VIII.—*Satirical Rhymes on the defeat of the Flemings before Calais in 1436 ; from a MS. in the Archiepiscopal Library at Lambeth. Communicated in a Letter from BENJAMIN WILLIAMS, Esq., to Capt. W. H. SMYTH, R.N., Director.*

Read January 13th, 1848.

MY DEAR SIR,

Cowley Grove, January 13th, 1848.

THE following satirical Rhymes on the defeat of the Flemings, and their raising the siege of Calais, in 1436, are inserted in a very fine copy of the Brute, or English Chronicle, ending that year, in the Archiepiscopal Library at Lambeth, No. 6. If you think them worth the attention of the Society of Antiquaries, I shall be obliged by your presenting them.

In order to explain the point of the verses, I would remark that Philip the Good, Duke of Burgundy, who for twenty years had been the ally of the English, and whose sister was married to the Duke of Bedford, had, shortly after that duke's decease in 1435, concluded a treaty of peace with Charles the Seventh of France, at Arras ; thereby terminating the unhappy dissensions of that kingdom. An alienation between the English and the Duke of Burgundy was the natural consequence, and, in 1436, the duke proposed to besiege Calais ; which, as he affirmed belonged to his county of Artoys. Some of his council, thinking it to be a strange and arduous undertaking, told him he had better desist from it, “ sachant bien qu'on ne prend pas tel chat sans moufle.” (Paradin, Annales de Bourgongne. Lyon. 1566.) But he was urged on by others less experienced. He accordingly assembled a considerable force of the men of Ghent, and Bruges, and other places, who made such a fine appearance when mustered that he was anxious to show his force to his brother-in-law the count of Richemont. They brought with them cannons, coleurines,^a and cross-bows. The duke commenced operations by erecting a lofty wooden bastille or tower to command the gate of the city, as he had done before in 1411. (MS. Cott. Galba E. vii.) This was, however, quickly taken “ before the beard” of the duke by the people of Calais, who put the garrison, consisting of 800

^a From *colubrina* ; see Archæol. XXII. p. 61.

Flemings, to the sword (in revenge for the murder of some English prisoners), and took a great many of the rest prisoners. At length, on the 25th of June, the succours that the duke had been expecting by sea arrived, and he immediately caused several of the largest vessels, which had been filled with masonry and iron anchors, to be sunk in the port, in order to prevent the approach of the expected fleet from England; but when the tide receded they were left on the beach, and the people of Calais, as well men as women, issuing out of the city, demolished them, in spite of a continued fire from the Flemish camp, of which they made no account, carrying the wood into the town, and burning the hulls.

The duke, thereupon, fearing the arrival of the Duke of Gloucester, suddenly took his departure, leaving behind him an immense quantity of goods, both of merchandise and engines of war, and, says the Burgundian Chronicler, “fut ce fortune le plus sinistre que la Duc de Bourgongne eut oncques.” (Paradin, pp. 770—776.)

I beg to remain, my dear Sir,

Yours faithfully,

B. WILLIAMS.

To Capt. W. H. Smyth, R. N.

&c. &c. &c.

“And on this wise Phelip Duc de Burgoyne and the Flemmyng deputed from Caleis, and þe Picardes from þe Castel of Guynes w^t gret sheme, and gret discourshipp, and w^t gret losse. Wherefore amonges Englisshmen were made many Rymes of þe Flemmynges, among the which one is here sette for a remembraunce, that saith on this wise:—

*When ye Flemmyng wer fressh florished in your flouris,
And had withal your will, ye wolde be conquerouris
Of Caleis, þat littel toun, al it come in youre mynde,
But ye to conquere Caleis, it cometh you not of kynde.
Remembres on þat wurship, ye wan the first day,
When the erle of Mortain came passig with his pray
Before youre toun of Gravenyng, wher ye as men bold
Com rennyng on him fersly as lyons of Cotteswold,
With habirgeons and hounscale, and rusti kettill hattes,^a
With long pikes, goden daghes,^b for to strikke the rattes,*

^a Amongst the list of arms and artillery furnished to the ship “Christopher,” temp. Edw. III. were “ten ketell hattes.” (Record Office, Carlton Ride, E. 13, 380.) They were probably open salades with brims.

^b This must not be confounded with the dag or pistol of later date. The weapons allowed by the constable and marshal in a duel, were the lance, long and short sword, and “daghe.” (Gruythuse MS. written prior to the close of the fourteenth century, being the Latin MS. 6049, Bibl. du Roi, Paris.)

With messis and meskins and eke w^t side jakes
 Doun unto mydde þe leg, of kanvas lyke to sakes,
 Stoppyd al w^t hempen tawe and þat in straunge wise,
 Sticked like a matrace, al of þe newe gyse.
 Ye laid upon þe Englisshmen so mightily w^t y^r hands
 Til of you iij hundred lay streched on the sandes.
 Ye fled þen into Grauenyng,^a and wold no longer bide,
 And gaue þe erle leve to pass over that same tyde
 In saefte with his pisoners^b and lost never a man.
 This was þe first wurship of Caleys than ye wan.^c
Remembres how ye laide seege with gret pryde and bost
 To Caleis, þat littel toun; the noumbre of youre host
 Was a hundrid thousand and fifty to reckon by þe pollis,
 As it was þat same tyme founden by youre rollis,
 And yette for al youre gret host, erly nothir late,
 Caleis was so ferd of you, they shitte never a gate.
Remembres how ye drowned att full see for þe nones
 With shippes Caleis haven, massoned w^t stones,
 And how that þe Calisers hem brake the next day
 When it was lowe watir, and bare hem clene away;
 Every stikke and stone, and lafte not ther one log.
 Remembers eke on Goby, the watir-bailiffe's dog,
 How he scarmysshed w^t you twyes upon the say,
 And among you on þe sandes made many a fray.
Remembres, ye of Brugg, how ye first wan your shon;
 How ye com forth to scarmysh upon an aftirnon,
 With pavyses and crossebowes on saint Peter's playn,
 And how sone the Calisers made you to turn again,
 And overthrew you sodeynly or ever that ye wist,
 And brought you into Caleis, tyed fast by the fist.
Remembres, ye of Gaunt, eke, for al youre pride and bost,
 Wonnen was your bulwerk, beside your gret host,
 And slayn all that was therin; and ye that same night
 Fled ouer Grauenyng water, but go that go might;
 And youre lorde w^t you for dred and for fere
 Of the duyk of Gloucestre, and yette was he not ther,
 Wel was hym might go before with pison & w^t paunce,^d
 And left behind you for hast all your ordinaunce.

^a Gravening Water, the boundary of the English territory.

^b See note ^d.

^c The forces of the Earl of Mortayne, Captain of Calais, had defeated 1500 Burgundians, led by Messire Jean de Croi, Bailiff of Haynault. Monstrelet places their loss in killed at from five to six hundred.

^d *Pison* or *pysane* is a contraction for *pavoisine*, a small shield. *Paunce* is a military garment, or hauberk, worn over the chest (Germ. *panzer*). The paunce is enumerated amongst the armour taken at Holy Island in 1437. (Meyrick's Antient Armour, ii. 127.)

Remembres,^a ye Picardes, at seege eke as ye lay
 Of Guynes, that strong castel, how ye fled away
 For ryngyng of the larum bell, shamefulle in a morowe,
 As few(?) as þe Flemyng w^t hertes full of sorowe.
 Ye lost ther your ordynaunce of gunnes that was cheff
 To you & to all Pycardis shame and gret repress.
Remembres now ye Flemyng, upon your own shame,
 When ye laide seege to Caleis ye wer right full to blame.
 For more of reputacion ben Englisshmen þen ye,
 And comen of more gentill bloode, of olde antiquitie.
 For Flemyng com of flemed^b men, ye shall well understand,
 For flamed men & banished men enhabit first youre land.
Thus prove I þat Flemyng is but a flemed man.
 And Flaunders of Flemyng the name first began.
 And þefore ye flemyngs, þat Flemyng ben named,
 To compare w^t Englisshmen, ye aught to be ashamed.
 Ye be nothing elles worth but g^{el} wordes to camp.
 Sette ye still and bith in pees ; God gyve you quader ^c cramp.

“Such and many other rymes were made among Englisshmen after the Flemynges were thus shamefully fled, from Caleis, & þe Picardes from Guynes fledd & gone þeire way for drede & fere of þe comyng of þe duyk of Gloucestre, which by þat time was redy at London w^t his power and armee to þe rescows of Caleis, and to shippe at Sandwich, where as lay redy in þe haven iii^c sayles to abyde his comyng.”

^a This form is very ancient, for example :—

“ Lordyngs that here likes to dwell,
 Leves 3owr speche, and heres this spell.”

(MS. Cott. Galba, E. ix. 22 b.)

^b Fleman, *fugitivus*. (Coles's Eng. Lat. Dict. 1707.)

^c Probably a corruption of cuartern or quartern, Ang. Sax. *prison*. (Layamon. II. 386.)