SOME NOTES ON TWO EARLY ROMANCES—HUON DE BORDEAUX AND MELUSINE ¹

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IT has long been common knowledge among bibliographers that there is an edition of *Huon de Bordeaux* bearing a date three years earlier than that mentioned as the first edition by Brunet; but the relation of this edition of 1513 to that of 1516 has not, as far as I know, been hitherto described. A brief account of these two editions, with a classification of all editions, may therefore be acceptable to members of the Bibliographical Society.

The two editions of 1513 and 1516 are for all ordinary purposes one and the same book; and a copy of either which had lost both title-page and colophon would require the closest scrutiny to decide to which edition it belonged. The type is the same; the woodcuts (with a single exception) the same; the page-wording and the placing of the cuts is throughout the same. In fact, it is evident that for the greater part of the book there was only one setting of the type. The points of difference are the following:

1. The title-page and the colophon.

(1513) LEs prouesses et faitz mer-/ueilleux du noble Huon de bordeaux per de france, duc/de guyenne. Nouuellemēt redige en bon francoys & im/prime par le congie et preuilege du Roy nostre sire cōme/il appert a la fin de la table de ce present liure.

[Below: woodcut of the Plumed Horseman.]

(f. clxxxviii recto:) ¶ Cy finissent les faitz et gestes/du noble Huon de bordeaux duc de/guyenne & per de france./

¹ Part of a paper read before the Bibliographical Society, December 1919.

Auecques/plusieurs aultres faitz & prouesses/daulcuns Princes regnans en son/temps. Nouuellemēt imprime a pa/ris par Michel le noir Libraire iure/en luniuersite de paris. Demourās/en la grant rue saint Jacques. Le-/quel a preuillege du Roy nostre sire/que nul autre que luy ne le peult im/primer ne faire imprimer autre que/luy et ses commys iusques a deux/ans finitz & acomplys a prendre du/io^r que ledict liure sera imprime qui/est le .xxvi. iour de nouembre mil. v/cens et treize.

[Below : M. le Noir's device.]

(1516) LEs prouesses et faitz mer-/ueilleux du noble Huon de bordeaulx per de france, duc de guy-/enne. Nouuellement redige en bon francoys et imprime par le/congie et preuillege du Roy nostre sire.

[Below : woodcut of the Plumed Horseman.]

(f. clxxxviii.) ¶ Cy finissēt les faitz et gestes du/noble Huon de bordeaulx duc de guy/enne et per de france. Auecques plu-/sieurs aultres faitz & prouesses daul/cuns Princes regnans en son temps/Nouvellement imprime a Paris le./xxiiii. iour de decēbre. Mil cinq cens/et seize. Pour Jehan Petit Libraire/Jure en Luniuersite de Paris. De/mourāt en la grāt rue saint Jaques.¹ ¶ Cum Preuilegio.

[Below : Petit's device.]

2. In 1513, the Table of Contents at the beginning is followed (sign. ā [vi] verso) by the 'preuilege', which occupies the whole page.

In 1516, the 'preuilege' does not appear; but its place is filled by a large woodcut of a bare-headed man on his knees presenting a volume to a king enthroned and crowned. This cut is found in other books of Michel and Philippe le Noir, e.g. the *Jardin de Plaisance*, s.d., and the *Illustrations de Gaulle*, 1524.

¹ This is according to the copy before me. In Brunet the words that follow the date are given as : par Michel le Noir.

3. In the rest of the book some fifteen leaves show perceptible points of difference. Even, however, where a page or a leaf carries some salient and unmistakable sign of new setting, as in words abbreviated or written in full, the general appearance of the page is most deceptively similar, and it is quite possible that other leaves than the fifteen I have observed may have been reset, reset to the point of facsimile. In a considerable number of cases, however, a lifted space-block, or a worn letter, or a marked irregularity of line offers sure evidence of the page being of the same impression.

All copies I have seen of the earlier of these two editions bear the name of Michel le Noir; but in the 1516 edition the name of his close ally and frequent coadjutor Jehan Petit appears in some copies instead of his own. This second edition was not issued till a full year after the expiration of the previous 'Privilège'; nor would it seem that any rival edition was even then threatening, as the next extant edition is the quarto issued by the widow of Jehan Trepperel, and must have appeared between 1522 and 1527—that is, at least six years later. I regret that I have not seen a copy of this edition, and cannot therefore give any account of it, or say what relation it bears in text or illustrations to Le Noir's.

These two Le Noir editions—for I think there is sufficient difference to justify the use of the often-abused word edition: to call them merely two issues would be rather misleading, in view of the reprinting of at least seventeen leaves and possibly more, and further in the absence of the Privilège in the second—these two editions are illustrated throughout with woodcuts altogether identical except for the additional cut taking the place of the Privilège, which makes the number in the second 88 instead of 87. There are only 14 repeats, so that there are respectively 73 and 74 separate cuts. Of these, twenty certainly, and perhaps one or two more, are special cuts designed for this work; and these are regrettably bad:

not the worst of the worst, such as the shameless atrocities found in the cheaper and later Paris Romances, but very decidedly poor work, inferior though conscientious in design, and correspondingly inferior in cutting. Yet of six of these poor things transfer-copies even worse appear in Denys Janot's later undated edition of the same Romance.

The cut on the title-page is the handsome and well-known cut of a Plumed Horseman. This fine cut appears in several of Le Noir's books, and this is not its first service; for it had been used eleven years before in the edition of *Beuves d'Antihonne* (Bevis of Hampton) published by Le Noir in 1502: I do not know of any earlier appearance.

The remaining illustrations are for the most part small cuts familiar in Le Noir's publications. They evidently belong to several different series, and all probably began life as illustrations to some particular work, to which it may some day be possible to trace them. But besides the smaller cuts there are six of larger size and more interesting. These six cuts (eleven with repeats) belong to the famous series illustrating the *Destruction de Troye le Grand* of Jacques Millet (a sort of Mystery-play in verse, founded on Colonna's Troy book), which was published at Paris by Jacques Bonhomme in 1484. Of this Troy book M. Claudin says 'It is one of the earliest and most remarkable books printed with woodcuts at Paris, the illustrations designed by a real artist, who has given a true character of life and movement to the persons represented.' Mr. Pollard, in the Pierpont Morgan Catalogue, agrees in this appreciation of these cuts, though he thinks that more than one artist and several cuts were employed on them. There were three editions of this work issued at Paris in the fifteenth century, the second and third being published by Vérard, into whose hands the books seem to have passed. After the edition of 1498 the cuts are not found again as a set, so far as I know. Whether some of them

perished with Vêrard's shop on the bridge that fell the next year we cannot tell; but of the complete set of 27 cuts about half are found promiscuously in books of a later date, and at least eleven of them appear after the death of Vêrard to have come into the possession or control of Le Noir, as they occur fairly frequently in books bearing his name.

The 1513 edition of *Huon de Bordeaux* is the earliest known, and is always presumed to have been the first printed. It may be pointed out, however, that the colophon states it to be 'nouvellement imprimé', words which usually imply a previous edition; and further that 1513 is a late date for the first appearance in print of such an important Romance; most of the other chief favourites, such as *Ogier le Danois* and the *Quatre Filz Aymon*, had been many years in print by this time, either at Paris or Lyons or both; and lastly, friend Michel le Noir was a publisher who followed rather than led, and almost all his publications were books which had already been successful with other publishers such as Vêrard or Trepperel. So much has been lost—so many early books exist only in single copies—that it seems more probable than improbable that there was an editio princeps, now lost, of *Huon de Bordeaux*.

Following these two editions of Le Noir come several without date, which can only be arranged and dated conjecturally, according to the time in which their various publishers are known or supposed to have been in business.

Of these, the first in order is probably that published by the widow of Jehan Trepperel, whose name appears alone in books between 1522 and 1527.¹ I have not seen this edition, of which there is no copy in the British Museum. The title and colophon are given in Brunet, and need not be reproduced here.

The undated editions of Olivier Arnoullet at Lyons and

¹ Harrisse, *Excerpta Columb.* Introd. p. xlviii.

Denys Janot at Paris may be provisionally arranged in this order, as the former published a book as early as 1525,¹ while according to Renouard, Denys Janot is only found at the address given in his *Huon de Bordeaux* after 1532. This latter is not mentioned in Brunet, but there is a copy in the British Museum. The colophon runs as follows :

‘Cy finissent les faictz et gestes du noble Huon de Bordeaux
deaulx Duc de Guyenne et Per de France. Auecques
plusieurs aultres faictz et Prouesses daulcuns princes regnans
en son temps. Nouuellement imprime a Paris par Denys
Janot demourant en la rue neufue nostre Dame a Lymaige
sainct Jehan Baptiste pres sainte Geneuiefue des Ardans.’

The woodcuts are all but one transfer-cuttings from those in the edition of 1513. There appear to be some ten or twelve, including two repeated. But eight pages are missing in the British Museum copy (signatures i and k).

The edition of Jean Bonfons, who published from 1547 to 1568, is almost certainly later than the two last-named. Both on the title-page and in the colophon it is stated that it is ‘Imprime nouuellement pour Jean Bonfons, Libraire demourant en la Rue neuue nostre Dame a lenseigne saint Nicolas’; but no date is given. The book contains nine woodcuts (with repeats, fourteen), old cuts re-used, and without any special merit or interest except that on the title-page. This, however, is a superior cut, representing a king riding in procession under a canopy; it is from the

¹ *Galien Retboré*. Brunet notes that the copy he had seen had lost its colophon, so he gives no date. But Vingtrinier, *Histoire de l'imprimerie à Lyon*, 1894, p. 187, gives the date as above. He mentions also a book published by one or other of the Arnoullets, he does not say which, with an earlier date still: *Les Gestes des Tbolesains*, 1517; this book was apparently unknown to Brunet.

² In the British Museum catalogue this book is dated thus 1[565]. the figures lxxv on the title-page (denoting the number of *cabiers*) having, as often, been taken for the date.

original block, and not from the transfer-cutting which appears in other books. In *Three Hundred Notable Books*,¹ p. 77, a facsimile is given of this cut from Petrarch's *Triumphes*, 1520, its first recorded use apparently. But the fleur-de-lis decoration on the canopy and the general design suggest that the cut was originally used (or intended) to represent some actual occasion; for instance, the coronation or entry into Paris of Francis I, for whom the youthful king on horseback might very well be meant. Of the other cuts, two are poor transfer-cuts of Le Noir's *Huon de Bordeaux* designs mentioned on p. 23 above. We may note that the book contains 264 leaves, but the cuts all occur in the first third of the volume, there being no more illustrations after fol. lxxii.

After these we come to a few editions which bear dates, the first of which is an octavo of 1566 of which Brunet can record nothing except that it is mentioned by Du Verdier. He had not seen the book himself, neither have I.

The quarto published at Lyons by Benoist Rigaud, and dated 1586, has more to say for itself, and is an interesting book. It is well printed in Roman letter, and contains 360 pages numbered in arabic figures, with a final unnumbered leaf on which is nothing but a woodcut. The text of the romance in this edition has been a good deal altered and the sentences often pared down; and now for the first time (to my knowledge) the lengthy romance is divided into two parts or 'books', the division being made where there is no real break, but actually in the middle of a conversation, and in the middle of a chapter, into which a new chapter-heading is inserted.² Although the whole is paged continuously, the second 'book' begins at a second set of signatures, the first being A—Z, the second AA—KK. In fact it looks very much

¹ 'Three Hundred Notable Books added to the Library of the British Museum under the keepership of Richard Garnett, 1899.'

² Cap. 106, though the chapters are not numbered in any of the early editions.

as if the division had been determined in the printing office, and according to the convenience of the printer rather than consideration of the matter.

The book contains forty-five different woodcuts of all sorts and sizes, fifty-three with the repeats. None of these appear to be new nor, with a single exception, p. 297 (misnumbered 299), originally designed for this romance. But their very variety gives them some interest, as they form almost a connected exhibition of Lyons woodcuts from their rude beginnings learned from Basle (p. 253) down through the promising second stage when the Lyons woodcutters had begun a style of their own (pp. 120, 124, 270, &c.) to the later period when the influence of Venetian cuts had swamped this hopeful beginning with mediocre imitations of the Italian style and copies of Venetian designs. Thus on p. 270 there is a reduced copy of one of the three-compartmented cuts to Ovid's *Heroides*, Venice, Tacuino, 1501 (Hero and Leander), and on p. 19 a miniature cut derived (through a previous reduction in Boulle's Lyons edition of 1527) from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Venice, 1497 (Bk. viii, Nisus and Scylla). On the title-page is a cut of a knight on horseback with vizor raised, both horse and man staring fixedly at a shield hung on a tree, which shield bears the monogram of BR, i. e. Benoist Rigaud, the publisher of the book. On the last leaf is the cut of a man on horseback, the horse wearing a plume and half turned to the spectator, which is used or imitated on the title-page of the succeeding small octavo editions of Lyons and Rouen.

There were six of these, three from Lyons and three from Rouen. The Lyons are dated 1606, 1612, 1626; of the Rouen none has a date. I have not seen the edition which appears to have set the style, that of 1606; but there is a copy of the next, 1612, in the British Museum (misdated in the catalogue 1611), and from this it is evident that the Rouen

three imitated closely the Lyons three in 'format', type, and illustrations. In all, the illustrations are few and mostly of second-rate quality. The subjects are so vague and general that it is impossible to say if any of them were designed specially for their present purpose. They fit the page very well. The Rouen editions seem the most common, and occur fairly often, sometimes in one volume and sometimes in two.

The Romance after this seems to have fallen quite out of favour, like the rest of its kin, and there is a long gap, till we come to its revival in the chap-books of Troyes, Lille, and Rouen. The earliest of these that I have seen is that of Troyes with the date 1705; and there were many succeeding. Every one knows these Troyes chap-books, and I need not describe them. But there is one very significant alteration of the text which marks the boundary-line separating the chap-book stage completely from the earlier editions. This is in the later part of the Romance, in one of the additions to the original story called Ide and Olive. The heroine Ide, dressed as a man, has done great deeds of prowess on behalf of the Emperor of Rome, whose daughter Olive of course falls in love with the victorious hero; there follows the discovery of her sex, and she is condemned to be burned. The next chapter-heading runs as follows: 'Comment nostre Sire feist grans miracles pour Yde, car il la fist estre homme, dont l'Empereur et Olive eurent grant joye.' With a great odour of incense an angel arrives and announces this miracle, and all goes merry as a marriage bell. But by the year 1700 the angel as *Deus ex machina* had lost his reality, and the miracle its credibility. In the chap-book version the original female Ide is left to be burned while Olive marries a prince of the same name, 'à fin de ne point corrompre cette histoire.' Could banality descend to a lower depth, or poverty of invention go more naked and unashamed?

Huon de Bordeaux, early editions.

(* Only known through Brunet's account. † Not in Brunet.)

- † 1. Paris, M. le Noir : 26 November 1513 : fol.
- 2. Paris, M. le Noir : 24 December 1516 : fol. (sometimes with Jehan Petit's name instead).
- * 3. Paris, Jehan Trepperel, s.d. : 4to.
- † 4. Paris, Denys Janot, s.d. : 4to.
- * 5. Lyons, Olivier Arnoullet, s.d. : 4to.
- 6. Paris, Jehan Bonfons, s.d. : 4to.
- * 7. Paris (no information), 1566 : 8vo.
- 8. Lyons, Benoist Rigaud, 1586 : 4to.
- * 9. Lyons (no information), 1606 : 8vo.
- 10. Lyons, Pierre Rigaud, 1612 : sm. 8vo.
- † 11. Rouen, Louys Costé, s.d. : sm. 8vo.
- 12. Rouen, Veufue L. Costé, s.d. : sm. 8vo.
- * 13. Lyons, J. Huguetant, 1626 : sm. 8vo.

Chap-book editions.

- Troyes, Jacques Oudot, 1705 : 4to.
- Do. do. 1707 (priv. 1705) : 4to.
- Do. do. (approbation to his widow, 26 May 1723) : 4to.
- Do. Veuve Oudot & Jean Oudot fils (permission confirmed July 1725) : 4to.
- Do. as the last, but second part dated on title-page 1727.
(There are at least two different settings up of the type in editions with permissions of the same date.)
- Troyes, Pierre Garnier, permission 1726 : 4to.
- Lille, Veuve Pillot, permission without name of publisher 1726 : 4to.
- Rouen, Leclère-Labbey, s.d. (*circa* 1800) : 8vo.

MELUSINE

Any bibliography of the Romance of *Melusine* must perforce take account of its literary history, because of the different versions of the different printed editions. These, however, all derive from the lengthy but interesting compilation of Jean d'Arras; and therefore for bibliographical purposes it is not necessary to go behind that, or attempt to analyse the various elements out of which this writer compounded his 'History'. To students of folklore and romance such an analysis presents very great interest, as well as to genealogists occupying themselves in the attempt to disentangle fact from fiction in the history of the House of Lusignan. Some effort at such disentanglement was made as long ago as 1587 by a member of that House¹; but beyond its bibliographical interest the book has little claim to attention. The most recent work dealing with the subject is that of Jules Baudot, *Les Princesses Yolande et les Ducs de Bar . . . première partie, Mélusine*, 8vo, Paris, 1900.

The Romance exists in three different forms; but these are not separate and distinct versions of the story, the second being derived directly from the first, the third directly from the second.

1. *Melusine*: Romance in prose compiled by Jean d'Arras, 1387-93.

a. Exists in several manuscripts, one in the British Museum (Harley 4418).

b. Printed by Steinschaber at Geneva, 1478.

c. Edited from this edition by Ch. Brunet in the *Bibl. Elzévir.*, 1854.

d. Englished about 1500. Unique manuscript in British Museum: Royal 18 B, ii.

¹ Les genealogies de soixante et sept très-nobles et très-illustres maisons . . . par R. P. Estienne de Cypre, de la Royale Maison de Lusignan: 4to, Paris, G. Lenoir, 1587.

- e. Edited from this manuscript by A. K. Donald, Early English Text Society, 1895.
- f. English version condensed and modernized in John Ashton's *Romances of Chivalry*, London, 1887.¹
- 2. The *Roman de Parthenay*, or *Roman de Lusignan*, an abridgement and partial rearrangement of Jean d'Arras' Romance in verse by a poet named Coudrette (or Coudrecte)
 - a. Exists in a good many manuscripts, one in the British Museum: Add. 6796.
 - b. Edited by Francisque Michel, Niort, 1854.
 - c. Englished about 1500-1520. Unique manuscript in Trinity College, Cambridge.
 - d. Edited from this manuscript by W. W. Skeat, Early English Text Society, 1866.
- 3. *Melusina*, German prose version rendered from Coudrette's poem.
 - a. Exists in manuscripts. (See Schorbach, *Zeitschrift für Bücherfreunde*, i. 138.)
 - b. First printed by Bämmler, Augsburg, 1474 (copy in British Museum, G 19934). Very numerous subsequent editions.
 - c. A fairly close English version from a modern German edition by Mrs. Leighton in *Mediaeval Legends*, London, 1895.

The existence of a second and derivatory form of the romance must be put down to two causes: firstly, to the prolixity of the original compilation, and secondly to the unskilful and ill-balanced plan of it. Jean d'Arras, excellent as he is in description and narrative, shows himself anything but

¹ For bibliographical purposes account must also be taken of 'Geoffroy à grand dent', a portion of the prose romance of Jean d'Arras, first printed by Olivier Arnoullet, Lyons, 1549. There is a modern French version by Alfred Delvau in the *Nouvelle Bibliothèque Bleue*, vol. iii, p. 289, as well as a version of Melusine in modern French.

skilful in the construction of a long story, or the management of a drama complicated by many details and side-shows. Possibly, too, he was hampered by instructions from his patron and the necessity of glorifying the House of Lusignan. The result is that the comparatively simple and engrossing story of Melusine is interrupted by an immense interpolation relating at full length the deeds of four of her sons, how they conquered great kingdoms and gained wealthy wives. The Romance, indeed, might be divided into four parts : the first telling the early history of Raymond and Melusine ; the second, the feats of the four sons above mentioned ; the third, the continuation of the story of Melusine proper ; and the last, the adventures of Geoffrey of the Great Tooth.

It is not surprising to find that a later lord of the House of Lusignan commissioned a professional poet to rewrite the Romance ; and in the poem of Couldrette the inconveniences and misproportions of the prose romance have been skilfully rectified by an evidently practised hand. The whole has been reduced to about one-third of its original length ; the unwieldy interruption has been cut down to a few side episodes that are worked into the general plan of the story without undue distraction ; and a judicious rearrangement in a few places has markedly improved the scheme of the story, and given it more cohesion and dramatic development.

But together with the considerable gain in briskness and sustained interest there is also a very perceptible loss in vividness and realistic quality. The original prose romance displays a somewhat remarkable power of graphic description and genuine character-drawing. The incidents of fight and foray suggest strongly that the writer had himself witnessed scenes of the kind ; and the ' berserker ' character of Geoffrey of the Great Tooth, who always swears ' by the tooth of God ', is well sustained and ' convincing ' enough for the work of a modern novelist. In the Court poet's smug octosyllabic

couplets most of these qualities disappear or are softened down ; and the interest of the story as mere story is brought out and made paramount. If we imagine *Rob Roy* cut down and condensed and retold in pretty drawing-room versification, we have a fairly adequate picture of the difference between the *Melusine* of Jean d'Arras and the *Roman de Parthenay* of Couldrette.

This disquisition on its literary history has been necessary to explain the bibliography of the Romance. The poem of Couldrette itself was not indeed printed in early days ; but it was this and not the original romance that was rendered in the German prose version which is the editio princeps of *Melusine*, and which won such popularity for the story in Germany that no fewer than thirty editions were printed in the course of the next hundred and fifty years. Further, it was the early German editions that first illustrated the book with woodcuts ; and, as so often happened in the case of romances and other books of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the earliest illustrations set the mode for all succeeding, and these early German woodcuts were copied and imitated not only in the German editions of the German version of *Melusine* but also in French editions of the French or original version. And in this lies the explanation of a curious fact which must have struck every reader of the French prose romance as reprinted in the *Bibliothèque Elzévirienne* (the only accessible form of the original), namely, the extraordinary difference in length of the chapters as marked by the chapter-headings, some occupying but a page or two, and others extending over twenty, thirty, even sixty pages. The fact is that these apparent chapter-headings were intended not so much for 'arguments' of the sections into which they divide the work as for explanations of the illustrations to which they were attached. The first edition of the French or original text of Jean d'Arras, printed at Geneva, was illustrated with copies

of the cuts in the earlier German edition, and the explanations of these cuts were translated into French and printed with the cuts in places to suit the French version, which as we saw is three times as long as the German. It followed naturally that there are very long passages in the French with no illustration and no picture-title, and therefore (in the unillustrated text) with no 'chapter-heading' or division of any kind. Had the modern text of the *Bibliothèque Elzévirienne* been taken from a manuscript instead of from the Genevan edition, the work would no doubt have shown a better system of divisions. The manuscript in the British Museum has but some six or eight illustrations, but is divided by chapter-headings into one hundred and sixteen chapters (as against sixty-five in the Genevan edition), according to the natural breaks or divisions of the subject-matter.¹

A full account and list of the German editions is easy of access in Schorbach's article in the *Zeitschrift für Bücherfreunde*, vol. i, p. 132 (June 1897). And Brunet mentions fourteen French editions, of which four are Incunabula. The first printed edition, containing the earliest series of woodcut illustrations, is by general agreement the German edition printed by Bämle at Augsburg and bearing the date 1474, of which by great good fortune the British Museum possesses a very fine copy. The cuts in this are of early workmanship and design; but from them all succeeding are derived directly or indirectly. The next set of cuts appears in the German edition without place, date, or name of printer, which Schorbach and other authorities attribute to Bernhard Richel of Basle, and date between 1474 and 1478. Schorbach asserts that these cuts are copied from the illustrations in a manuscript actually existing in the University Library at Basle. I live in hopes some day of testing this assertion for

¹ This manuscript is slightly imperfect at the beginning, and possibly one or two miniatures and chapter-headings are missing.

myself. Comparing these cuts with the Bämle, one would naturally assume that they were improved and enlarged reproductions of the earlier designs ; just as the Husz and Le Roy cuts were intended to improve upon the Ortuin in the case of the Roman de la Rose. The first French edition is almost certainly later than this ; and the cuts in it are copies, sometimes reversed, of its woodcuts. It was published not in France but at Geneva, and is dated 1478. M. Claudin was certainly misled in supposing that the copying was the other way about : he only knew the Richel series from their after appearance in a Lyons edition of the French version, and imagined that they were of French workmanship.

All the early editions of *Melusine* are so extremely rare that it is impossible to find copies of more than one or two in the same library or collection ; and hence the comparison and inquiry as to their relation to one another is very difficult. The Netherlands series described in Sir Martin Conway's *Woodcutters of the Netherlands* was first printed in 1491, and may therefore be derived from one or other of these three earlier series ; but from mere description it is impossible to say ; and all editions containing these cuts appear to be out of reach except at the cost of such journeying as Sir Martin himself undertook for the purpose of his work above mentioned.

Leaving the other sets aside, there are a few particulars with regard to the Richel cuts which I think are of sufficient interest to place before the Bibliographical Society in a connected way. Originating at Basle, as illustrations to the German version, the cuts seem almost immediately to have passed on to Lyons, and reappear in three editions of the French version of *Melusine* printed there. (The relations of the printers and publishers of Basle and Lyons were close in early days.) These three editions are described by M. Claudin in his third volume, all being of the utmost rarity. Of the first, printed by Ortuin and Schenk, only two copies, both

imperfect, are known. The next was issued by Guillaume Le Roy, and of that also only two copies exist, one of which is in the Douce Collection in Bodley's. Of the third, printed by Mathieu Husz, M. Claudin mentions only one copy—that at Chantilly. I have examined both copies of the second of these rare editions—at the Arsenal and at the Bodleian; and I found that the full series of the Richel cuts is reproduced in the book, with the exception of a single cut in the middle, and of the four illustrations at the end which illustrated the four chapters not existing in the French version of the Romance, in which therefore these four cuts had no *raison d'être*.

Besides these three Lyons editions, there is an edition in Spanish in which most of these same cuts appear, together with a few traced-cuttings reversed, replacing the original blocks. A copy of this is in the British Museum. It was printed at Toulouse in 1489; and strange as it seems to find perishable and easily injured wood-blocks wandering to and fro in this manner, it appears pretty certainly to have been issued between the second and third of the three Lyons editions, the last of which M. Claudin places conjecturally about 1494, five years later than the date in the Spanish book. This is confirmed by the appearance in the Lyons edition of a reduced copy of the scene of Riding under the Stars in place of the original cut which was still in place in the Toulouse edition.

In the Toulouse impression of these cuts there is an interesting little specimen of wood-cutting craft noticeable in one of the blocks. The cut is used twice; in the first use the formidable tusk which always marks Geoffrey of the Big Tooth had evidently got broken off the wood-block, and does not appear, nor does the mark like a lion's claw on his brother Anthony's cheek. But when the same cut is used later there is the big tooth again, reinserted by some device of the wood-cutter, though perceptibly different from that which had been broken; and the lion's claw mark also appears again.

From these Richel cuts were copied the several series which illustrate succeeding German editions, such as those published by Knoblochtzer at Strasburg, which are in the British Museum, and the smaller and worse edition of Knobloch, in which the little cuts are almost despicably bad, although this wretched edition was priced at over a hundred pounds in a bookseller's catalogue not long before the war.

In Mr. John Ashton's *Romances of Chivalry* are small reproductions of sixteen of the Richel cuts. Both Muther and Claudin give full-sized facsimiles of some few of them.

As was said above, the chapter-headings in the earliest German editions are really only picture-titles, describing not the contents of the coming chapter but the particular scene in it which the woodcut illustrates. Those in the Richel edition, and their accompanying illustrations, correspond almost exactly to those in the Bämle edition; and the illustrations appear to have been certainly founded upon those in the earlier book, with the ambitious improvements of a more highly developed art. There is a slight difference in the numbers in the two editions, the earlier, Bämle, containing seventy cuts with a few repeats among them, or sixty-three separate cuts. Richel has sixty-seven cuts with no repeats.¹ This difference is partly accounted for by the Richel cutter cutting separate designs for cuts which were repeated in Bämle, which would naturally give the former seven more than its exemplar. But on the other hand Bämle twice gives two cuts to a single picture-title where Richel only has one, and also in two places he has a cut where Richel for some reason has none. Owing to the rearrangement of

¹ All existing copies of the Richel edition appear to be imperfect; but from a comparison of several the above number of cuts has been computed to be what a perfect copy should contain. The numbers given here for the Bämle edition are taken from the excellent copy in the British Museum, but Hain (*11064) mentions a difference in copies.

the story in Couldrette's version, there are in the German printed editions two stories at the end which are not there in the French prose romance—one is the tale of Melior who kept the Castle of the Sparrow-hawk; the other, of Palatine (or Palestine) who guarded the treasure of her father Helmas. The illustrations to these, four in number, are naturally omitted in the French printed editions, although both stories are in fact merely amplifications of what in Jean d'Arras is told, very briefly, in the prefatory part of his romance. See *Melusine*, *Bibl. Elzéu.*, p. 24.

It is to be hoped that some day facsimile reproductions may be made of all the three earliest editions of *Melusine*, the German editions of Bämle and Richel, and the French of Steinschaber. The exact relations of one to the other could then be clearly defined.