

been accidental, while both are really inaccurate. Our object will be attained, however, if, in consequence of what we have written, the necessity of a joint employment of the two processes of observation and *a priori* reasoning, is more clearly kept in view in future discussions of the subject. What educational system will prove itself the best, it is impossible to predict; but that the best will ultimately prevail, when the "struggle for life" between the various kinds of schools is ended, does not admit of a doubt. Meanwhile we protest against a resuscitation of the policy of "levelling-up," which has been finally exploded in reference to ecclesiastical establishments, and its application to education. We claim for private schools no State support obtained by fresh taxation, nor a share in endowments already existing, but simply that recognition of their importance which they justly demand as their due.

C 4

ART. II.—THE CHANSON DE ROLAND.

Le Chanson de Roland, texte critique accompagné d'une traduction nouvelle et précédé d'une Introduction Historique.
Par LÉON GAUTIER. Tours. 1872.

IN quo prælio Eggihardus, regiæ mensæ præpositus, Anselmus comes palatii, et *Hruodlandus* Britannici limitis præfectus, cum aliis compluribus interficiuntur." This sentence of Eginhard, the courtier and chronicler of Charles the Great, is the only line in all history that contains the name of Roland. Yet a later writer of the next reign, known as "L'Astronome," might well say of the hero and his peers, "quorum quia nomina vulgata sunt, dicere supersedi." Legend is capricious and has her favourites, who are not those of history; phantoms that have secured a renown as real and as immortal as the real men among whom posterity sees them move. Thus, three centuries after his death at Roncevaux, it was the song and the name of Roland that were chanted at Hastings, when Taillefer rode out before the Norman line. He has become the mediæval Achilles, "risen invulnerable from the stream of Lethe, not of Styx," a figure at which Time can throw no dart. Even the glory of Charles pales before that of the Warden of the March of Brittany; the great Emperor becomes like Arthur or Agamemnon, a crowned shadow, remote, withdrawn, while the epic of the heroic age of the West is "La Mort Roland." His name has gone out to the ends of the earth, and wherever he passes, he leaves traces of sword-blows, like thunder-strokes; and footsteps more than human.

The immense gorge that splits the Pyrenees under the towers of Marboré was cloven at one blow of Roland's blade Durandal ; Francis I. lifted the stone of his sepulchre at Blayes, and marvelled, like Virgil's labourer, at those mighty bones of ancient men. Italy is full of relics of his renown, his time-worn statue guards the gate of the Cathedral at Verona ; Pavia shows his lance, and at Rome Durandal is carven on a wall of the street Spada d'Orlando. In Germany he rides through the forests, melancholy as Dürer's mysterious knight ; on the Rhine he built the tower of Rolandseck, and distant echoes of him are heard in vaguest tradition through India to the snows of Tartary. In Paradise Dante beholds his soul, with that of Charles, pass, "a double star, among the central splendours of the Blessed."*

How did so wide and permanent a glory gather round this figure ? what portion of his legend is historical, what mere fantasy ; what the shreds of old mythology, fallen from the limbs of forgotten gods of the North, and woven into a garment whereby we see this forgotten man ? M. Léon Gautier has done much to present clearly and so far to solve, the difficulties of these questions, in his new and splendid edition and translation of the Chanson de Roland. M. Gautier's task has been a long one, fulfilled with a conscientious love of the Iliad of the warlike West. But before the poem itself can be enjoyed, there is much to be done : an iron and rugged language to be mastered, a history of the growth of the epic to be studied, a conception of the society whereof it is the one literary charm and treasure to be attained to.

The first part of this labour M. Gautier has made light enough. He furnishes a text, based on that of the oldest, the Bodleian MS., which is not earlier than the middle of the eleventh, nor later than the first part of the twelfth century. This text is aided by collations of the Venice and Paris MSS., and is printed more in accordance with the best grammar of the period than that which the careless scribe of the Oxford version chose to employ. Further, M. Gautier has filled up the lacunæ of the Oxford text with *remaniements* from the foreign sources, translated *back* into the earlier style of the Bodleian copy ; but these hazardous emendations are confined among the notes. In the translation he has avoided the pedantry of M. Genin, who turned the style of the eleventh into that of the sixteenth century—and has given a line for line version in modern French prose.

Thus the epic can be read, but scarcely as yet appreciated.

* Paul de S. Victor, "Hommes et Dieux."

There are works of art, masterpieces in their way, which appeal in vain to unaccustomed eyes or ears. The impassive attitude of an Egyptian Sphinx, the archaic lines of Æginetan sculpture, the low relief of early Italian marbles, the thin luxuriance and artifice of the age of the Pompadour, are enigmas to all who cannot see in these the forces of society, of thought, of life, of which they were the fruit, the ultimate expression. We must have lived in imagination with the old Egyptians, in a changeless land of peoples obedient to the dead; we must have felt the struggle in the Greek or Florentine heart, between a keen new sense of the grace of things, and a sense, not less constraining, of the religious traditions in art; we must have fled the time carelessly with Manon Lescaut, passing delicately over the volcanic crust of society, before certain lovely creations of art can yield the intimate secret of their loveliness. Indeed, of what art is this not true, save of the mirror which the Academy or the Salon holds up to the dress and manners of the day? And even this in a hundred years will require a historical attitude, of a mind as keen as that of Charles Baudelaire, to see the beauty of artifice and decadence, before it will find an admirer. The Frankish epic of Roland is the only beautiful thing in literature that survives from an age that, save to one or two historians, seems to have only the darkness, and none of the fruitfulness, of Chaos and of Night. We can only admire it, when we find that that epoch was indeed heroic, and not the scene of a "mere fighting and flocking of kites and crows." Here then is a poem of more than four thousand lines in length, telling of the events of two or three days, and giving to these events colossal proportions altogether unwarranted by history. How far is the action historical? Was there ever a battle with the Saracens, a heavy discouragement for Charles, fought in the passes of the Pyrenees? Are the Paladins mere fictitious and gigantic ancestors of the later feudal houses, or exaggerated pictures of real peers; or have the stories of old gods been attached to new names, and is Roland with his sword of sharpness and wondrous horn, the Norse Hrodo, or a myth of the Sun; is his love, Lady Alde, one of the maidens of the Dawn? Next, how did the epic come to have the shape it has, rough indeed, yet massive, in verse too ponderous to be lyrical. It cannot be a mere collection of people's songs, it has not the light measure of the Kalevala, or of the Romaic Tragoudia, or of the Scotch or Provençal ballad. Is it then the work of some monk, who in that grey dawn of the first Renaissance may have tasted of the stolen waters of the Magician Virgilius? Or is it the song of a wandering jongleur, chanted in village streets? Or is it only one out of the countless crowd of feudal romances, composed

by known authors, for a kind of literary public, between the eleventh and the fourteenth centuries? Probably it falls under none of these descriptions. Not lyrical, with no touch of classical influence, not vulgar in tone, the poem is a true *chanson de geste*, a family lay, grown together under the hands of a succession of the minstrels nurtured by a noble house, and ultimately it has received written form at the hands of one of these.

Again, what manner of men were they who found in the Paladins their heroes, and in this poem their epic? How much memory had they of the Roman culture, and of the Olympian gods? what did they know of the new monotheism of Arabia, what survivals of heathenism did they retain? What beginnings of chivalry were there among them, what remains of barbarism? In what were they like, and in what unlike the sons of the Achæans, among whom the older and lovelier epics came into existence? Some of these questions need to be considered before the poem is approached, some of them the poem itself answers.

First, with regard to what Mr. Max Müller calls the "grits of local history," which sometimes exist at the centre of a myth, and refuse to yield to the keenest instruments of the mythologist. Here there rises one form, as later another, of the endless Homeric question. In the case of Homer no one can doubt that there was a great empire at Argos, a great capital at Mycenæ, and few can refuse to see in the Iliad traces of a war more human than the struggle between light and darkness. Yet it is only here and there a student of Professor Blackie's type who believes in a real Achilles, a real Helen; and most readers must rest in the opinion that the prehistoric civilization of Argos left a genuine though vague memory, which became a nucleus for myth and tradition of various date and origin, and scarcely of estimable historical value. Just so it is with the historical part of the Frankish epic. We know that in 778 the rear-guard of Charles's army was cut off by mountaineers in the Pyrenees, as it returned from an unsuccessful attempt on Saragossa. But we have no reason to believe that the Saracens aided in the attack, and we are certain that the prodigious feats of Roland and his companions, the echoes of the "dread horn," the edge of Durandal, the angelic apparition, are as unhistorical as the vision of Pallas to Achilles. Ganelon too, the traitor, is of the race of Ægistheus, and the whole epic is full of the common-places and stock characters of primitive imagination. Yet it does not follow that because much is impossible and supernatural, and the tale one of defeat and death, the poem is a mere version of a Solar myth.

The school of mythologists who see all tradition in the sun

as Malebranche saw all things in God, have not spared the glory of Roland. There are two attacks, one scientific and one popular, on the hero's identity. The first is the theory of Dr. Hugo Meyer, according to whom the Chanson sets forth a myth blended of memories of the twilight of the gods, and of the real disaster at Roncevaux. Thus the name of the traitor Ganelon is resolved into Gamal, gamal is translated old, Old is an epithet of the mythical Wolf of the Edda, the Wolf is Twilight, for Twilight is grey and swallows the light. This equation worked out, it is plain to any unbiassed mind that Roland, the foe of Ganelon, must be the God Hrodo fighting the Wolf Fenris. In point of fact, Roland does not fight Ganelon, who is his stepfather, and certainly regards him in a stepfatherly way. The only real refutation of the solar theory, as M. Gaston Paris has observed, is a parody, or a sneer. Any battle, the life of any hero, may be twisted into a parable of day and night. But M. Paris has proved that in this case Ganelon is saved from being the wolf by the laws of language, which do not permit the conversion of Gamal into Guenes, or Ganelon. Besides, there is no *à priori* reason why a Christian and Frankish aristocracy of the ninth century should desert their own stock of Christian mythology for that of Scandinavia. Mr. Cox, another advocate of the Sun, has nothing to say of Hrodo, or Gamal, but thinks that Roland's sword of sharpness, his invulnerable strength, his horn, and his lady Alde, who dies at the tidings of his death, identify him with Herakles, Achilles, Sigurd, Arthur, all the heroes who are absorbed in the centre of our system. Perhaps the supernatural element in the epic is more easily accounted for by the usual, and apparently *necessary* forces of the primitive imagination. Whatever the will may be, in primitive man the imagination is bond, and the seemingly wildest fancies of remote races go an unvarying round of events, characters, very often of verbal formulæ. As to the supernatural occurrences, Guibert de Nogent, or any chronicler of the eleventh century, tells stranger marvels. Roland's arms are not those of the Sun, the *lucida tela diei*, they are gifts of no god more celestial than Wunsch or Wish, the old German God of Desire. Whatever the childlike imagination craves, caps of darkness, *nebel-cappe*, shoes of swift-ness, swords of sharpness—with these it equips its favourite heroes. The Chanson is just as historic as the Iliad; it tells of a war in which little is certain save that the contending parties were great hostile races.

Supposing that three centuries were enough for the one tragic incident in Charles's career to bear fruit in the popular imagination, it would certainly be sung of in the ballads of the people, and the question occurs, Is the Chanson a *pastiche* of popular

songs? And here the likeness to the Homeric controversy recurs, for the Homeric epics, too, are felt to have *some* relation to the ballad style. That ballads existed among the Franks there can be no doubt at all. Charles himself is known to have collected the ancient volks-lieder of Germany. In the biography of S. Faro, a work of the ninth century, mention is made of a ballad on one of Clotaire's victories—a ballad sung by girls in the dance. The biographer of S. William of Gellone, too, writing in the eleventh century, talks of the *chori juvenum* who sung of his hero. A yet earlier, and still extant ballad, is that of *Donna Lombarda*, Rosamond, the wife of Alboin. These ballads were contemporary with the events they recorded, and no doubt such ballads must have contained the popular view of the disaster at Roncevaux. These would be portions of truly popular poetry, of that spontaneous song which in Corsica and Modern Greece, and Russia still—as of old all over Europe—formed the culture of the people.* These songs in all lands express delight at the return of spring, or record the aspect in which, as through deeps of still water, some tragical event of the moving world of men appears to the indolent eyes of peasants; or they give voice to joy or sorrow at bridal or burial, or weave into melody some one of the primitive stock of folk-stories. These are all of the nature of true popular poetry, but these must not be confused with epic. It is this mistake which has led to attempts at Homeric translation in ballad metre and ballad commonplace. The epic is of its nature not popular, but aristocratic and artistic, and sings of the ancestors of a settled aristocracy. Thus in Greece the Lityerses song, or the Rhodian song of the swallow, was popular; the aristeia of Diomedes, or of Achilles, were primarily the property (the *chansons de geste*), of the houses of Crete or Larissa. How, then, was the epic formed? how was the advance made from the lyric versicle to the ornate chronicle in verse? Looking at the epics either of Greece or France, it is plain that they contain survivals of the characteristic formulæ of ballads. These are textual repetitions of speeches, recurring epithets, as "the green grass," "the salt sea foam;" in Homer, ὄρεα σκιόεντα; in *Roland*, *coupes d'or cler*, *L'Emperes à la barbe chenuë*; also the curious practice of lavishing gold and silver on common articles of everyday use. One might say, then, that artistic poetry grew like the manor out of the folk-land, like religion out of the worship of recognised ancestral spirits, instead of strange objects at large; that even so in art, an aristocracy found popular poetry a

* Cf. Mr. Ralston's "Songs of the Russian People;" M. Rathéry's article in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*; M. Nigra's and M. Pitré's "Popular Songs of Italy."

field unenclosed, and employed ministers of its own—retainers, who became a profession, with a hereditary collection of artistic rules, to perpetuate the memory of forefathers. These minstrels would naturally retain much of the simple formulæ of the folk-song; but with practice, with an audience that had plenty of leisure, would add to the early simplicity the length, fire, continued majesty of the epic. This would, lastly, be written out, and become a model, from which a later class of singers degenerated. If this account of the growth of a *chanson de geste* be a correct one, we need not look, like M. Gautier, for fragments of ballads in the separate stanzas. M. Gautier, like many Homeric critics, thinks he can discern various short lays in the Dream of Charles, the Death of Alde, the battle-scene, and so on. But these, with their dramatic propriety, as necessary links in the poem, cannot have been composed as chance snatches of song. The girls of Lorraine in the present century still sung of Ogier, but the ancient ballad was a light lyric, in nothing like the stanza of Roland.*

Who then may have been the genius, the *Homeros*, who gave unity to the traditions of Roncevaux? Two answers at least may be rejected. He was not one of the lower jongleurs, who got his living by singing through villages. A village audience could have neither time nor appreciation to give to such a poem; though in Finland, through the enforced idleness of the long winter nights, the peasantry have developed the Kalevala, an epic of their own. Lastly, the composer of the "Chanson de Roland" can scarcely, as a writer in the *Quarterly Review* supposes, "have been acquainted with the great models of Roman literature."† Where the feudal approaches the classic epic, it is by virtue of its native force and heroic quality, not by the patches of mythological allusion and faded rhetoric with which the contemporary, Abbo, garnishes his verses on the siege of Paris by the Normans. Nor is the religious tone at all that of the learned monk. What monks made of Roland we see in the chronicle of the Pseudo Turpin, where the hero is a military pietist, not the Baron who holds up in death his gauntlet to God.

We may set aside, then, the village jongleur, and the monk of letters, and consider "Roland" a real "family song," *chanson de geste*. Looking further down history, we find a school of cyclic poets in France, occupied with glorifying the heroic houses of Lorraine, of Rousillon, at the expense of Charles, the ancestor of the royal line, and the typical enemy of the feudal revolt.

* "Romancéro Champenois."

† *Quarterly Review*, vol. cxx., p. 287.

In the hands of this school Charles is degraded, just as the characters of Menelaus and Odysseus were by the poets of republican Greece.

"Roland" is to such a poem as "les fils d'Aymon," as the "Iliad" is to the "Orestes" of Euripides. Even in Roland the king is not the most prominent figure; but as the influence of the *leudes* of the later Carlovingians grew stronger, he becomes the *fainéant* that even the latest of his race in Laon never were.

Later still, the cyclic epics lost all hold on history, became poems of fantasy, like "Huon of Bordeaux," the mediæval Odyssey. Still later came Celtic and Provençal influences, the chivalry and faërie of the court of Arthur, and Roland was only remembered in the chap books of peasants, and the burlesque of Ariosto. Other poems of the early date must have existed, for they are referred to in the "Chanson" just as the "Iliad" refers to lost songs; but of this class, the great Chanson alone remains to testify to a heroic age and an epic genius among the Franks.

So far, there is a tolerably complete parallel between the Homeric and the mediæval epos. Both retain traces and survivals of an earlier *genre* of poetry, the folk-song; of both, the ultimate composer is unknown, both glorify an aristocracy co-existing with a heroic kingship.

In the epic the strange identity of human nature is once more revealed. Here, after the ages of classic civilization and of Christian faith, an epoch as simple and hardy, noble and child-like as the Greek heroic age, is reborn, under changed stars indeed, and on ground strewn with the ruins of empires, and amid confusion of broken lights. This recurrence of the past is the beauty of the poem, "all of iron" as it is, as the King Didier said of the hosts of Charles. Here once more is the Homeric king, "here are the Franks of France," like the sons of the Achæans, here are quarrels like those in the leaguer of Troy, and the wrath of Ganelon sends many souls of heroes to be among "the holy flowers of Paradise." God is the spectator of this fight, and angels and devils take sides with Franks and Saracens, for the war had a sacred character reflected on it from the religious indignation that caused the first crusade. Yet, sacred as is the war, the military character is the more prominent, the song is the voice of the free life of the Franks, who have changed Odin for Christ, without any of the fear or ecstasy of the monk, but simply as men recognising a higher form of the God of battles. The courtesy of the North is here with all its gravity, not even Ganelon returns a railing answer; but this courtesy is the natural growth of reverence from freeman to freeman, and has none of the later refinement of chivalry.

Love, too, so soon to be the god of Western poetry, is kept out of view—a power unthought of in time of war—and though the lady Alde dies at the news of Roland's death, he wears in battle no favours of hers, or of any lady's.

The artistic form of the epic is a series of *laissez*, or stanzas of varying length ; of lines of five feet, each *laisse* having but one rhyme or assonance throughout. M. Littré has translated a book of Homer into this metre, not without success ; and an idea of its value for Homeric imitation may be gathered from this fragment by M. L. Gautier :—

“ Oiez chançon plus bele n'iert chantée
Ce est d'Achille à la chiere membrée
Qui tant duel fist en Grèce la loée
Par qui tant amne en enfer fust logée
Tant corps es chiens gite comme cuirée.”

The poet starts at once *in medias res*, there is no invocation of any muse. Charles is sitting on his golden throne, judging his host, under a pine-tree ; around the warriors are playing chess or draughts, like the suitors on the threshold of Odysseus. Then comes Blancandrin to the Emperor of “ the long beard in white flower,” with offers of peace and treaty from Marsile, sultan of the miscreants. Marsile will give hostages, and follow the Emperor to Aachen. Here Roland speaks out, and would have Charles refuse all parley with heathens who once already had slain his envoys. This is enough to make Ganelon, Roland's stepfather, reply *moult fierement* on the other side. From this quarrel, the *μῆνις* of Ganelon takes occasion. As the barons wrangle Charles speaks, the Emperor is still lord of his warring knights, *Franceis si taisent* at his word. He decides to send an envoy to Marsile, and the choice falls on the reluctant Ganelon, who now thinks himself but a slain man. As he mounts to ride away with Blancandrin, he already meditates treason. “ Seigneurs,” he says, “ ye shall have news of this sending.” Yet his heart is softened a moment, thinking of la belle France, and of his son at home.

“ Baldwin mon filz que vous savez
E lui aidez, e pur seignior le tenez.”

There is even something noble and admirable in Ganelon's bearing. He scarcely disguises his intention to play the traitor, a part fatal in his house, as other crimes in the house of Thyestes. “ In hell we are a great house,” says a traitor of his line, in a later epic, and in the hostile camp Ganelon acts like one who is treacherous through no coward fear. He cries aloud to Marsile, “ Be thou baptized, oh king, to Aachen shalt thou be haled,

and there receive judgment, and there shalt thou die in shame and mean estate." Marsile laid his hand on his spear, it seemed as if the envoy were to be slain with his missive unread. Then Ganelon having been as insulting as his code required, produced Charles's letter, and as Marsile read it, set his back against a pine, and half drew his sword. Even the ranks of miscreants could scarce forbear to cheer: *Noble Barun ad ci*, they said. He is indeed a fair knight, broken loose from the central duty, the necessary loyalty of feudalism.

Marsile found the letter less fiery than the manner of its delivery; he spoke softly to Ganelon, and offered him a present of sable skins, a Homeric rather than a chivalrous form of satisfaction. "When will Charles the Old be weary of war?" "Never while his nephew Roland and the Peers are on ground," says Ganelon; and he advises the Sultan to send tribute and hostages, but withal to lay a great ambush in the passes of the Pyrenees. Then Ganelon swears to treason on the relics of his sword, and returns to camp "en l'albe, si cum li jurz esclairet," bringing the keys of Saragossa, hostages and treasures.

Before the army sets out for home, Charles has an evil dream, that Ganelon seized his spear in the pass of the hills. The king wakes, and weeps like Agamemnon or Achilles, the ready heroic tears. "Charles ne poet muer que de ses oilz ne plurt." By Ganelon's advice he assigns the rearguard to Roland, with Evrard de Rousillon, Turpin, and Oliver. Then the army broke up camp. "Black rocks they crossed, and dark valleys," till they came within sight of Gascony. Then again broke out the ready heroic tears, "at memory of their fiefs and fields and of their little ones, and gentle wives none was there who did not weep." There was forethought of evil in the hearts of the vanguard; in the rear, Oliver heard the footsteps of the gathering Pagans. "We shall have battle," he says. "God grant it," says Roland, "*que malvais chant de nus chantet ne seit.*" Never let bad ballad be sang of us. Then Oliver would have spoken evil of Ganelon, but Roland would not hear it; "*mis parastre ist, ne voeill que mot en suns.*" Nor will Roland listen to Oliver when he bids him blow his magic horn, for aid against miscreants.

"In sweet France I would lose my fame."

The heathen approach, Turpin absolves the army; no elements of sacrament are there but grass and leaves. So in Threnakia the doomed company of Odysseus made hapless sacrifice, *φύλλα δρεψάμενοι τέρενα δρυὸς ὑψικόμοιο*. Then the Franks cried "Mount Joie;" and Aelroth, the nephew of Marsile, rode along the heathen line shouting taunts, and the mêlée began. Through all the scene of battle, the Frankish singer, like Scott

in the song of Flodden, "never stoops his wing." In this Homeric battle Roland drives his lance through breastplate and breast of Aelroth, Oliver casts down Fausseron, "Seigneur of the land of Dathan and Abiron," Turpin slays King Corsablyx. Spears and axes sound like hammers on heroic mails; the fight goes well for the Franks. "Gente est nostre bataille," cries Oliver. Siglorel falls, the "enchanter whom Jupiter had led through hell." Sathan hath his soul. Lances are broken and thrown away. Oliver draws his sword Haute claire—it is no battle to smite in with a spear truncheon. Roland draws Durandal; the peers cut their way through the Saracens, as Cortez's men through the white clouds of Aztec spearmen. But the innumerable hosts of the miscreants close in, the heathen reserves come up, the ranks of the barons are thinned. And now would Roland fain sound his horn, but Oliver mocks him. "Wilt thou not lose thy fame in sweet France? Ah, never now shalt thou lie in the arms of Alde my sister." "Nay, sound," said Turpin, "we shall have burial at our friends' hands, and be no wolves' spoil." Then the hero blew till blood started from his mouth, and the echo of that dread horn wound through the passes of the hills, and rang above the tempest of wind, and the thunder, the wailing of nature, *la granz dulurs pur la mort de Roland*. Surely if there is anything of mythology in the legend of Roland it is here, where the heaven is darkened, and the veil of the heaven is rent, and the blind powers of the world cry, as for Baldur or Adonis. Charles heard the horn, and knew his nephew was in extremity, and knew the treason of Ganelon. So Ganelon was given to the cooks and camp-followers, to bind him and torment him. Meanwhile the battle raged on the Spanish side of the hills, "the black folk that had nothing white save the teeth," fell on the weary knights. Never shall they see *tere de France, mult dulz pais*. The Califf wounds Oliver to death, and is slain by the Paladin, whose eyes are now dimmed by blood and heat, and who strikes blindly, like John of Bohemia at Creçy. A blow even falls on Roland's crest, "*Sire cumpain faites le vos de gred,*" he asks, "did you strike me wilfully?" "Nay, for I hear thee, but see thee not, friend Roland, God help thee." Then Roland pardoned him before God, "*à icel mot l'un a l'autre ad clinet.*" With this courtesy they parted that had in life been true companions in arms, and in death were not long divided. Now Roland's horse was slain, and himself foredone with battle, and he gathered the corpses of the peers in a circle about the dying Bishop Turpin. The bishop crosses his hands, "*ses beles mains les blanches,*" his fair white hands, that shine out in the rough poem like a delicate *fleur de Paradis* from hewn Gothic work. They shall

all meet soon, he says, among the Holy Innocents. So Roland spoke his praise over Oliver, as Bors over the dead Sir Launcelot. But Oliver is honoured, not as "the curtiest knight that ever in hall did eat with ladies," but

" Pur Osbercs rompre et desmailler,
Epur proz domes tenir e cunseiller
En multe tere n'ot meillur chevaler."

Last, Roland lays himself down "sur l'erbe verte," and seeks to break the blade of Durandal lest it fall into the hands of unbelievers. Ten blows on the hard rock and on the Sardonyx stone fail to splinter the steel. "Ah, Durandal, how clear thou art and bright that shinest as the sun; with thee have I conquered lands and domains for Charles of the white beard. Yea, now for thee have I sorrow and heaviness, and would die sooner than see thee in pagan hands. Holy thou art, and lovely; in thy golden hilt is store of relics. How many kingdoms have I taken with thee, wherein Charles now rules!" Then he lay down on the green grass beneath a pine, and cast his sword and horn beneath his body. His face was turned to Spain, and many things came into his mind—sweet France, and the Barons of his house, and Charles his lord. He might not endure, but wept and groaned heavily. He stretched out to God the glove of his right hand; S. Gabriel took it from his grasp. Roland is dead; God have his soul in heaven. S. Michael of the Sea bare his spirit to Paradise.

The poem might well end with Roland's, as the Iliad with Hector's, death. But national pride requires that the Paynim should not triumph, and poetical justice demands the punishment of Ganelon. The sun stood still for Charles, as of old on Gilboah, and the heathen, calling on Termagaunt their god, were driven to Saragossa. They pass like a mist into the dark; the tired horses lie down and feed as they lie. Charles finds Roland's body with its face to the foe. In Saragossa, Marsile beats his image of Apollo, and casts the idol of Mahomet into a ditch. Clearly the poet's notion of the Arab monotheism was gathered previous to the Crusades, from some alien fetichism, and from memoirs of the degraded rulers of Olympus.

Next day was a day of battle. The king fought well in his place, *dient Franceis, Icist Reis ist Vassals, Mult bien i fiert Charles li Reis*, an angel stood by him. Night fell softly. *Clere est la lune, et les esteiles flambiert*, when Charles marched into Saragossa. His second return was unmolested; but in Aachen the beloved of Roland waited for news of her lord. Alde "of the golden hair and the bright face," fell dead at Charles's feet. He would have given her rough comfort, and his

son for husband. Here only love enters the poem, "vierge comme la Mort." The part of woman in the Western world is not yet come.

With Alde's death all the interest of the Chanson ceases. Yet the last lines are dramatic. The grey king is musing alone; he says, *Deus, si peneuse est ma vie*, a vista opens of future wars without Roland's sword, of a hard end to a hard life, of Norman invaders and a tarnished fame, to the eyes of the weary emperor.

Ci falt le Geste que Tuoldus declinet. So ends the epic which Theroualde, whoever he was, wrote, or composed, or recited. New themes, chivalry, Arthur's Table, faerie, came in, "the newest songs are sweetest to men." When Ronsard and Voltaire sought subjects for epics they found them in a fictitious Francus, and that dubious hero, Henri IV. The later writer might well say that the French have not *la tête épique*. Whatever the conquering Franks possessed of weighty language, of simple heroism and grave imagination, they lost as they became one with the subject Celts and Latins.

The Chanson de Roland will probably always be for France, not a source of new and lofty poetry, but a rough literary curiosity, a thing to admire by practice and with reservations. The nation, like Sainte-Beuve, is more at home with the polished artifice of the Renaissance, or the passion of the Romantic school.

ART. III.—AN EARLY FRENCH ECONOMIST.

PIERRE LE PESANT DE BOISGUILBERT, or Boisguillebert, was the Civil and Criminal Lieutenant of the Balliage of Rouen towards the end of the seventeenth century, a rank about equivalent to that of President of the Civil Tribunal at the present day.

Beyond the fact that he was a grand-nephew of the great Corneille, and that he was a native of Normandy, presumably of a poor gentleman's family of Rouen, scarcely anything is known of his birth and parentage.

The Duc de St. Simon, in his well-known Memoirs, tells us that Boisguillebert, inspired with the profoundest sympathy for the woes of his country, and deeply disgusted with the incapacity and dishonesty of the officials who preyed upon her, resolved to wait upon Pontchartrain, the Controller General of Finance, in the hope of inducing him to listen to his plans of reform.