
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the secret conversations, the amusements, and assemblies, which he was at liberty to partake of by day or night? and, as if these traits were not sufficient to make her known at the time he wrote, he seems to have wished to have more clearly pointed her out by the name of Anne, in the enigmatical verses which make part of his Manuscript Poems. One may presume that this love, so passionate and so tender, had the usual fate of almost every passion.

Froissart speaks in one of his Rondeaux of another Lady whom he had loved, and whose name, composed of five letters, was to be found in that of Polixena: this may be an Alix, which was formerly written Aelix. There is reason to believe he had a third flame called Margaret,
and

and that it is her whom he indirectly celebrates in a poem * under the title, and in honour of the flower which bears her name †.

Perhaps he sought in these episodical amours some remedy for a passion, which according to his own account was unfortunate. At least we know that, in despair for the little success which had attended all his assiduities and attentions to his first mistress, he took the resolution of again absenting himself from her.

This absence was longer than the pre-

* Dittie de la fleur de la Margherite, pages 70 and the following of his Manuscript Poems.

† The English reader must be informed, that Marguerite is not only the name of a woman, but also of the flower called daisy, and of a pearl.

ceding one; he returned to England, and attached himself to the service of Queen Philippa. This Princess, sister to the countess of Namur, wife of Robert, to whom Froissart seems to have been a servant, saw always with pleasure her countrymen from Haynault; she loved Letters; the College which she founded, and which at this day is known at Oxford under the name of Queen's College, is an illustrious monument of the protection she granted to them; Froissart therefore united all the titles which could merit the affection of Queen Philippa.

The history which he presented to her, as I have before mentioned, whether at his first journey or the second, (for it is not possible to decide which of
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the two), was very well received, and probably gained him the title of Clerk (that is to say secretary or writer) of the chamber of this Princess, which he was in possession of from 1361.

In the age of Froissart, all the world was persuaded that Love was the motive of the most brilliant actions of courage and virtue. Knights made a parade of it in tournaments. Warriors exposed themselves to the most perilous combats, to maintain the honour and beauty of their ladies. It was then believed that Love might be confined to a delicate intercourse of gallantry and tenderness: it is almost always under this form that we see it represented in the greater parts of those efforts of the mind which have been handed down to us from that period;

period ; the ladies blushed not in feeling so pure a passion, and the most modest made it the ordinary subject of their conversations.

The Queen of England frequently amused herself by making Froissart compose amorous ditties ; but this occupation must be considered solely as a relaxation that no way impeded more serious works, since, during the five years he was attached to the service of this Princess, he travelled at her expence to various parts of Europe, the object of which seems to be a research after whatever might enrich his history. I draw this conclusion from a preface which is found at the head of the fourth volume in several manuscripts of the Chronicle of Froissart ; and, as it is not

to be found in the printed copies *; I thought the insertion of it would not be improper here.

“ At the request, wish, and pleasure,
 “ of that most high and noble Prince,
 “ my very dear lord and master Guy
 “ de Chatillon, Count de Blois, Lord of
 “ Avesne, of Chimay, of Beaumont, of
 “ Schonove, of Goude; I John Frois-
 “ fart, Priest, Chaplain to my very

* M. de St. Palaye is not quite correct; for the beginning of this preface is in the printed edition of Verard, and in another printed edition which I believe was not known to Denys Sauvage nor to M. de St. Palaye. It will be more particularly mentioned hereafter. This preface in my printed editions is not so long as this, and is somewhat different. It is not mentioned in the editions of Denys Sauvage.

dear

“ dear Lord above named, and at this
 “ time treasurer and canon of Chimay,
 “ and of Lille in Flanders, am again
 “ awakened, and entered into my work-
 “ shop, to labour and work at the grand
 “ and noble matters which, in former
 “ times, occupied my attention, which
 “ treat and examine the feats and
 “ events of the wars between France
 “ and England, and of all their allies
 “ and adherents, as it clearly appears
 “ from the treaties which have been
 “ made and completed until this very
 “ day of my again being awakened.

“ Now, you that read, have read, or
 “ shall read this history, consider in
 “ your own minds, how I could have
 “ known, and collected such facts as I
 “ treat of, and of so many different
 C “ parties.

“ parties. In truth, I must inform you
 “ that I began at the early age of twenty
 “ years, and came into the world at
 “ the time these events were passing,
 “ in the knowledge of which I have
 “ always taken greater pleasure than in
 “ any thing else. God has been so
 “ gracious to me, that I was well with
 “ all parties, and of the household of
 “ Kings; more especially of King Ed-
 “ ward, and of the noble Queen his
 “ lady, Madame Philippa of Haynault,
 “ Queen of England, lady of Ireland
 “ and of Aquitaine, to whom in my
 “ youth I was Secretary, and amused
 “ her with handsome ditties and madri-
 “ gals of love; and through affection
 “ to the service of that noble and pu-
 “ issant lady to whom I belonged, all the
 “ other

“ other great Lords, Dukes, Earls,
 “ Barons, and Knights, of whatever
 “ nation they might be, loved me, saw
 “ me with pleasure, and were of the
 “ greatest utility to me. Thus, under
 “ the protection of this good lady, and
 “ at her costs, as well as at the expences
 “ of great Lords, I have searched in
 “ my time the greater part of Christen-
 “ dom (in truth who seeks will find);
 “ and wherever I came, I made inquiry
 “ after those ancient Knights and Squires
 “ who had been present at these deeds
 “ of arms, and who were well enabled
 “ to speak of them. I sought also for
 “ heralds of good repute, to verify and
 “ confirm what I might have heard
 “ elsewhere of these matters. In this
 “ manner have I collected the mate-

“ rials for this noble ‘history ; and that
 “ ‘gallant ‘Count de ‘Blois before ‘men-
 “ ‘tioned, ‘has taken great ‘pains ‘in it.
 “ And as ‘long as through God’s ‘grace
 “ I shall live, I shall continue it, for
 “ ‘the more I work at it, ‘the greater
 “ ‘pleasure I receive ; like the ‘gallant
 “ ‘Knight or Squire ‘enamoured ‘with
 “ ‘arms, by perseverance and ‘attention
 “ he perfects and accomplishes himself,
 “ thus by labouring and working on
 “ this subject, I acquire greater ability
 “ and delight.”

‘Of all the particulars of Froissart’s life
 ‘during his residence in England, we only
 ‘know that he was present at the separation
 ‘of the King and Queen in 1361, with
 ‘their son the Prince of Wales and the
 ‘Princess his lady, who were going to
 take

take possession of the government of Aquitaine; and that he was between Eltham and Westminster in the year 1363, when King John passed on his return to England.

There is in his Poems a pastoral, which seems to allude only to that event. With regard to his travels during the time he was attached to the service of the Queen, he employed six months in Scotland, and penetrated as far as the Highlands. He travelled on horseback with his portmanteau behind him, and followed by a greyhound.

The King of Scotland, and many Lords whose names he has preserved to us, treated him so handsomely, that he could have wished to have returned thither. William Earl of Douglas lodged

him during fifteen days in his castle of Dalkeith, five miles from Edinburgh. We are ignorant of the date of this journey; and of another, which he made into North Wales, that I believe must have been about the same time.

He was in France, at Melun sur Seine, about the 20th of April 1366; perhaps private reasons might have led him to take that road to Bordeaux, where he was on All Saints day of that year, when the Princess of Wales was brought to bed of a son, who was afterwards Richard II. The Prince of Wales setting out a few days afterwards for the war in Spain, Froissart accompanied him to Dax, where the Prince resided some time. He had expected to have attended him during the continuance of
 this

this grand expedition; but the Prince would not permit him to go farther, and shortly after his arrival sent him back to the Queen his mother.

Froissart could not have made any long stay in England, since in the following year he was at different Italian Courts. It was this same year, that is to say 1368, that Lionel Duke of Clarence, son of the King of England, espoused Joland, daughter of Galeas the second, Duke of Milan. The marriage was celebrated the 25th of April; and Lionel died the 17th of October following. Froissart, who probably was in his suite, was present at the magnificent reception which Amadeus Count de Savoye, surnamed the Count Verd, gave him on his return: he describes the

feasts on this occasion, which lasted three days ; and he does not forget to tell us that they danced a virelay of his composition.

From the Court of Savoy he returned to Milan, where the same Count Amadeus gave him a good Cottehardie*, with twenty florins of gold ; from thence to Bologna and Ferrara, where he received forty ducats from the King of Cyprus ; and then to Rome.

* Or, as it is more often written, *Cotardie*, a sort of coat, a dress common to men and women ; here it means a Pourpoint. This was one of the liberalities which great Lords were accustomed to make ; they put money, as one sees by this example, into the purse, which, according to the usage of that time, was attached to the coat.

ST. PALAYE.

Instead

Instead of the modest equipage we have seen him travel into Scotland with, he was now like a man of importance, travelling on a handsome horse attended by a hackney.

It was about this period that Froissart experienced a loss which nothing could recompence: Philippa of Haynault Queen of England, who had heaped wealth on him, died in 1369. He composed a lay on this melancholy event, of which however he was not a witness; for he says, in another place, that in 1395 it was 27 years since he had seen England. According to several authors*, he wrote

* Vossius de Historicis Latinis, lib. 3. cap. 4.
Bullart, Académie des Sciences, tom. I. p. 124.

the life of Queen Philippa ; but this assertion is not founded on any proofs.

Independently of the employment of Clerk of the Chamber to the Queen of England, which Froissart had had, he had also been of the household of Edward III. and even of that of John King of France. As there are several other Princes and Lords of whose households he had been, or whom he calls his Lords and masters, it is proper to observe, that by this mode of speech he means not only those Princes and Lords to whom he had been attached as a servant ; but likewise all those who had made him presents, or gratifications ; or who, having received him in their Courts or Castles, had admitted him to their tables.

Froissart,

Froissart, having lost his patroness Queen Philippa, did not return to England, but went into his own country, where he obtained the living of Lestines. Of all that he performed during the time he exercised this ministry, he tells us nothing more than that the Tavern-keepers of Lestines had five hundred francs of his money in the short space of time he was their rector. One reads in a manuscript Journal of the Bishop of Chartres, Chancellor to the Duke of Anjou, that, according to letters sealed on the 12th December 1381, this Prince caused to be seized fifty-six quires of the Chronicle of Froissart, rector of the parish church of Lestines, which the historian had sent to be illuminated, and
 then

then to be forwarded to the King of England, the enemy of France.

Froiffart attached himself afterwards to Winceflaus de Luxembourg Duke of Brabant, perhaps in quality of Secretary, according to the custom of Princes and Lords in those days, who employed clerks to manage their affairs, and in their correspondence, and who amused them by their knowledge, or their wit.

Winceflaus had a taste for Pœtry : he had had made by Froiffart a collection of his songs, his rondeaus and virelays, who, adding some of his own pieces to those of the Prince, formed a sort of romance, under the title of Meliador, or the Knight of the Sun ; but the Duke did not live sufficiently long to see the completion of the work, for he died 1384.

Almost

Almost immediately after this event, Froissart found another patron : he was made clerk of the chapel to Guy Count de Blois ; and he was not long in testifying his gratitude to his new patron, by a Pastoral on the betrothing of Louis Count de Dunois, son of Guy, with Mary daughter of the Duke of Berry. Two years after, on the solemnization of this marriage at Bourges, he celebrated it in a sort of Epithalamium, sufficiently ingenious for those times, intituled "The Temple of Honour."

He passed the years 1385, 1386, and 1387, sometimes in the Blaisois, sometimes in Touraine ; but the Count de Blois having engaged him to continue the course of his history, which he had left unfinished, he determined in 1388

to take advantage of the peace which was just concluded, to visit the Court of Gaston Phœbus Count de Foix and de Béarn, in order to gain full information in whatever related to foreign countries, and the more distant provinces of the kingdom, where he knew that a great number of warriors signalized themselves daily by the most gallant actions.

His age and his health still allowed him to bear great fatigue; his memory was sufficiently strong, to retain whatever he should hear; and his judgment clear enough, to point out to him the use he should make of it

He set out with letters of recommendation from the Count de Blois, to Gaston Phœbus, and took the road through Avignon. One of his pastorals informs

us, that he resided in the environs of an abbey*, situated between Lunel and Montpellier, and that he gained the affections of a young person, who bewailed his departure: in the same poem he tells us, that he carried with him four greyhounds†, as a present to the Count de Foix. Gaston was passionately fond of dogs, and had upwards of sixteen hundred always with him: there exists a treatise written by him on hunting, which is preserved in manuscript in several libraries, and which was printed in 1520.

* Probably St. Geniez, a monastery of nuns, one league and a half from the road which leads from Montpellier to Lunel. ST. PALAYE.

† Their names were Tristan, Hector, Brun, and Rollant. ST. PALAYE.

Froissart

Froiffart went from Carcaffonne to Pamiers, of which he gives an agreeable description; he remained there for three days waiting for the chance of meeting some person with whom he might travel into Béarn. He was fortunate enough to meet with a knight from the country of Foix, who was returning thither from Avignon, and they journeyed together.

Sir Espaing du Lyon, the name of the knight, was a man of high distinction; he had had considerable commands, and was employed all his life in negotiations as delicate as they were important. The two travellers agreed perfectly well together; the knight, who had served in all the wars in Gascony, was equally desirous to learn every thing which related to those that Froiffart was acquainted

quainted with ; and Froissart, more in a situation to satisfy him than any one, was not less curious to be informed of those events in which the knight had borne a part : they mutually communicated all they knew, with a reciprocal complaisance. They rode side by side, and frequently only a foot's pace : their whole journey was passed in conversations ; by which they mutually instructed each other.

Towns, castles, ruins, plains, heights, valleys, defiles ; every thing awakened the curiosity of Froissart, and recalled to the memory of the Lord Espaing du Lyon the different actions which had there passed under his eyes, or which he had heard related by those who had been engaged in them.

The historian, too exact in the recital which he gives us of these conversations, relates even the exclamations by which he testified his gratitude to the knight, for all the interesting intelligence he was so good to give him.

If they arrived at a town before sunset, they profited of the remnant of day to examine the outworks of the place, or to observe those parts of it which had suffered from assaults. On their return to the inn, they continued the same conversations, either between themselves or with other knights and esquires, who might be lodged there; and Froissart never went to bed until he had put in writing every particular he had heard.

After a journey of six days, they arrived at Ortez. This town, one of the
most

most considerable in Béarn, was the ordinary residence of Gaston Count de Foix and Viscount de Béarn, surnamed Phœbus, on account of his beauty. Froissart could not have chosen a Court more suitable to his views. The Count de Foix, at the age of fifty-nine years, was the most vigorous, the handsomest, and best-made man of that period. Adroit at all exercises, valorous, an accomplished Captain, noble and magnificent, he never suffered any warrior who waited on him to depart without carrying with him proofs of his liberality: his castle was the rendezvous of all those brave Captains who had distinguished themselves in combats, or in tournaments. Their conversations solely ran on attacks of places, surprizes, sieges, assaults,

assaults, skirmishes, and battles. Their amusements were games of address and force; tilts, tournaments, and huntings, more laborious and almost as dangerous as war itself. These details deserve to be read in Froissart: I can only imperfectly trace what he has so excellently painted.

The Count de Foix having learnt from Sir Espaing du Lyon the arrival of Froissart, who was well known at the Court of Ortez by the two first volumes of his Chronicle, sent to seek for him at the house of one of his esquires, who had received and lodged him; and, seeing him at a distance, said to him smiling, and in good French, “ that
 “ he was perfectly well acquainted with
 “ him, although he had never before
 “ seen him; but that he had heard
 “ much

“ much talk about him, and he retained
“ him in his household.”

This expression, as I have before said, does not mean that Froissart was lodged in the castle, but only that his expences were defrayed by the Count during the winter he passed at his Court. His most usual occupation, in that time, was to amuse Gaston, after his supper, by reading to him the romance of Meliador, which he had brought with him. Every evening he repaired to the castle at midnight, which was the hour the Count sat down to table, and none dared to interrupt the reading. Gaston himself, who listened with the greatest attention, only spoke to ask questions concerning the book; and he never sent him away, before he had made him drink all the

wine which had remained on the table, from his own bottle.

Sometimes this Prince took pleasure to inform him of those particulars of the wars in which he had distinguished himself. Froissart did not gain less information from his frequent conversations with those knights and esquires whom he found assembled at Ortez; more especially from the knights of Arragon and of England, attached to the household of the Duke of Lancaster, who at that time resided at Bourdeaux. They related to him all they knew of the battles of the Kings John of Castile, and Denys of Portugal, and their allies. Among others, the famous Bastot de Maulion, in giving him the history of his own life, told him also that of almost

most all the wars which had happened in the different provinces of France, and even in Spain, from the time of the battle of Poitiers, at which period he first bore arms.

Although he applied himself, without relaxation, in collecting historical memoirs, Froissart gave, however, some moments to Poesy. We have a pastoral, by him, which he seems to have composed in the county of Foix, in honour of Gaston Phœbus. He says, that being

En beau Pré fert et plaissant
Par dessus Gave la riviere
Entre Pau et Ortais seant,

he saw shepherds and shepherdeses,
who were conversing of different Lords,

and the arms they bore. He adroitly makes use of this fiction, to name with praise all those from whom he had received any marks of liberality, and terminates his list with the Count de Foix.

After a tolerable long residence at the Court of Ortez, Froissart began to think of his departure. He was detained by Gaston, who gave him hopes that an opportunity would soon offer for him to travel in good company. The marriage of the Countess of Boulogne, a relation of the Count, having been concluded with the Duke de Berry, the young bride was conducted from Ortez to Morlas, where the equipages of the Duke, her husband, were waiting for her. He set out in her suite, after having received proofs of the generosity
of

of Gaston, who warmly pressed him to return to him. He accompanied the Princess to Avignon, and the remainder of the road which she took across the Lyonnais, la Bresse, le Forès, and the Bourbonnois, as far as Riom, in Auvergne.

The stay at Avignon was unfortunate to Froissart; they robbed him. This melancholy adventure was the subject of a long poem, in which he introduces several incidents of his life, and which I have made use of in this memoir.

One sees, by this piece, that the desire of visiting the tomb of the Cardinal de Luxembourg, who died in odour of sanctity, was not the sole motive which had induced him to re-pass through
Avig-

Avignon in the suite of the young Princesses; but that he was charged with a private commission from the Lord de Couci. He might, as he says, have endeavoured to seek for redress for the loss of his money by soliciting a Benefice; but this resource was not to his taste. He laid greater stress on the generosity of the Lord de la Riviere, and the Count de Sancerre, who accompanied the Duchesse de Berry, and on that of the Viscount d'Asci. He paints himself, in this poem, as a man of much expence: besides the revenue of the living of Lestines, which was considerable, he had received, since he was twenty-five years old, two thousand francs, of which nothing remained. The composition of his works had cost him

him

him seven hundred francs; but he regretted not this expence; for, as he says, “ I have composed many a history “ which will be spoken of by posterity.” The remainder was spent among the tavern-keepers at Lestines, and in his travels, which he always performed with a good equipage, well mounted, well dressed, and living well wherever he went.

Froiffart had been present at all the feasts which were given on the marriage of the Duke of Berry; celebrated the eve of Whitsunday at Riom, in Auvergne. He composed a pastoral for the morrow of the nuptials; then, returning to France with the Lord de la Riviere, he went to Paris. His natural activity, and his ardour for information, with

with which he was incessantly occupied, did not permit him to remain there long. We have seen him in six months go from the Blaisois to Avignon; then to the county of Foix; from whence he returned again to Avignon, and cross Auvergne to go to Paris. One sees him in less than two years successively in the Cambresis, in Haynault, Holland, Picardy, a second time in Paris, at the extremity of Languedoc; then again at Paris and at Valenciennes; from thence to Bruges, Sluys, in Zealand, and at last in his own country.

He accompanied into the Cambresis the Lord de Coucy to the castle of Creveccœur, which the King had just given to him. He relates to him all he had seen, and learns from him the different

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ferent particulars of the negotiations between France and England.

After having staid fifteen days in his own country, he passed a month in Holland with the Count de Blois, entertaining him with the history of his travels. He then goes to Lelighien, to learn the details of the negotiations for peace, which were carrying on at that place. He is present at the magnificent entry which Isabella de Baviere makes into Paris. The exactness with which he describes the ceremonies observed between the Pope and Charles VI. at Avignon, seems to prove he was an eye-witness of their meeting. this is the more probable, because it is certain that Charles VI. went from Avignon to Toulouse, to receive the homage of the
 Count

Count de Foix ; when Froiffart was present, and heard their conversation.

Nothing of novelty passed, as one sees, but Froiffart wished to be a spectator of; feasts, tournaments, conferences for peace, interviews of princes, their entries, nothing escaped his curiosity. It appears, that, at the beginning of the year 1390, he returned to his own country, and that he was solely occupied in the continuation of his history, and in completing it, from the intelligence he had amassed from all parts with so much labour and fatigue. However, what he had learnt relative to the war in Spain did not satisfy him ; he felt a scruple at only having heard one side ; that is to say, the Gascons and Spaniards, who had been attached to the
King

King of Castille. It was the duty of an exact and judicious historian to know also what the Portuguese had to say on this subject: and, on the information he had, that numbers of that nation were to be found at Bruges, he went thither.

Fortune served him beyond his hopes; and the enthusiasm with which he speaks of it, paints the ardour with which he was desirous of a perfect knowledge of facts. On his arrival, he learnt that a Portuguese knight, “ a valiant and wise
 “ man, and of the Council of the King
 “ of Portugal,” whose name was Juan Fernando Portelet, had lately come to Middleburgh, in Zealand.

Portelet, who was on his road to Prussia to join in the war against the
 in-

One cannot say how long Froissart remained in Haynault; one only knows that he was again in Paris 1392, at the time when the Constable de Clifson was assassinated by Peter de Craon; and at Abbeville towards the end of that same year, or the beginning of the next, during the conferences which were held there by the Plenipotentiaries from France and England, when they at last established a truce for four years.

From the year 1378, Froissart had obtained from Pope Clement VII. the reversion of a canonship at Lille. One sees, in the collection of his Poetry, which was completed in 1393, and in a Preface, which is to be met with in several manuscripts at the beginning of the

the

the fourth volume of his History, composed about this time, that he titled himself Canon of Lille; but Clement VII. dying in 1394, he gave up his expectations of the reversion, and began to qualify himself Canon and Treasurer of the Collegial Church of Chimay, which he probably owed to the friendship of the Count de Blois, who respected him much; the Lordship of Chimay being part of the inheritance which the Count had had fallen-in to him in 1381, by the death of John de Chantillon, Count de Blois, the last of his brothers.

It was twenty-seven years since Froisfart had left England; when, taking advantage of the truce between the French

and English, he returned thither in 1395, furnished with letters of recommendation to the King, and his uncles. From Dover, where he disembarked, he went to Canterbury, made his offering at the shrine of Thomas à Becket, and, from respect to the memory of the Prince of Wales, to whom he was perfectly well known, he visited his magnificent mausoleum. He saw there the young King Richard, who had arrived to return thanks to God for the success of his last campaign in Ireland: but, in spite of the good intentions of the Lord Percy, High Steward of England, who had promised to procure him an audience of the King, he could not be presented; and was obliged to follow this Prince to the

dis-

different places he visited, until he came to Leeds-castle *.

This time was not lost on our Historian; the English were still full of their expedition to Ireland; and he got them to tell him both their own exploits, and the marvellous things they had seen there. Being yet at Leeds-castle, he presented to the Duke of York his letters from the Count d'Hainault and the Count d'Of-trevant †. “ Master John,” said the Duke to him, “ keep near to our per-
 “ son, and to my people; we will shew
 “ you all love and kindness; we are
 “ bounden so to do, from affection to

* In Kent.

† Afterwards Earl of Holland, and Knight of the Garter.

“ former times, and to our Lady Mo-
 “ ther, to whom you were attached ;
 “ we well remember those times.” He
 afterwards introduced him into the King’s
 chamber, who received him with very
 distinguished marks of good-will. Ri-
 chard took the letters he had been charged
 with; and, having read them, said, “ that
 “ since he had been of the household of
 “ his grandfather, and of the Queen his
 “ grandmother, he must be still of the
 “ household of England.”

Froiffart, however, had not yet been
 able to present to the King the romance
 of Meliador, which he had brought
 with him; and Percy advised him to
 wait a more favourable opportunity.
 Two important objects occupied the
 mind of Richard; one was his in-
 tended

tended marriage with Isabella of France; the other, the opposition of the people of Aquitaine to the donation which he had made of this province to his uncle, the Duke of York. The prelates and barons had been summoned to Eltham, to deliberate on these two affairs; and Froissart had followed the Court. He wrote down regularly all the news of the day, which he heard in his conversations with the different English Lords; and Richard de Servy*, who was of the King's Cabinet Council, entrusted him, in confidence, with every resolution they had determined upon, begging him only to keep them secret until they should be publicly divulged.

* Q. Was it Richard de Surry, Lord Surry?

At last, on the Sunday which followed the holding of this Council, the Duke of York, Richard de Surry, and Thomas de Percy, finding the King but little occupied, mentioned to him the romance which Froissart had brought with him. The Prince asked to see it; and the Historian says, “ he saw it in
 “ his chamber; for, I had it always
 “ with me, and placed it upon his bed.
 “ He then opened and looked into it,
 “ and was greatly pleased: indeed, he
 “ ought to have been pleased; for it
 “ was illuminated, and the writing much
 “ ornamented: it was, besides, bound
 “ in crimson velvet, with ten silver-gilt
 “ nails, with a golden rose, in the midst
 “ of two clasps gilt, richly worked with
 “ gold rose-trees. Then,” continues
 Froissart,

Froissart, “ the King enquired what subject it treated of; and I told him, of love. He was delighted with this answer, and looked into different parts of the book, and read therein; for, he read and spoke French perfectly well. He then ordered one of his knights, named Sir Richard Credon, to carry it to his cabinet; and he seemed much obliged to me for it.”

Henry Castede, an English esquire, who had been present at this conversation, and who knew besides that Froissart was writing his history, coming up to him, enquired if he had been informed of the details of the conquest which the King had just made in Ireland. Froissart pretended to be ignorant of them, in order to engage the esquire

quire

quire in conversation, who took pleasure in recounting them to him.

Every thing the Historian heard, among the rest, the repast which the King of England gave in Ireland to the four Kings, after having conquered them, excited in him very great regret, for not having come to England a year sooner, as he was preparing to do, when the news of the death of Queen Anne of Luxembourg, Richard's first wife, made him alter his intentions: he would not have failed to have gone to Ireland, to have seen every thing himself; for, he was much interested in collecting the minutest circumstances of this expedition, in order to entertain "his Lords" the Duke of Bavaria and his son, who had on Frizeland similar pretensions to

to those of the King of England on Ireland.

After three months residence in England, Froissart took his leave of the King. This Prince, whom he had followed in his different excursions near London, ordered him to be given, as a last mark of his affection, 100 nobles* in a goblet † of silver, gilt, weighing two marcs.

The melancholy end of Richard, which happened in 1399, is related at the end of the fourth volume of Froissart's history, who acquits himself most

* This sum may amount to about 25 guineas of our present coin.

ST. PALAYE.

† This was called by our ancestors a Henepée, id est, hanap, full of money: from whence comes the Hanaper office in the English Treasury.

ST. PALAYE.

grate-

gratefully to this Prince by the affecting manner with which he laments his misfortunes. At the same time he remarks, that in this event he saw the accomplishment of a prediction which had been made on Richard, when he was born at Bordeaux; and also of a prophecy in the romance of Brutus*, which pointed out the Prince who would dethrone him.

The death of Guy Count de Blois happened soon after Froissart's return home: he mentions it in his Chronicle, under the year 1397. He was then sixty years of age, and must have lived at least four years more; for, he relates some events of the year 1400. If one was to

* See particulars of Wace, author of the romance of Brutus, in Mr. Ellis's Specimen of early English Poets.

believe Bòdin and La Popliniere, he would have lived to 1420; but these two writers have probably been deceived by these words, which begin the last chapter of his history: “En l’an de grace mil quatre cent ung moins;” instead of reading, “ung,” as it is written in several manuscripts; and in the black letter editions they must have read “vingt.”

Another passage in Froissart may also have given rise to a belief that he lived to about the middle of the fifteenth century. In speaking of the banishment of the Count de Harcourt, who persuaded the English to make a descent in Normandy, he says, that the melancholy effects of this invasion were visible for more than a hundred years after. These terms must not be taken literally; the author

author wrote rather as foreseeing those evils to come which he dreaded, than as being a witness of these fatal effects.

It is not, however, possible to decide in what year he died; it only appears that it was in the month of October, since his "obit" is indicated in that month in the Obituary of the Collegial Church of St. Monegunda, at Chimay, from which I have added an extract at the end of this Memoir. According to an old tradition of the country, he was interred in the chapel of St. Anne, in this Collegial Church; and, indeed, it seems very probable that he should end his day in his own Chapter.

The name of Froissart was common to several persons who lived at the same time with our Historian; besides the Froissart Meullier, the young esquire
from

from Haynault, whom I mentioned in the beginning of this Memoir, one finds, in the Chronicle of our author, a Dom Froissart, who had signalized himself at the siege which the Count de Haynault had formed in 1340 against the town of St. Amand. This monk defended for a considerable time a breach which had been made in the walls of the abbey, and did not abandon it, before he had killed or wounded eighteen men. One reads, at the end of some charters of the Count de Foix, a signature of J. Froissart, or Jaquinot Froissart: he was a Secretary to the Count, and, perhaps, a relation of the Historian. There is also mention made, in the registers of the "Tresor des Chartes," of a remission granted in 1375 to Philebert Froissart, esquire,

esquire, who had been in the company of Gascons in the country of Guyenne, under the command of Charles d'Artois, Count de Pezenas.

To avoid interrupting the thread of the narrative, I have deferred to the end of this Memoir the examination of a passage in the poetry of Froissart, which points out, but in obscure terms, one of the principal circumstances of his life. He recals the faults of his youth, and particularly reproaches himself for having quitted a learned profession for which he had natural talents, and which had gained him much respect (he seems to point at History, or Poetry), to follow another, which, though much more lucrative, was as little suitable to him as that of arms; and, having failed in
it,

it, had made him fall from that degree of honour to which the first had elevated him. He says, he is determined to repair his fault, and, returning to his former occupations, transmit to posterity the glorious names of those Kings, Princes, and Lords, whose generosity he had partaken of.

In the whole course of the life of Froissart, I see no period in which this pretended change can be placed, nor that can point out this lucrative trade, and which he himself calls "*marchandise*." The indecency of the expression will not suffer us to suppose it could be his cure of Lestines; although he has said, in another part, that the rectory was of considerable value: could it be the profession of lawyer, or that of

his father, who was, as we have before stated, a painter of arms? A singular meaning of the word “*marchandise*,” in Commines, may perhaps give us a plausible explanation.

Commines, born in the same country, and not very far from the time of Froissart, employs this word to signify a negotiation of affairs between Princes. The business of a negociator, or rather a man of intrigue, who seeks, without any apparent character, to penetrate the secret of Courts, would perhaps be that, which Froissart repents to have followed. The details in which we have entered respecting his various travels, the long residence which he has often made, in critical times, with several Princes, and the talents which he had

had to insinuate himself into their good graces, seem to me to warrant this conjecture.



Extract from a manuscript taken from the archives of the Chapter of St. Monégunda, at Chimay, in which are found the obits and pious foundations made to this Chapter, and other antiquities. Folio 39 and 40.

“ The obit of Sir John Froissard,
 “ born at Valenciennes, Canon and
 “ Treasury of the aforesaid Church,
 “ which flourished in 1364, may have
 “ place here, according to his quality,
 “ as having been domestick Chaplain
 “ to the renowned Guy de Chatillon,
 “ Count de Soisson and de Blois, Lord
 “ of

“ of Ayefnes, Chimay, and Beaumont,
 “ &c. who has also been a very cele-
 “ brated Historiographer of his time,
 “ and has written the wars and chroni-
 “ cles, and the most remarkable events
 “ from the year 1335 until the year
 “ 1400 ; according, as he himself re-
 “ lates, in divers parts of his history ;
 “ and more especially in the 51st chap-
 “ ter of his 4th book, and as it is shewn
 “ in the culgium written in his praise
 “ in the following words :

“ Cognita Romanæ vix esset gloria gentis,

“ Pluribus hunc scriptis nî decorasset honos.

“ Tanti nempe refert totum scripsisse per orbem,

“ Quælibet et doctos sec'la tulisse viros.

“ Commemorent alios alii, super æthera tollam

“ Froissardum, historiæ per sua sec'la ducem ;

“ Scripsit

- “ Scripsit enim historiam magis sexaginta per
“ annos,
“ Totius mundi, quæ memoranda notat,
“ Scripsit & Anglorum Regine gesta Philippæ,
“ Qui, Guilielme, tuo tutia juncta toro.”

HONORARIUM.

Gallorum sublimis honos & fama tuorum,
Hic, Froissarde, jaces, si modo forte jaces,
Historiæ vivus studuisti reddere vitam,
Defuncto vitam reddet at illa tibi.

JOANNES FROISSARDUS, Canonicus &
Thesaurarius Ecclesiæ Collegiatæ
Sanctæ Monegundis Simaci, vetus-
tissimo ferme totius Belgii oppido.

Proxima dum propius florebit Francia scriptis,
Fania * dum ramos, Blancaque † fundit aquas,

* The Faigue de Chimay, a small forest de-
pendant on it.

† La Blanche Eau, a river which runs by Chi-
may.

Urbis ut hujus honos, templi sic fama vigebis

Teque ducem historice Gallia tota colet,

Belgica tota colet, Cymeaque vallis amabit

Dum rapidus proprios Scaldis obibit agros.

AN
ESSAY
ON THE
WORKS OF FROISSART.

Translated from the French of
M. DE LA CURNE DE ST. PALAYE,

BY
THOMAS JOHNES.

*Heads of the Matters contained
in this Essay.*

- I. A general plan of Froissart's History.
- II. A more detailed plan of the same History.
- III. Division of the four volumes of this History into chapters; and that of the first of these volumes into several parts.
- IV. Did Froissart himself make these divisions?
- V. The time which Froissart employed in the composition of this History.
- VI. The enquiries which Froissart made to form this History, and the pains he took.
- VII. What was the object Froissart proposed to himself in writing this History, and what were the rules he had laid down to himself in writing it.
- VIII. The

VIII. The chronology of Froissart.

IX. Of the first thirty years which Froissart speaks of at the commencement of his History after John le Bel; that is to say, from 1326 to 1356.

THE life of Froissart has been the subject of the preceding pages. I will now give you the history of his works, as well printed as manuscript, in verse, and in prose ; and I will, as faithfully as I am able, detail their contents. It may, perhaps, be thought I have pushed these details too far ; but, I feel I owe a particular attention to an Historian, who alone is worth a number of others, by the importance of the subjects he treats of, and from the length of time his history continues. I have besides observed that the author has expanded, in the course of his work, many facts which serve to clear up many preceding facts ;

facts; and that, for want of this information, it has oftēn happened that I have been stopped in my reading, and have not profited sō much by it, as I otherwise should have done. It is this which has made me sensible of the want those who read Froissart would have of such an explanation. To smooth all difficulties, and to lay down such rules as may conduct them, I have attempted to do that, which I should have been glad to have found done, when I began to read this author: for, I do not simply propose to give an idea of our Historiān, that may satisfy those whom curiosity alone may induce to peruse; my object is, that these Memoirs should serve as an Introduction to those who may be induced to read him; and that

they should render him, as much as may be possible, more easy, more interesting, and more instructive.



I.

General Plan of his History.

THE History which Froissart has left us extends from 1326 until 1400. It is not confined to the events which were passing in France during this long period; it comprehends, with almost as much detail, every considerable affair which happened in England, Scotland, and

and Ireland, and in Flanders. It includes also an infinite number of particulars relative to the affairs of the Popes of Rome and of Avignon; of Spain, Germany, Italy; sometimes even of Russia, Hungary; Turkey, Africa, and other places beyond sea; in short, of almost the whole known world. But this immense multitude of facts, so different from each other; whose chronological order is not very clearly made out, frequently presents to the reader but a confused mixture of events, passed at different times, and in different places, of which he cannot form any distinct idea, and whose memory cannot unite so many scattered objects, which have a necessary connection between each other.

There

There will be found, at the end of this Essay, an abridgement of the principal facts related in the course of this history * ; and, in order to remedy, at least in part, the disorder which reigns in placing these events, I will dispose of them each in the class to which they belong, in pointing out the chapters which it will be proper to read, to follow the train of causes of a similar nature, as well as the history of the same country, or same nation. It will not be possible for me to go into a very minute detail. To leave nothing to be wished for, it would be right to make refer-

* Neither this, nor his Poems, are continued in the Memoirs de l'Academie, by M. de St. Palaye. T. J.

encès, at every article, of all the passages which precede relative to it, and of all those which follow; but this can only be executed on the original itself, and would require all the attention of an Editor who should interest himself for the advantage of his readers.



II.

A more detailed Plan of Froissart's History.

THE History of Froissart is divided into four books, or volumes, as well in all the manuscripts, as in all the printed editions.

The

The first begins with the coronation of Edward III. King of England, in 1326, and with the accession of Philip de Valois to the crown of France in 1328; and closes with the year 1379 inclusively.

Froissart begins his second volume with the three last years of the preceding volume, and with more detail, having gained fuller information than when he first wrote it. He continues it until the peace of the men of Ghent with the Duke of Burgundy, the treaty of which is in the last chapter but one of this volume, dated the 18th December, 1385.

The third volume goes back as far as the year 1382 inclusively, reciting several events, which had been mentioned in the second from the 93d chapter un-

til the end. The events of these four last years, which had been already related, are so much expanded in the third volume, that they occupy the 29 first chapters. The rest is employed in the history of the following years until 1389, ending with the truce concluded for three years between France and England, and with the preparations that were making for the entry of the Queen Isabella de Baviere into Paris, of which the author promises to speak hereafter.

The fourth volume begins with a recital of all the feasts and magnificences which were made for this entry, and ends with the dethroning and death of Richard II. King of England, in 1400, and with the election which was made that same year of Robert, Emperor of Ger-

Germany. These events terminate the two last chapters of the whole work.

This manner of dividing the History of Froissart is the same in all the manuscripts and printed copies; but these divisions do not always begin or end at the same places in all the copies. I will give an account of these variations, which, in truth, are not very considerable, when I come to where I shall treat of the different printed copies and manuscripts of Froissart which have passed through my hands.

III.

Division of the four Volumes of Froissart into Chapters, and of the first Volume into several Parts.

THE four volumes of the History of Froissart are each subdivided into a great number of chapters, which are differently placed, according to different manuscripts and printed copies; but, besides these divisions, in a great many manuscripts there is one which is particular to the first volume. Some have four books, or parts, others six, and some eight. I will speak more fully when

when I come to mention the manuscripts of Froissart.

It is in one of these four, six, or eight divisions of the first volume, that one must seek for the termination of that part of his *History* which Froissart carried to England, and presented to Queen Philippa of Haynault. It necessarily precedes these books, or parts, in which the death of this Queen in 1369 is related: it even precedes, if I am not mistaken, every thing one reads prior to 1367, when he was appointed Clerk of the Closet to the Queen of England; for, I believe, it was the *History* which he presented to her that made him known, and gained him the office he held in the household of that Princess.

One cannot doubt but that it was posterior to the recital of the battle of Poitiers in 1356, since it was but at that epocha he began to write. One must not seek for it neither before nor after the years 1357, 1358, 1359, or 1360; I would rather fix on the year 1360: for in that year was the treaty of Breigny concluded, which gave peace to the French and English. This period agrees tolerably well with the time our author appears to have gone into England: the circumstance of the peace naturally intercepted a History which had apparently no other object than to treat of deeds of arms.

The second and third volumes are terminated at similar periods; one at
the

the peace between the Duke of Burgundy with Ghent in 1385; and the other between the French and English in 1387.

Froissart discontinued writing in 1392, and during the following years, which were passed in a succession of truces between France and England; of which Froissart took advantage, by going to England, where he had not been for twenty-seven years.

IV.

Did Froissart make these Divisions ?

ONE may ask if Froissart himself divided his History in the manner we have related? I do not doubt but he was the author of the division into four volumes; for, besides that it is so in all the manuscripts, even of those of his own time, he sometimes cites facts in some of these volumes which had been related in a former, and makes use of these expressions, “ as it is mentioned “ in another History;” or in these words, “ as you have before heard re-
 “ lated

“ lated in the preceding book of this
 “ renowned excellent History.”

But as for the sub-divisions of the first volume into four, six, or eight books, it is not to be found in the most antient manuscripts; besides, it is not uniformly the same in those wherein it is seen: I therefore do not hesitate in attributing them to the copyists, who have made them of their own accord.

With regard to the chapters of each volume, and the titles of these chapters, they are only to be met with in the printed copies; and in the manuscripts of that time, and posterior to it, they are different, according to the different manuscripts or printed copies; and I see no probability that Froissart was the author of them. One single passage
 may

may create a difficulty on this subject. It is in the first volume, p. 116, where the Historian refers you to the preceding chapter; but this passage is evidently an interpolation. Notwithstanding it is in the three black-letter editions, and in those of Denys Sauvage, it is not to be found in any of the manuscripts which I have seen, with the exception of a single one in the National Library, number 8321, which is of the date of the latter end of the fifteenth century, and one of the least authentic copies we have.

V.

*The Time which Froissart employed
in the Composition of his History.*

THE principal of these divisions, that which divides the History of Froissart into four volumes, serves to mark as many different epochas, at which he stopped in the course of his work; whether from want of materials, having carried his narration to the time of his writing; or whether he wished to take some repose himself, and allow the same to his readers: but these are not the only places where Froissart has suspended the
course

course of his History ; many have been pointed out, and I will endeavour to fix a date to them, as well as to others, to the utmost of my abilities.

Before entering on this examination, I shall explain the manner in which I understand Froissart discontinued to write his History. From all I have said of his life, he is seen continually occupied with this object : upwards of forty years of his life, reckoning from the time he was twenty, were passed in this pursuit : but in such a great length of time, there is one part of it which more directly belongs to the composition of this work ; I mean that, when, returning from his travels and laborious enquiries, he collected his materials, arranged them, and formed a connected

his-

history, such as we have it at this day. As he worked at it at different times, I shall attempt to assign to each of the parts the suitable time for it; to fix when it was begun and finished; how many years he employed upon it, and the intervals during which he ceased to write: I think all these details necessary. Froissart travelled over large tracts of country, and made in several places long residences; he was attached, at different times, to Courts whose interests were in opposition; he lived with a great number of Princes and Lords of different parties. It would have been very difficult for him not to have been biassed by prejudices, or influenced by affection for some, and hatred to others; and that he should always have steered clear

of

of the illusions of partiality; for his candour alone, would have served to have rendered him more susceptible of them. If all the circumstances are recollected of the life of our Historian, which have been related in the preceding pages, and they are connected with those times in which he worked at the composition of different parts of his History, not only the nature of the information he might be in a situation to collect will be manifest, as well relative to places, as to the persons he had seen; but those persons to whom he may be supposed to have leaned, will be pointed out. These grounds being once established, will be of very great assistance in enabling us to appreciate more justly the different degrees of authority he deserves,

serves, according to the various matters he treats of, and the times in which he treats of them. Without it being necessary for me to explain myself more at length on this subject, every reader may apply this rule as he shall advance in the reading of Froissart: it will serve him as a guide each step he takes; it will guard him from error or seduction; whether the Historian should have been ill-informed; whether he should wish to impose on his readers, supposing it true that he should be capable of so doing.

The first volume of Froissart comprehends, as I have said before, the History from 1326 to 1379. This period includes the time of his journey to England, when one may readily suppose he

had

had discontinued the work ; for, he considered it then as being finished to that part, since, he says, he carried it to England, where he presented it to the Queen. It ends, as I have already said, about the year 1360; and, as we have seen that it was completed in 1361, and that he had only begun on it about the year 1357, it is evident that Froissart scarcely employed more than three or four years in the composition of this part of his work ; which nevertheless appears to me one of those with which he has taken the most pains.

A sort of connection, which I find between several chapters of the remainder of this first volume, of which the first announces others at a great distance, convinces me that this remainder
has

has been composed off-hand, and without interruption; and that, consequently, the Author only began to write it towards the year 1379, since he closes it with the account of the events of this same year. In truth, I believe that, during the time he passed in the service of Queen Philippa from 1361 to 1369, he was more occupied in writing, by her orders, poems on gallantry and love verses, than in labouring at his History; and that, although in his different travels, several of which were after the death of this Princess, he was anxious to gain every information of the history of his own time, he had not, in the midst of an agitated life, neither sufficient leisure, nor a mind enough disengaged, to write it. He employed three

or four years in composing the last half of his first volume ; for we shall see, that the following volume, which he did not immediately begin on, was written from 1385 to 1388.

Notwithstanding Froissart may have written the first volume at two different times, it seems, that the preface, which is at the beginning, was not done until the whole was finished ; for, the author speaks in it of his travels into Scotland, whither he did not go until after he had presented the first half of this volume to the Queen of England.

No material interruption is met with in the course of the second volume. The author employs the twenty-seven first chapters in recapitulating the events of the three last years of the preceding volume,

lume,

lume, which had been too succinctly related. He adds new facts, or new circumstances, to those he had before told, or rectifies the narration, as having been better informed afterwards; and it is from this that I draw my proof, that there was some interval between the composition of the first volume, and that which followed.

After these twenty-seven first chapters he resumes the thread of his History, which he follows until the peace the men of Ghent obtained from the Duke of Burgundy, and of which he reports the original treaty, dated the 18th December, 1385.

It is towards the year 1385 or 1386, that Froissart began to write his second volume: it was finished in 1388. This

ſame year he viſited the Count de Foix; and in the account he gives of his travels he ſays, that different perſons reminded him of events which he had related in his Hiſtory; and theſe events are told in the ſecond volume, which, according to appearances, was immediately written.

There is an interval of upwards of twelve years between the compoſition of this volume and the enſuing one; for, the Author only began on the third in 1390. He then wrote it by order, and at the expence, of the Count de Blois: this he expreſſly ſays in the beginning of the 97th chapter, and 266th page of this volume. There is nothing to prevent us from believing that the preceding volume had been compoſed by
the

the orders of the same nobleman, since I have shewn, in the *Memoirs* of his life, that Froissart had appeared to have been attached to his service from the year 1385.

The third volume, which returns to those events that had happened since the year 1382, and which gives a fuller account of them, had been, as I have just said, begun on in 1390, and was already finished in 1392. The author makes it so to be understood in that part where he speaks of the conventions entered into by the Duke of Brittany with the King of France. He says, that at the time he was finishing this book, the Duke had faithfully observed them, and had not done any thing worthy of being noticed. We shall hereafter wit-

ness the disobedience of this Duke in 1392 ; who, having received Peter de Craon at his palace, at the time a state criminal, he refused to obey the orders which Charles VI. sent him to give him up. This whole volume seems to me to have been composed without interruption ; at least, there is a material connection between several chapters at a great distance from each other.

The interval there is between the third and fourth volumes, seems to have been caused more to give repose to the reader, than to the Historian ; for Froissart, in ending the third, announces the events which are to be the materials of the fourth volume. I believe, the Historian, immediately on completing the third, wrote the 50 first chapters of the

2

fourth

fourth volume, which close with the events of 1392.

A great number of manuscripts, and black-letter editions, which only begin the fourth volume after these fifty chapters, form a very natural prejudice in favour of this opinion: besides, from the year 1392, when they end, two years passed in continual negociations between the French and English; during which, several truces, but of short duration, were made; which, however, ended at last in a peace, or truce, for four years. One cannot doubt but that Froissart then interrupted his writing; since that was the time he performed his journey into England, where he resided three months. I believe, this interval was considerable, because the re-

mainder of the fourth volume, which seems to me to have been written without intermission, was composed, if I mistake not, but several years after this journey; that is to say, towards the end of the fourteenth, or the beginning of the fifteenth century. One finds in it those events which belong to the years 1399 and 1400. I find nothing that may lead us to form any judgment how long a time the Author employed on this last part.

It is necessary to make one general observation on the subject of these intervals, which I have just been speaking of, and of which I have attempted to determine the length. When our Historian finished one of the parts of his History, he brought it down to the
time

time when he was writing; and towards the end he related the events as they were passing: from whence it happens, as it seems to me, that there is much confusion, often omissions and mistakes, which he has been obliged to correct, or alter, in the following parts. It is probably these different supplements which have made him take in many places the title not only of "Actor," that is to say, Author, but in addition to it, that of Augmentator, of this History; and that he says, in other parts of it, "to have undertaken, continued, and augmented."

VI.

The Enquiries Froissart made to compose his History, and the Pains he took on this Subject.

IT has been shewn with how much pains and fatigues Froissart had visited the greater part of the Courts in Europe. Admitted into the palaces of the greatest Lords, he insinuated himself into their confidence to so great a degree, that they not only related to him many particulars of their own lives, and of those events in which they had had a share, or been eye-witnessees of ; but they discovered

covered to him sometimes the secret of the resolutions which had been entered into in the councils of the Cabinet, upon the most important affairs: he never failed to take advantage of his conversations with those with whom he could converse and interrogate with greater freedom.

It seems that he had learnt many details of the Court of France from the servants even of the King, and from those who were near to his person.

If in his travels, at Court, or in other places he visited, he met with any from whom he thought he could gain information, more especially Captains, or Heralds, who in those times were the most usual agents in negotiations, and in affairs of importance; he began a conversation with them, and insensibly led

led them to speak of those parts of history of which they ought to be best informed, whether in regard to the country where they were, or to other circumstances of their lives; and he never quitted them until he had made them tell all they knew; all of which he immediately set down in writing.

Not content to collect all these precious authorities, and to compare very carefully, as he himself informs us, the information of persons who had been attached to different parties, he sought for proofs still less liable to suspicion. He consulted the treaties which Princes had entered into with each other, their challenges, or declarations of war, the letters they wrote to each other, and other papers of this nature. He expressly says, that

that he had seen many which he does not introduce; particularly those of the Chancery of the King of England; and some of them are transcribed entire in the course of his History. It appears that he did not choose every thing he found as chance offered them, but that he examined them critically, and laid aside all those whose authenticity did not seem to him fully proven.

VII.

What End Froissart proposed to himself in writing his History; and what Rules he had laid down to himself in writing it.

ONE may easily judge, from the detail of the attentions which Froissart himself tells us he took, that he was acquainted with the rules of sound criticism, and the true method which ought to be followed in writing history. He likewise informs us, that he had not the intention of making a dry Chronicle, wherein facts are simply related with
 their

their dates, and in the order they happened, but that he was anxious to write what may be called in truth History, in which the events were presented with all the circumstances which had attended them. The details which lay open the secret springs by which mankind act, are precisely those which unveil the character and the very heart of the personages which History places on the stage; and this was one of the essential parts of the design which Froissart had proposed to himself in writing History.

Many passages in his work indicate that he had a natural inclination for it, and that he found infinite pleasure in working at it; but another object, which does him much more honour, had greatly strengthened this natural taste:

taste: he proposed to preserve, for ages to come, the memory of those men who had made themselves renowned by their courage, or by their virtues; to give to their actions a value, which nothing can efface, or alter; and, by amusing usefully his readers, to give birth to, or augment in their hearts, the love of glory, by the most brilliant examples.

This desire, which always animated him in his various enquiries, supported him during forty years of labour, in which he neither spared attention nor time, and for which he feared not expending very considerable sums of money. In effect, nothing can be more proper than the spectacle which Froissart places continually before the eyes of his readers, to inspire them with a love for war; that
in-

industrious vigilance, always on its guard, against surprizes, is incessantly active to surprize others; that activity, which counts as nothing pains and fatigue; that contempt of death, which elevates the mind above the fear of danger; in short, that noble ambition which excites to enterprizes of the greatest peril.

He passes in review all the heroes which, nearly during a whole century, were produced by two warlike nations; one of which was encouraged by successes as flattering as they were uninterrupted; and the other, irritated by its misfortunes, was making exertions to revenge, at whatever price it may be, its own honour and its King. In so great a number of actions, of which *many were extremely glorious to each*

I party,

party, it is not possible but that some were to be found of a quite different sort. Froissart does not take the less pains to paint these last, in order to give as much horror for vice, as he wished to inspire love for virtue: but, if all these pictures had been the fruits of his own imagination, they would not have been felt as much as he wished them. In order that their impression on the heart and mind should be perfectly sure, and strong, it was necessary that their basis should be founded on the purest truth, disengaged from all flattery, as well as from partiality, or interest.

It is this truth which our Historian piques himself with having sought after with the greatest care. However, all I have

have

have just said is taken from his own words, spread over an infinity of passages, in his History; and it is this alone that I guarantee. It remains to be seen if he has as faithfully observed this law which he imposes on himself, as he has promised it. But before I enter into an examination of this question, I shall make some general observations on his chronology: I shall then speak of the thirty-first years of his History, which are, properly speaking, but an introduction to the forty, and some years which follow them, until the end of the fifteenth century.

VIII.

The Chronology of Froissart.

I OBSERVE in the chronology of Froissart two capital defects, which are the source of all the disorder found in it. The first is, that when he passes from the history of one country to another, he makes the history which he begins go back to a period anterior to what he has just spoken of, without having had the attention to inform his readers of it. The second, which is not less considerable, is, that he has not settled in his own mind the manner of

count-

counting the years ; he makes them sometimes begin the 1st of January, at other times at Easter ; others even at Palm Sunday.

Froissart does not confine himself to date by years the events he relates : months, days, hours of the day, are often expressed in his different recitals. I remark, with regard to the days, that he only begins them when night is completely gone, and that day-break begins to appear. With regard to the hours of the day, he gives them a division, of which some examples, but in a small number, are seen in our antient authors, and to which he very particularly attaches himself. He divides them according to the canonical hours of *prime*, *tierce*, *none*, and *vêpres* ; because, per-

haps, he was in the ecclesiastical line himself. I observe, that he has not any where made use of the word *sext*: what he means by *prime*, was the morning, the first hour of the day, or the hour which followed next after day-break. *Tierce* seems to me, to mark the intermediate time between the morning and mid-day, which he expresses either by the word mid-day, or by that of *none*. Afterwards comes *vêpre*, or, *la vêprée*: it was, as the word points out, the end of the day; after which was reckoned mid-night. Sometimes he adds to these words of *prime*, *tierce*, *none*, *vêpres*, the epithet of *basse*, to mark that the time of these hours was near closing; and sometimes the word *haute*, which, in some instances, appears to have the same

same signification, and in others quite the contrary. He uses this mode of speech *à l'aube crevant*, to say, that the dawn of day has but just begun to shew itself; *au soleil resconsant*, to express the setting sun; *à la relevée*, for the time which follows the hour of mid-day; and *à la remontée*, which seems to me synonymous to *la vèprée*, for the evening, the time at which the day approaches to its end.

IX.

Of the first Thirty Years which Froissart has treated of at the Beginning of his History, after John le Bel; that is to say, from 1326 to 1356.

THE first thirty years of the history of Froissart are properly but a preliminary, which serves to give the reader some information relative to the wars which he was afterwards to give an account of. He describes the state of France and of England; and shews the cause of the quarrel between the two Crowns, which was the origin of those bloody

bloody wars they carried on reciprocally against each other. Froissart cannot be reckoned a contemporary writer of these first thirty years; he was not born, or if he was, he was in his infancy, or of such an age that he could not make any great use of his reason. He therefore scarcely ever mentions these thirty years, as an author who has seen what he relates; and, without doubt, it must be to this period alone that one can refer what he says in the commencement of his History, that he wrote after another who had lived before: it is, as he tells us, “the true Chronicles of John le Bel, Canon of St. Lambert, of Liege.” These Chronicles have not been handed down to us; and I cannot discover any thing more, either concerning

cerning the work, or its author, but what Froissart tells us. He speaks of him as of one who no longer existed ; but he boasts his exactness, and the pains he took in comparing his Chronicles, and the considerable expences he was at on this subject. He represents him as the favourite and confidant of John of Haynault, in company with whom he might have witnessed several great events, which, says he, shall in the end be related ; for the Earl, who was nearly related to several Kings, had played a principal part in many of these transactions.

Froissart, in these thirty years, which are anterior to the battle of Poitiers, in 1356, enters more into the detail of the history of the English than of the French, perhaps from ha-

ving

ving followed, in this respect, his original author, who had taken a much greater interest in the History of England, from its connexions with the Count de Haynault. This certainly is the cause why those manuscripts, which only contain the first years of the Chronicle of Froissart, are called Chronicles of England; and also has given rise to the reproach which has been made to him of being the partizan of England, and ill-inclined towards France; an accusation which I shall examine at the end of this criticism.

I do not think Froissart could have chosen a better guide for the history of the thirty years, than the author he says he followed. To judge of the information which this Historian might have
 drawn

drawn from the intimacy with which he lived with John of Haynault, one must recollect the situation in which this Earl then was. The Queen of England, Isabella of France, had fled from England with the young Prince of Wales, her son, afterwards Edward III. to free herself from the persecutions of the Spencers, and the other favourites of her husband, Edward II.

Charles le bel, King of France, brother to this Queen, was forced to order her to quit his kingdom, after he had afforded her an asylum for some time. The Court of the Count de Haynault, of whom we are speaking, was the only resource for the mother and son: not only was this open to them, but they found there powerful succours to carry
with

with them to England, and to draw down vengeance on their enemies.

The young Prince had there met a virtuous and amiable Princess (she was one of the daughters of the Count), who felt for him those first sentiments of a natural inclination, which seem to foretell the most durable attachments: he conceived a strong affection for her, made her his bride, and afterwards she was placed with him on the throne of England. It is the same to whom Froissart presented his History.

Froissart wrote then after an author who was himself personally acquainted with all these facts, and from the persons the best informed; for it was their own history. The writer who appears to have been brought up at the Court of
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the Count de Haynault, was living in the greatest familiarity with those, to whom all the circumstances of this Court, which were then recent, would be in their recollection, and perfectly well known to them; and he wrote the history of it for Queen Philippa, of Haynault, who had acted so principal a part in it: never was there an Historian who had more undeniable witnesses of the facts he relates. Never was there one, in whom greater confidence could be placed, than in Froissart in this part of his History. You will, however, recollect the faults which M. Lancelot has corrected in several articles which concern the History of England at this period. His criticism is founded on the original acts which he has had in his hands,

hands, and whose authority is unquestionable. I urge this example, because it seems to me more proper than any other, to make a truth, important to our History, more strongly felt, and which has been so much recommended by authors the most versed in this study: I mean, the absolute necessity of accompanying the study of History, with the comparing it with the original acts of those times.

Some of them enlighten parts which are wanting, while others add to the testimonies of History a degree of authenticity of which they are but in too much need; and it is from this comparison, that the certitude of these truths results as much as their nature is susceptible with regard to us. I shall reserve for
 another

another opportunity to speak of those forty and some years following, which Froissart wrote as a contemporary Historian, and as an eye-witness, I may say, of every thing which was then passing in the world. But I shall first examine the different judgments which have been passed on this Historian, and particularly the almost universal reproach which has been made to him, of being a violent partizan of the English, and a declared enemy to the French. I shall speak of his partiality in other respects, his credulity in certain articles, his exactness in others, and his mode of writing: I will then enumerate the detail of the editions which we have of his History; I will discuss the merits and faults of each of them; I shall, more
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especially examine whether that of Sauvage has more corrupted and falsified the text, than it has enlightened it.

In short, I shall give a summary account of upwards of forty volumes, in folio, of manuscripts of this History, which I have collated with great attention.



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A
CRITICISM
ON THE
HISTORY OF FROISSART.

Translated from the French of
M. DE LA CURNE DE ST. PALAYE,

BY
THOMAS JOINES.



I HAVE laid before you the views with which Froissart wrote his Chronicles, the care he took to be informed of all the events which were to make parts of it, and the rules he had imposed on himself in writing it. I shall at present examine if he has been exact in observing these rules; what are the defects and advantages of his History; what is the form and style of it. From thence I shall pass to the manuscripts and editions we have of it; then to the abridgements and different translations which have been published.

Froissart is accused of partiality ; and this accusation is become so general, that it seems to have acquired the character of notoriety ; whose privilege is to supersede proofs. Froissart is said to have sold his pen to the English, who paid him a considerable pension ; and, by a necessary consequence of his affection for them, he is unfavourable to the French.

Bodin, Pasquier, Brantôme, Sorel, la Popeliniere, le Laboureur, decide against him in the most positive terms. It seems even that his readers, prejudiced by the connexions which Froissart had with the English, may have some reason to distrust every thing he relates to their advantage. In truth, he begins by saying, that he had written his History

tory

toſy at the ſolicitations of Robert de Namur, a near relation of the Queen Philippa, and a vaſſal of the Crown of England, which he uſefully ſerved againſt France. In another part he informs us, that he was of the houſehold of Edward III. the moſt cruel enemy of the French; and that his Queen, to whom he was Secretary, had not only, by her liberalities, enabled him to travel into various parts in order to enrich his Hiſtory, but that ſhe had generously paid him for his labours in it.

In ſhort, the firſt twenty-fix chapters of his Chronicle ſolely concern the Hiſtory of England, which has been the reaſon why it has been called the “ Chronicle of England” in ſeveral manuſcripts. From thence it has been

concluded, that Froissart, from his intimate attachment to the Court of England, must be a violent partizan of that nation, and the enemy of its enemies. Nothing more was wanted for the most innocent accounts, if given by any other Historian, appearing as poisonous if issued from his pen: but, in order to judge if this suspicion has any foundation, I will run over the period of which he has transmitted to us the history, in examining successively the different situations he was in when he wrote the various parts of it.

Froissart cannot be suspected of partiality during the first years of the reign of Edward III. . . This Prince never forgot that his uncle, King Charles le bel, had given him an asylum in his kingdom;

dom ; when, with his mother, Isabella of France, he had escaped from the persecutions of the Spencers, who governed the mind of his father, Edward II.

The Court of France had not any misunderstanding with that of England during the reign of Charles. I pass over for a moment the forty years which followed from 1329, when the succession to the Crown of France being opened by the death of Charles le bel, the bonds which had united the Kings of France and England became themselves the source of divisions and of the most murderous wars ; and I come to the times which succeeded the death of Queen Philippa in 1369, a period when Froissart, no longer residing in England, had

had attached himself to Winceflaus, Duke of Brabant. This Prince, brother to the Emperor Charles IV. was, in fact, uncle to Anne of Bohemia, who was afterwards Queen of England, by her marriage with Richard II.; but he was also in the same degree of relationship with Charles V. of France, the son of his sister, and preserving a strict neutrality between the two rival Crowns, he was invited to the Coronations of Charles V. and of Charles VI. He obtained even in the last of these ceremonies the pardon of the Count de St. Pol, whom the King's Council wished to put to death for the crime of high treason.

Froiffart, who informs us of this circumstance, with which he must have been well acquainted, tells us another, which

which clearly shews, that Winceflaus ever preserved the friendship of King Charles, as well as that of his Council. During the time the war was carrying on with the greatest obstinacy, he obtained a passport for the Princess Anne of Bohemia to go to England, where she was to marry Richard II. Charles and his uncles accompanied this favour with the most obliging letters, adding, they only granted it out of friendship to him. Froissart had not any interest to write against France during the time he passed with this Prince; he had, shortly afterwards, still less, when he was Secretary to the Count de Blois, who crowned a life, completely devoted to the interests of France, by the sacrifice of the interests of his own family. The most trifling

fling marks of ill-will against France
 would have exposed him to lose not
 only the good graces of his master, but
 the fruit of his historical labours, which
 he had induced him to continue, and
 which he so generously recompensed.
 The Historian therefore, fearful of the
 reproaches which might be made him
 for being too good a Frenchman, re-
 proaches very different from those which
 have been since made him; thinks him-
 self bound to justify, in the following
 terms, what he relates of the inviolable
 attachment of the Bretons to the Crown
 of France against the English, vol. III.
 chapter LXIV. p. 193, year 1387. "Let
 " no one say I have been corrupted by
 " the favour which the Count Guy de
 " Blois (who has made me write this
 " His-

“ History) has shewn unto me, and who
 “ has so liberally paid me for it that I
 “ am satisfied, because he was nephew
 “ to the true Duke of Brittany, and
 “ so nearly related as son. to Count
 “ Louis de Blois, brother-german to
 “ Charles de Blois, who, as long as he
 “ lived, was Duke of Brittany: no,
 “ by my troth, it is not so; for I will
 “ not speak at all, unless it be the truth,
 “ and go strait forward, without colour-
 “ ing one more than another: besides,
 “ the gallant Prince and Court, who
 “ have made me undertake this History,
 “ had no other wish but for me to say
 “ what is true.”

Since Froissart, in all these times
 which carry us almost to the end of his
 Chronicle, cannot be suspected of ha-
 tred

fred to the French, nor of affection to the English; I return to those years I have omitted from 1329 to 1369, of which he passed a considerable part in England, attached to the King and Queen, and living in a sort of familiarity with the young Princes, their children: it is in respect to these years, that the suspicion of partiality to the English can subsist with the greatest force. It was difficult, in a Court where every thing breathed hatred to France, for him to preserve that perfect neutrality which the quality of an Historian demands; and that he should not lean towards that passion of Princes to whom he owed his present fortune, and from whom he expected more considerable establishments.

One might find reasons to weaken this prejudice in the *sweetness* and moderation which Queen Philippa ever preserved in the midst of all these wars; who calmed the fury of her husband at the siege of Calais, and who obtained, by her instances, the pardon of the six generous citizens of that town, whom he had condemned to death. I might add, that if Froissart was of the household of King Edward, he was also of the household of King John; and it seems, he was attached to this Prince even at the time when he was in England.

But, without seeking to combat these prejudices by others, I shall simply consult the text of Froissart, which must, in this respect, be the rule for our judgment.

judgment. After having read him with all the attention I am capable of, without having remarked one single trace of the partiality they reproach him with, I have examined with the utmost care some principal points, where naturally it ought to have been the most apparent.

The accession of Philip de Valois to the Crown had incensed all England, who adopted the chimerical pretensions of Edward III. This was a delicate circumstance for an Historian; who, living in the midst of a Court, and a nation so strongly prejudiced, was determined not to quit the line of duty. Now, these are the terms in which Froissart relates this event, after having mentioned the deaths of the Kings, Louis Hutin, Philip le long, and Charles le bel: “The
 “ twelve

.“ twelve Peers and Barons of France
 “ did not give the realm of France to
 “ their sister, who was Queen of Eng-
 “ land, because they declared and main-
 “ tained, and still resolve, that the
 “ kingdom of France is so noble, that
 “ it ought not to descend to a female,
 “ nor consequently to the King of Eng-
 “ land, her eldest son; for thus they
 “ determine, that the son of a female
 “ cannot claim any right of succession
 “ as coming from his mother, when the
 “ mother herself has not any right; so
 “ that, for these reasons, the twelve
 “ Peers and the Barons of France una-
 “ nimously decreed the kingdom of
 “ France to my Lord Philip, nephew
 “ to the good King Philip, of France,
 “ before-mentioned, and took from the
 L “ Queen

“ Queen of England and her son the
 “ right of succeeding to the last King,
 “ Charles. Thus, as it appeared to
 “ many persons, did the kingdom of
 “ France go out of the strait line of
 “ succession, which occasioned very
 “ great wars in consequence, &c.”

This whole passage presents nothing
 but what must make one admire the cou-
 rage and candour of the Historian, when
 even he should have added these words,
 “ it appeared to many persons;” since
 it is not any matter of doubt that the
 succession passed from the strait line to
 the collateral branch.

Nevertheless, some malignant inten-
 tion was thought to lurk beneath, and
 the words “ took from” having offended
 some readers, they have added in the
 margin

margin a sort of correction, which I have seen in two manuscripts in a hand almost as antient as the manuscripts themselves: “ They never could take
 “ away what they had never been in
 “ possession of, nor had any right to.
 “ They never took it away; for, neither
 “ the foresaid lady, nor her son, had
 “ even a right to it; but Froissart shows
 “ he was partial to the English.”

The homage which King Edward III. paid to the King of France, hurt exceedingly the delicacy of the English: they had disputed for some time, and with great warmth, on the form in which it was to be made; seeking to curtail it of all that was humiliating to them. As the King of France firmly supported the prerogatives of his Crown,

and obliged Edward to acquit himself of this duty according to the terms which had been practised by his predecessors, an Historian who was desirous of being complaisant would have slightly passed over this article. Froissart, however, insists upon it as much as he is able; he neither omits the difficulties which the English made, nor the authorities which King Philip opposed to them; and he accompanies these details with the original acts the most proper to confirm them; so that, if the Kings of France should ever have occasion to verify their rights, the deposition alone of Froissart would furnish an authentic and incontestable title.

The English accuse the French of not being very scrupulous in observing
treaties;

treaties ; and maintain, that Sir Geoffry de Charni acted by the secret orders of the King of France, when, in contempt of a truce which had been made, he attempted to surprize Calais in 1349. Rappin embraces this opinion, and supports it by the testimony of Froissart, whom he quotes in the margin. I know not from what copy, nor what manuscript, he has taken his authority ; but, for my part, I read in all the printed and in all the manuscripts these words, which are quite contrary to his sentiments : “ I believe, that Geoffry de
 “ Charni had never spoken of it to the
 “ King of France ; for, the King would
 “ never have advised him to attempt it,
 “ on account of the truce.”

The English again impute to Charles V. the infraction of the treaty of Bretigny, which they first broke, if we believè the French. Far from finding any thing in Froissart which favours the English pretensions, I believe that, if the terms in which he expresses himself were strictly examined, they would at least form a presumption against them. I do not despair but that one day a brother academician will give us all the proofs which a sound criticism, and a mature reading of the historical monuments of that age, can furnish on a point of History which is of equal consequence to the nation and to truth.

The singular combat proposed in 1354
between the Kings of France and of
England,

England, is still a matter of dispute between the Historians of the two nations. According to the French, the challenge sent in the name of King John was not accepted by Edward; whilst the English say, their King dared the King of France to battle, but that he refused the combat: Froissart decides formally for the French. “The King of France,” says he, “went after him as far as St. Omer, and sent to him (the King of England) by the Marshal d’Authain, and by several other knights, that he would fight with him, if he pleased, body to body, or strength against strength, any day he would name: but the King of England refused the combat, and re-crossed the sea to

L 4 “England;

“ England ; and the King of France re-
 “ turned to Paris.”

To these examples, I could add a great number of other passages where he gives much praise, as well to the people, as to the Lords who signalized themselves by their attachment to the party of the French, and wherein he neither spares those who had declared themselves against, nor those who had cowardly abandoned them. In addition to what he says of the fidelity of the Bretons, and of the Counts de Blois, their legitimate sovereigns, he praises the zeal with which several Lords in Scotland received the French fleet sent in 1385 to assist them against the English. The Earl of Douglas, to whom
 he

he appears much attached, and in whose castle he had spent several days in his travels into Scotland, seems to be of this number. At the same time he declaims against those whose bad faith, and ingratitude, rendered this armament fruitless. He speaks in the strongest terms of the presumption of the Duke of Gueldres, who dared to declare war against the King of France (Charles VI.) in 1387, and of the insolence with which he expressed himself in his declaration of war. He applauds the just indignation which induced this monarch to march in person to chastise the pride of this petty Prince.

In short, of all the nations whom he speaks of in his History, there are but
few

few whom he has not sometimes marked with odious epithets. According to him, the Portugueze are passionate and quarrelsome; the Spaniards envious, haughty, and uncleanly; the Scots perfidious and ungrateful; the Italians assassins and poisoners; the English vain-boasters, contemptuous, and cruel. There is not one trait against the French: on the contrary, this brave nation supports itself, according to Froissart, by the vigour and strength of its knighthood, which was never so totally overwhelmed by its misfortunes, as not in the end to find some marvellous resources in its courage. The Historian also seems to have taken a pride in having been born a Frenchman, in telling us, that he

owed

owed to this title the good reception which a French esquire gave him, when he lodged with him at Ortez.

It is true, that the King of England, and his son the Prince of Wales, seem to have been, as long as they lived, the heroes of his History; and that, in the recital of several battles, he is more occupied with them than with the King of France. But, where is the Frenchman of candour, who will not find himself forced to give these Princes the utmost praise? Besides, does not our Historian render justice to the valour and intrepidity of King Philip de Valois, and of King John? Nothing can surpass the praises he gives as well to the wisdom as to the ability of King Charles V.; and, above all, that glorious testimony which

which he makes no difficulty to put into the mouth of the King of England :

“ There never was a King who so little
 “ armed himself ; and there never was a
 “ King who gave me so much to do.”

I think I have fully established, by all that you have just read, that Froissart was not that partial Historian he has been accused of. Nevertheless, I think it will be more sure to read him with some circumspection, and that one ought, as much as may be possible, never to lose sight, I repeat it, of two objects which I have particularly endeavoured to make observed in the preceding pages : I mean to say, on one hand, the details of his life, his different attachments to divers Princes and to certain Lords, the connexions he had, or
 the

the friendships he contracted with various persons; on the other, the situations in which he was placed when he wrote his History, what parts of it were undertaken at the solicitation of the Count de Namur, a partizan of the English, and those which he composed by the orders of the Count de Blois, a friend to France.

For, if one is determined to persuade oneself that he ought to be disposed to favour the English in all he relates until 1369; from the same reason, he should lean to the French in all the ensuing years until the conclusion of his Chronicle. I ought not to neglect to mention that his prejudices are sometimes visible when he enters into the minutest details,

details, as one may be convinced of by the praises he gives to the piety and other virtues of the Count de Foix, strongly contrasted by those actions of cruelty he had just before related. But when an Historian, disengaged from all passion, should hold an even balance between the different parties; when to this quality he adds that which cannot be refused to Froissart, I mean, a continual anxiety to be informed of every event, and of every particular, that may interest his readers; he will yet be very far from perfection, if to these acquirements he does not add sound criticism, which, in the multitude of discordant relations, knows how to separate every thing that is distant from truth; or his

work

work will otherwise be less an History, than a heap of fables and popular rumours.

Notwithstanding all Froissart tells us of the care he took to hear both sides, and to compare their different accounts with each other, often with the original pieces, I think he may be accused of some little negligence on this head. His manner of life allowed him but little leisure to make all the reflections and all the comparisons which such an examination would require. In those countries whither his active curiosity carried him, other attentions occupied his mind. Charged sometimes with secret commissions, he endeavoured to insinuate himself into the good graces of those Princes he visited, by compositions
of

of gallantry, by romances, by poetry ; and the love he ever had for pleasure took such possession of both his time and his heart, that his mind must have been often turned from the serious meditations of the cabinet, of which naturally it was not very capable. I am not afraid to say, that his manner of life is to be found in some sort re-traced even in his Chronicles. One sees in them tumultuous meetings of warriors of all ages, degrees, and countries ; feasts ; entertainments at inns ; conversations after supper, which lasted until a late hour ; where every one was eager to relate what he had seen, or done : after which, the travelling Historian, before he went to bed, hastened to put on paper every thing his memory could recollect.

recollect. One sees in them the history of events which happened during the course of almost a century, in all the provinces of the kingdom, and of all the people in Europe, related without order. In a small number of chapters one frequently meets with several different histories, begun, interrupted, recommenced, and again broken off; and in this confusion the same things repeated, whether in order to be corrected, contradicted, or denied, or whether to be augmented.

The Historian seems to have carried even to his composition of the Chronicle his love of romances, and to have imitated the disorder which reigns in these sort of works; from which one might say he has affected even to borrow their

ftylé. Thus, for example, when he begins a narrative, he frequently uses this expression, “ Now the tale fays;” and when he speaks of the death of any one, or some other melancholy event, he adds, “ but amend it he could not;” phrases which are to be met with in almost every page of the romances of the Round Table.

However, all I say of this romantick taste of Froissart, which he seems to have preserved in his History, applies solely to the style he makes use of; for I have never once observed that he attempts to embellish it with the marvellous. The faults which are met with contrary to historical exactness, arise solely from the natural confusion of his mind, the precipitation with which he

wrote,

wrote, and the ignorance he must necessarily have been in respecting many things, which would have escaped his enquiries. What he relates of distant countries, such as Africa, Hungary, Tartary, and, in general, the Eastern parts of the world, is full of the grossest blunders. In his time commerce had not then formed any connexion with those countries and our own : what was known of them, was founded on the faith of those whom accident had carried thither, and who had resided too short a time among them to gain sufficient information respecting the manners, customs, and history of these people. But if Froissart has committed many faults in what he relates to us, the greatest, without doubt, is to have

spoken at all of what he could not but imperfectly know.

All these defects and imperfections do not prevent his Chronicle from being considered as one of the most precious monuments of our History; and that the perusal of it should not be as agreeable as instructive to those who, not confining themselves to the knowledge of general facts, seek in the details, whether of particular events, whether of the usages of that age, to develop the character of mankind, and of the centuries which have passed.

Froissart was born to transmit to posterity a living picture of an age, enemy to repose; and which, amid the intervals of troubles with which it was almost continually agitated, found relaxation only

only in the most tumultuous pleasures.

Besides the wars of so many nations which he describes, and in which he informs us of divers usages respecting the Ban and Arriere Ban, the attack and defence of places, fortifications, detachments, skirmishes, orders of battle, artillery, marine, the armour of those on foot, and those on horseback; one finds in this History every thing which can excite curiosity with regard to the nobility and knighthood, their challenges, their deadly combats, tilts, tournaments, entries of Princes, assemblies, feasts, balls, the dresses of both sexes; so that his Chronicle is for us a complete body of the antiquities of the fourteenth century. One must own

that these details only attract attention from their own singularity; they are related without study, and without art: it is, in truth, the familiar conversation with a man of understanding, who has seen a great deal, and tells his story well. Nevertheless, this amiable storyteller knows how, at times, and in particular when he speaks of any grand event, to unite the majesty of History with the simplicity of a tale. Let any one read, among other things, among so many battles which he has so excellently painted; let him read the recital of the famous battle of Poitiers, they will there see in the person of the Prince of Wales a hero, far greater by the generosity with which he made use of his victory, by his attentions to a conquered Prince,

Prince,

Prince, and by the respect he always paid him, than by those efforts of courage which had made him triumph. I do not believe there is any thing which can equal the sublimity of this morsel of History, nothing which can more elevate the heart and mind. Others, of a very different nature, have their value in their simplicity : such is the episode of the love of the King of England for the Countess of Salisbury ; the tender and affecting recital of which does not yield to the most ingenious and best-written romances. The Historian sometimes takes a gay tone ; as in the chapter wherein he speaks of the impatience of the young King Charles VI. to receive his new bride ; and in that wherein he relates the jokes which this Prince

made on his uncle, the Duke of Berry, who, at a time of life not very suitable for love, married a young and amiable wife.

The taste of the author is very visible in the manner which he treats these subjects; but, as the age he lived in knew how to conciliate all things, this taste did not exclude the fund of devotion which runs through the course of his work. It is only to be wished that he had not degraded his religion, by a credulity ridiculously superstitious; false miracles, prophecies, enchantments, have nothing in them so absurd as not to find in him an unbounded and blind belief. Every one knows the tale he tells of the demon Gorgon. One can scarcely comprehend how he can connect
with

with Christianity the example which he draws from the fable of Acteon to justify the probability of an adventure of the same sort, which makes part of this tale. He has besides been reproached with having dishonoured History by his too great minuteness. I agree that we readily would have dispensed with his telling us at what sign those lodged of whom he was speaking, and from pointing out the inns where he himself had sometimes taken up his quarters; but I cannot equally condemn the love adventures, the feasts, and ceremonies, of which he has left us descriptions. When his narrations shall not be of subjects sufficiently noble, yet he paints so agreeably and so true the age of which he writes the History, that it would,

would, I think, be ungrateful to make any complaints.

I have inserted summarily in this judgment a sketch of the opinions which different authors have given of him ; and they may be consulted. I will add that of an author who knew better than any other the full value of a ready and natural genius.

“ I love,” says Montagne, “ Histo-
 “ rians very unaffected or excellent :
 “ the unaffected, who have not where-
 “ withal to add of their own, and who
 “ are only careful to collect and pick
 “ up every thing which falls within
 “ their notice; and to put down every
 “ thing without choice and without
 “ forcing, give us the opportunity of
 “ wholly judging of their truth. Such,
 “ for

“ for example, is the good Froissart,
 “ who has gone on with his work with
 “ such a frank simplicity, that, having
 “ committed a fault, he is no way
 “ ashamed of avowing it, and correct-
 “ ing it at the place he is informed of
 “ it; and who tells us the diversity of
 “ rumours which were current, and the
 “ different accounts that were told to
 “ him. It is History, naked and un-
 “ adorned; every one may profit from
 “ it, according to the depth of his un-
 “ derstanding.”

I come now to the editions of Frois-
 fart. We have three black-letter ones,
 and two posterior to them: that which
 I believe to be the oldest, is by Anthony
 Verard, at Paris, without a date, three
 volumes in folio. The second is, Paris,
 by

by Michael le Noir, the 15th July, 1505, two volumes in folio; a handsome type. The third is, Paris, by Galliot du Pré, 1530, three volumes in folio. The fourth, Lyons, by John de Tournes, 1559, 1560, 1561, three volumes in folio, revised and corrected by Denys Sauvage. The fifth, which copies exactly the fourth, is Paris, by Gervais Mallot, 1574, three volumes in folio*.

There

* M. de St. Palaye does not seem to have known *all* the editions of Froissart. I have three of different dates to those he mentions.

1. A most superb copy on vellum, in four volumes, which originally belonged to the Sobieski library, purchased at the sale of the Bibliotheca Parisiana; printed in black-letter, by Guillaume Eustace, at Paris, 1514.

2. An

There is reason to believe, from the manner in which Father Long expresses himself, on the subject of the editions of Froissart, that there may be others where there have been united into one body his Chronicle, with the first continuation, by an anonymous writer, until the year 1498, and with a second continuation until the year 1513. But these works have never been printed together. This is not the only mistake which this learned Librarian has made in the same article; as I will some time hence explain,

2. An edition by Denys Sauvage, in four volumes, printed by Michael Sonnius, Paris, 1574. This had belonged to Mr. Secretary Criggs.

3. An edition by Denys Sauvage, in four volumes, printed for Michael de Roigny, Paris, 1574. This had belonged to Mr. Tyrwhitt.

when

when I speak of these continuations. He also speaks of an historical work, printed under this title : “ Order of the entry
 “ and happy arrival in the city of Paris
 “ of Isabella de Baviere, Queen of
 “ France, wife of Charles VI. in the
 “ year 1389 ; extracted from the fourth
 “ book of the History of Froissart ;”
 without noticing either the date, or place of its impressiion.

I am ignorant if this is not an old fragment of Froissart which Sauvage had consulted, that had been printed before the black-letter editions, and of which I have never been able to gain any knowledge. To return to those editions I have pointed out, I shall fix principally on that of Sauvage, and endeavour to shew, at the same time,
 what

what opinion should be formed of the black-lettered editions which preceded his.

If the Historian has been accused of shewing too great a hatred against the French in several parts of his Chronicle, the Editor has been equally accused of shewing too great an inclination to them, by suppressing every thing which might displease them. Perhaps this charge is only made in consequence of the first; and readers, prejudiced on one hand that Froissart had been an enemy of the French, surprized on the other at not finding any traces of this pretended enmity in his History, may have judged, without further reason, that Sauvage had retrenched, through love
to

to his country, all that the Historians had written through hatred to it. The French, with whom Sauvage, according to this mode of reasoning, ought to have found' favour, have not been less hard upon him on another head. According to several, he has altered and disfigured the proper names ; he has changed' the simple language of the times of Froissart, to substitute his own ; in which he has rather rendered the History more obscure than he has enlightened it, and has only caused those editions which were prior to his own to become more scarce, and more dear. We shall see if this is the recompence that all the trouble he gave himself deserved : but I ought first to speak of the manner in which

which he laboured at this edition, and the assistance he had, according to the account which he gives himself.

Sauvage, having first transcribed the printed copy of Galliot du Pré, compared it with the two other black-letter editions, when he found the difference between them so trifling, that he thought he ought to consider all three but as the same. He then collated his text with a printed fragment still more antient; then with the third volume of “ La Mer des “ Histoires,” in which Froissart has been copied from the beginning until the 177th chapter; and lastly, with two abridgements in MS. which he indicates, not being acquainted with the authors, by the names of “ La Chaux

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“ and

“ and de Sala,” who had communicated them to him.

The Editor, in acknowledging that these abridgements, or manuscripts, were so much damaged, that he was frequently obliged to guess the meaning, have been at times very useful to him, gives notice that he did not follow their punctuation; but, persuaded that one cannot be too exact in religiously preserving the language of antient authors, he follows, with a scrupulous attention, the orthography, the antient words, and antient modes of speech, although they were very different from what they were when the first copies came from the hands of Froissart. He, nevertheless, avows that, without derogating,

gating from the respect due to the ancient text, he has thought himself justified in making some changes, but solely, when he has been under the indispensable necessity of seeking the aid of better historians, to give a meaning to passages which were in want of it. Even in these cases, the only ones in which he has taken the liberty of making any change, he has had the precaution to place in the margin the original reading, however defective it might be; leaving, by this means, the reader the power of judging of the corrections he had made. With regard to proper names, and the names of places, he has not touched them, from the impossibility of correcting them with success.

The Editor addresses the four volumes of Froissart to the Constable de Montorency, by as many dedicatory epistles. One sees in the first, and by an advertisement to his readers, that the additions he had already given of several of our historians were but preparatory to a general history of the Gauls and of the kingdom of France, which he was then at work on.

M. Sauvage promises nothing relative to his edition of Froissart, which he has not faithfully performed; as one may be convinced of, by following the notes which he added. I do not say, that he has always well chosen from the different texts he had under his eyes; but, if the corrections he proposes are not
all

all equally just, there are many which offer a clear and very probable meaning of passages which, in the old editions, are a collection of words without connexion, and without sense. With regard to the language, besides his attention never to change any thing of the antient words, he accompanies them with an explanation whenever he thinks them not sufficiently intelligible. His zeal in this respect is more praiseworthy than his intelligence. It is surprising that, after having published several of our old authors, he was not better acquainted with their language, and that he should add such unnatural explanations and etymologies.

As the chronology of Froissart was sometimes defective, Sauvage has re-

formed it in those places which appeared to him most in need of it. He has often recalled to the reader's memory distant passages, in order to conciliate them, or to shew their contradiction; or, in short, to demonstrate the connexion of certain facts to each other; but his attempt in this part is scarcely worth mentioning.

Some genealogies, which regard persons of whom Froissart speaks, as well as some remarks on divers places, whose position he attempts to fix, by relating the different names they are called by, shew that the editor had not absolutely neglected these two objects. One must not be surprized, that so many foreign names should not always be exactly correct; besides their having been changed

since

since then, one should not impute as blame, either to the author or editor, the faults of copyists who have incorrectly read them, and who have written them according to the pronunciation or orthography of their language and age ; for, not only are the names read in as many different ways as there are manuscripts, but they often vary in the same MS. as often as they are met with. The only means to remedy this, is to clear up Froissart by himself, in collating the various passages where the same name is found ; and this is what Sauvage has done ; and for greater security he has read over five times the text of his author ; however, when he could not draw any advantage from this repeated reading, he has made use of

every assistance from any quarter he could find. He appears, in fact, to have very carefully studied the maps and descriptions of those countries the Historian speaks of, and also to have consulted the people of those countries. One observes, that, when he had retired to Lyons to give himself up more freely to study, he went to reconnoitre in that neighbourhood the field of battle of Brinay, or Briniais, in which the Duke of Bourbon had been defeated in 1360 by the free companies. The description he gives of it is very instructive, and serves to clear up the circumstances of that event. An epitaph which he had read in a church at Lyons serves at another time to prove the falsity of a date in Froissart. In short, there is scarcely
any

any Historian of importance, of whatever country he might be, whom Sauvage had not seen, in order the better to understand him on whom he was at work, and to make him better understood by others, and to confirm or to rectify his testimony. One may count nearly forty authors whom he cites in his margins, as well relative to the history of France, as to that of England, Scotland, Flanders, Germany, Spain, Italy, Hungary, and Turkey. I add, that he had consulted the original acts, since he has inserted in his annotations the ratification of the treaty of Bretigny, done by the Prince of Wales at Calais, after having transcribed with his hand upon a copy from the same Prince, collated by a "Trésorier des Chartes."

If,

If, then, the edition of Sauvage is still very imperfect, it has not any defects but what the preceding editions have in common with it; to which, however, it is infinitely superior. The editor, well versed in our antiquities and our history, exact and indefatigable, proves, by the constant use he makes of the two manuscripts, by the judgement he bears of their insufficiency, and by the regrets he utters at not being able to meet with better, that he has been in greater want of assistance, than of good will, good faith, and capacity.

In his time, manuscripts buried in the libraries of ignorant monks, or in the archives of private persons, and unknown to their possessors, were lost to the learned world. Times have since changed ;

changed ; thanks to the attention of ministers, who neglect nothing for the public good ; there is scarce a man of letters to whom manuscripts of all ages are not become a sort of property. Nothing would be wanting to the good fortune of this age, if, with such abundant succours, there could be found men, as laborious as Sauvage, to take advantage of them ; for, I have not a doubt, -but that, if he had had the manuscripts we possess, he would have given us an excellent edition of Froissart.

The number of those known at this day is so considerable, that, after the Bible and the Fathers, I do not believe there is any work of which there have been so many copies ; which shews the great esteem it has been held in during every

every age. In the single national library there are upwards of thirty volumes in folio, which contain separately some one of the four books into which this History is divided. The numbers 6760, 8317, 8318, 8319, 8320, 8324, 8331-2, 8332, 8334, 8335 and 36 joined together, 8334; and the numbers of the manuscripts of Colbert, united with those of the nation, 15, 85, and 231, include the first volume. The numbers 8321, 8330, 8333, 8337, and 8338, added together with those of Colbert, 16, and 86, compose the second volume. The numbers 8325, 8328, 8337, and 8338, added to those of Colbert, 87, and 232, the third volume. The numbers 8329, 8331, 8341, 8344, added

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ed together, and that of Colbert, 17, compose the fourth volume.

I should extend this Essay to too great a length if I was to describe the form, the age, the titles, the omissions, or imperfections, and other singularities, which distinguish these manuscripts. In regard to other and more essential differences, I shall say in general, that the greater part consist in transpositions of some articles, changes, additions or retrenchments of words, of omissions sometimes considerable ; abbreviations of several chapters, or of many events ; vague transitions, useless recapitulations of the foregoing chapters ; certain phraseology, which, like formulas, are repeated in every page ; and some interpolations of the copyists, which, serving only to swell

Swell out the volume, have been wisely curtailed by Sauvage in his printed edition. I will not quote any other example but the passage; where, speaking of the affection of Edward III. for the Princess of Haynault, whom he married, he says, “ a fine spark of love “ therefore struck him ;” to which the copyist adds these words, “ which Ma- “ dame Venus sent him by Cupid the “ god of love.” However, among these frivolous additions, there may have been some of importance, which it would be proper to search for in those parts that offer any difficulty, or in those articles which demand a serious discussion.

After these general observations, I will say one word of the principal singularities which I have noticed in some of these

MSS. Those of the numbers 8317, and 15 of Colbert, are remarkable for the correction which has been put on their margins in the article that mentions Philip de Valois's accession to the Crown of France. The same hand has also added to this last manuscript a note, which is written on one of the blank leaves which precede the Chronicle:

“ Two verses which the Peers of France
 “ sent to King Edward of England, at
 “ the time he disputed the succession to
 “ the Crown of France.

“ Credo Regnorum qui cupis esse duorum

“ Succedant mares huic regno non mulieres *.”

In

* To re-establish the measure and the sense of the first verse, one must, I think, add the word Rex: regnorum qui Rex cupis esse duorum. And

to

In number 8318, one reads in the same hand-writing with the manuscript, that it was given to John Duke of Berry the 8th November, 1407, by William Boifratier, Master of Requests, and Counsellor to this Prince. If it is the same which has since been given by M. de Chandenier to M. le Laboureur, as this last believed, it would be rendered the more precious from this circumstance, that there would be found in it very considerable differences, that

to make Edward feel the application, one may, instead of Credo, read Crede, or Credito, of which Credo is perhaps an abbreviation. With regard to the second, the number of syllables are there which an hexameter verse requires; and that should be sufficient not to quarrel with the measure.

ST. PALAYE.

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he says he has observed in this manuscript, from the printed copies, and more especially from that of Sauvage; or it would convince us of the falsity of this imputation, which appears to me very suspicious.

But as the copy of M. le Laboureur, as he himself informs us, contained miniatures representing the principal events of the History, and that the one which Boifratier presented to the Duke of Berry does not contain any, it is certain that it cannot be the same. Although the miniatures, head-pieces, capital letters illuminated and embossed with gold, in the MS. 8319, are of great beauty; it must, nevertheless, yield in this respect to number 8320,

from which much may be learnt regarding warlike customs, ceremonies, dresses, and other points of antiquity. The Reverend Father Montfaucon has taken from them the prints of the entry of Queen Isabella of France, and the arrest of the King of Navarre, which he has inserted in his "Monuments François." Notwithstanding this I believe, that in these miniatures, which are not, at the most, earlier than the middle of the fifteenth century, the Painter has confounded the dresses of his own age with those of the times whose history he was painting.

One sees at the beginning of several MSS. the author represented differently dressed, sometimes as a Canon, with his surplice

surplice and *aumusse* * ; sometimes in a purple robe, presenting his work to the King of France, or to some other Prince, seated on his throne, and crowned. The King of England is known by his robe embroidered with leopards in the number 8331-2, and the Queen of England in number 15 of Colbert's collections.

The most ancient of all the manuscripts of the first volume are the numbers 8318 and 8331-2, which appear to me to be of the end of the fourteenth century : and though many things are deficient in each of them, their antiquity ought to give them the preference. I have the same opinion respecting the

* *Aumusse* is a sort of bracelet of fur, which Canons wear on their arms, when dressed. I cannot find any English word to translate it.

MS. number 8333, being the most ancient of the second volume; though it does not seem to me to have been written earlier than the middle of the fifteenth century. The number 8321 is a continuation of number 8320; there are fewer miniatures, but they are equally beautiful; which is the only merit they have; for otherwise they are, properly speaking, but an extract of Froissart, and frequently many chapters are omitted together.

Number 16, which is the same writing as number 15, of which it is a continuation, contains, besides the second volume, a part of the third, as far as these words of the 44th chapter, page 151 of the edition of Sauvage: "Thus was broken off the expedition by sea at this time;" to which it adds,

adds, " which cost the kingdom of
 " *France C. M. francs, thirty times*
 " counted."

Number 8330 has for title, " The
 " third volume of the Chronicles of
 " Froissart;" although it contains but
 the second. By a similar mistake one
 reads, at the end of number 8325, which
 concludes the third volume, " here ends
 " the second volume of the Chronicles
 " of Froissart." This MS. which is but
 of the middle of the fifteenth century,
 is that in which the language of old
 times is the most preserved: perhaps it
 has been copied from some other more
 antient and better than those which
 remain to us. There is at the end
 some circumstances concerning Frois-
 sart, which are also in the MSS. 8328

and 232, and which are not in the printed copies. It is more from the antiquity of the style, that makes me consider the MS. 8329, although scarce earlier than the end of the fifteenth century, as the best we have for the fourth volume. One finds in it, as in the numbers 8331, 8341, 42, and 17, two important additions. The first is the preface, which I have noticed in the life of Froissart; the second terminates the whole of his Chronicle, when the author, towards the end, speaking of the death of Richard, that he would not enter into any detail of it, from want of having sufficient information. The addition is a sort of letter, true or false; which is addressed to him, and by which he is informed of all the particulars; such

such as had been written by a man worthy of belief, who was then in England. The manner with which this fact is related has not been forgotten by the English historians, who have mentioned the different rumours which had gone abroad on this subject.

Number 17 seems to have been written by the same hand as 15 and 16, and the three added to the MS. of the third book, which is wanting, made perhaps the work complete.

Under the number 169 of the Coislin library, at present in that of St. Germain-des-Prez, are comprehended four volumes, three of which are of the same hand-writing; that is to say, of the middle of the fifteenth century, containing the first, the third, and last book of

Froiffart. The fourth, which is of the same writing, but more beautiful, is another copy of the last book, with the addition which I have just mentioned, concerning the death of Richard.

M. Mahudel has communicated to me a MS. of the beginning of the fifteenth century, without a title, and which may have been thought written by Froiffart; but it is only a very succinct abridgement, in which has been preserved, as much as possible, the original text of the Historian until the end of the first volume, where the abridgement ceases. It is divided into six books, of which the two first end with these words: “ Here finishes the first (the second) book of
 “ this second volume of the Chronicles
 “ of England, and consequently the
 “ twentieth

“venth (the eighth) of the four volumes *parciaulx*.” One reads also at the end of the sixth, “Here finishes the second volume of the Chronicles of England”

This MS. probably made part of four volumes of a compilation of a History of England, divided each into six books; such nearly as our Chronicles of St. Denys. The first volume would have contained events anterior to Froissart; and as the second, which we have, includes an abridgement of his first volume, one may presume that the two following would, in like manner, have contained that of the three other volumes, and perhaps also the history of the times posterior to them.

This

This abridgement, however, is the same to that of La Chaux, which Sauvage has made use of; I discover the marks by which he has pointed it out, with exception of the first leaf, which may have been lost since that time.

To this great number of MSS. others must be added, which contain only very short abridgements of the Chronicle of Froissart; and which are to be found in the national library, among the MSS. of the Colbert collection. Such are the numbers 169, which includes part of the first and second volumes abridged; 258, nearly conformable to the foregoing: but where they have added at the end four pages, containing “The tenor
“ of the Letters of alliance of France
“ with

“with Scotland” in 1379, with the names of those Lords, as well Scots as French, who signed the Treaty; and 2444, which comprehends the abridgement of the four volumes. This is preceded by a preface, wherein the abreviator having said he should follow Froissart “chapter by chapter,” adds, “and because this same Master John “Froissart has not made an Index to “his first book; and by means of the “Index to a book one may, at one “glance, see those parts which one “may be desirous to read; I have re- “solved to divide this first book into “one hundred and twenty-seven chap- “ters.”

We see nothing in these MSS. which either establishes the pretended enmity
of

of Froissart against the French, nor which justifies the accusation brought against Sauvage of having altered the text of his Historian. But a magnificent MS. at Breslaw furnishes, according to some writers, an incontestable proof of it. The learned world, say they, believe they have an entire Froissart; it has been grossly deceived by Sauvage, who has not preserved the tenth part of it in his edition. One may reply to this charge; 1st, That Sauvage will be always exempt from reproach, since he has given us the text of Froissart, such as he had seen it in the known copies of his time. 2dly, That the description they give us of the miniatures of this MS. of Breslaw, makes us believe that it cannot be much older than towards the
end

end of the fifteenth century, and that, consequently, it is but of very moderate authority. In short, after the agreement of so many other MSS. of which many even have been written in England, or destined for that country, since the author is represented as offering his book to the King and Queen of England, it will not be easy to persuade the world that the single MS. of Bressay contains alone such very considerable differences. At least it becomes our prudence to suspend our judgement, until they shall have published the MS. itself, or some of those passages which are said to have been retrenched. One cannot too eagerly press the possessors of it to allow the publick to participate of a treasure so infinitely precious to the lovers of History.

History.

History. If, hitherto, we have been in an error, we will cheerfully turn back; and there is not a man of letters possessing sense, who, laying aside all national interest, would not ardently desire to have the Chronicles of Froissart, such as they came from the hands of the author. Many MSS. of Froissart are to be found in the libraries of foreign countries. There is one in the library of the Cathedral of Tournay, according to the report of several Flemish Librarians*; three in England, according to the ca-

* M. de St. Palaye is ignorant how rich this country is in MSS. of Froissart. There are many magnificent ones in the British Museum, at Oxford, Cambridge, and in other public and private libraries. I have in my library not less than six; but not one is a complete History.

talogue of MSS. in that kingdom; which also mentions some manuscript notes collected by Mr. Ashmole; and others again, which may be seen in the new Catalogue of MSS. by Father Morfauon.

Besides the antient abridgements of Froissart, Sleidan, full of admiration for this Historian, and anxious that the utility which may be drawn from him should be common to all ages and nations, made in 1537 a Latin abridgement, which was afterwards translated into French and English by P. Golin, in 4to. London, 1608.

In a preface, or epistle, which precedes the Latin edition, the author recommends the study of the History of France above all others, and particularly that of Froissart, whose candour
 he

he praises, and whom he only finds fault with for being sometimes too minute in his military details, and in his conversations with Princes. Foreign writers have accused Sleidan of not having composed this abridgement with the disinterestedness and fidelity that was to have been expected from a man of so great a reputation, and to have wished to favour the French too much; to have passed over the most brilliant actions of the English, where he quits the sense of his author, in writing otherwise than Froissart had done: this last reproach does not seem to me founded. With regard to omissions, he has taken that liberty which an abbreviator ought to be allowed, to attach himself chiefly in extracting what he thinks suitable for his purpose;

purpose; and that Sleidan, who at the time was living in France with Frenchmen, may, without any want of candour, have attached himself principally to those facts which concerned them. It will not be so easy to justify Belleforêt, who, giving a French abridgement of Froissart, has contented himself with translating literally Sleidan, without ever mentioning the author whom he translated.

The English, whom the reading of Froissart interests in so particular a manner, have in their language a translation of the Chronicles of Froissart, composed by Sir John Bouchier, Lord Berners, by order of King Henry VIII. and printed towards the end of his reign. There is also one in Flemish, printed

by Guerrit Vander Loo, in folio; without counting that in the same tongue which Voffius had seen in manuscript.

I shall not say any-thing of these translations, not having met with either. That of Bouchier is, they say, more correct than the French editions, in regard to proper names * ; this must, however, be understood to mean English

* I am sorry I must contradict M. de St. Palaye, in his opinion of Lord Berners's translation. Had it been as he imagines, I should not have attempted to offer a new translation to the publick: but, so far from being correct as to names, he mangles them nearly as bad as old Froissart. I cannot flatter myself with having succeeded to my own satisfaction, although I have taken every possible pains to make it as complete as the difficulties would allow me.

names. The Flemish translation must have the same advantage with regard to proper names, and names of places in Flanders. They may both be of great utility to whoever should wish to give a good edition of Broissart.



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