VIII.—THE PROVERBS OF ALFRED. By the Rev. Professor SKEAT, Litt.D.

THE thirteenth-century piece known as "The Proverbs of Alfred" was printed by Dr. Morris for the Early English Text Society in 1872, at p. 102 (and the following pages) of his Old English Miscellany.

Of this piece there are (or were) three manuscript copies.

The first to be considered is that which once existed in MS. Cotton, Galba A. 19; not noticed at all in Dr. Morris's Preface. I suppose the reason for not noticing it is, that it suffered in the fire which damaged so many of the Cotton MSS.; for Kemble remarks that "it is now lost." He adds that there is a copy of it in the Bodleian Library; but this is certainly a mistake. Bodley's librarian has carefully examined that famous collection, and nothing of the kind is known there.

Nevertheless, the first 30 (short) lines have been preserved by Wanley, in his Catalogue, p. 231, and might as well have been consulted; in some respects, it looks as if this must have been the best of the three copies.[1]

The second copy is that in the library of Jesus College, Oxford. It was printed by Wright in "Reliquiae Antiquae," i, 170; and was taken by Morris to form his "Text I."

Wright's text is fairly correct; and it is obvious that Morris's text has been reread with the MS. itself.

As I have compared these copies, I here give the collation, with a few remarks.

19. Morris, wes; Wright, was; in the second instance.

51. Morris, monne; Wright, monnen. One would like to know which it is. *Monne*, of men, is probably right in any case.

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[1] Thus, in l. 27 it probably has the true reading : "Wolde ye nu liþen and lusten yure louerd," i.e. "Would ye now hearken and listen to your lord." In the other copies *nu liþen* has been altered to *nu leden*, or to *mi leode*, i.e. my people.

59. M., W., we.   Morris here notes that the correct reading is *þe*, meaning " who."   But it is obvious that the correct reading is *wo*, as in the Trinity MS., *wo* being (as I shall show presently) another spelling of *who*.   This is shown by the alliteration also.

105. M. lorþeu; W. lorthen.   The line is not in the Trinity MS. *lorþeu* is probably right; see Stratmann.   But Stratmann also has *lorþein* in the same sense; so that Wright's reading is not impossible.

125. M. þat; W. the (as in Trinity MS.).   Either reading gives sense.

186. M. lone *or* loue; W. love.

201. M. gnyde; W. guyde.   Here *gnyde*, rub to pieces, is right.

231. M. wile ; W. wele.   The sense intended is "will."

236. M. meneþ; W. moneth.   The sense is "bemoan"; which, in M.E , was rather *meneth* than *moneth*.   The mod. E. *moan* was, originally, a substantive only.

245. M. þin (as in MS. Trin.); W. thine (wrongly).

260. M. alyue; W. a lytte (wrongly).   Trin. MS. oliue.

293. M. for swunke (without a hyphen); W. for-swunke (rightly).   The reading in the other text shows that this is a misprint in the E.E.T.S. edition.

295. M. nule; W. vule (wrongly).

319. M. [N]eure; W. Evre.   Morris's correction is not needed; for *ne* occurs in l. 320.

337. M. vnlede; W. vulede (wrongly).   The error is noted in Stratmann.

340. M. ys; W. nys (which is admissible).

379. M. le; W. be.   There is here some mistake in the MS. See *Le* in the Glossary.

400. M. sulue ; W. selve.

453. M. arixlye; W. arulye.   See *rixlien* in Stratmann.

The only remark I have to make on this text is, that I am quite sure that l. 438 must be wrong in both prints as to the reading *werende*; this obviously ought to be *wexende*, as in lines 168, 433. I mention it because I suspect the MS. is right.   The distinction between *r* and *x* in such a MS. is so slight, that it may easily have escaped notice.   The Glossary suggests *wexende*, for the fault is obvious.

I now come to Text II, printed from the Trinity MS. marked B.14.39.   This was first printed by Wright, in "Reliquiae Antiquae," i, 170; but with several mistakes.   It was next

printed by Kemble, in his " Salomon and Saturn," p. 226 ; also with several mistakes. And lastly by Morris, in his " Old English Miscellany," without correction of the former errors; so that, in fact, no correct copy of it has yet appeared. Dr. Morris was not in a position to correct the errors, from the nature of the case. Let us hear what he says in his Preface, p. ix.

" The second text is printed from Wright and Kemble ; copies which they seem to have transcribed independently from a MS. formerly in Trinity College Library, Cambridge. To speak plainly, this valuable MS. has been stolen from the Library by some one who has abused the generosity of the authorities of Trinity College, who are ever willing and ready to afford every facility to those desirous of consulting their valuable stores of antiquity."

Here Dr. Morris expressed what was then, with much reason, a general belief; but it is now known that the MS. was not stolen; it had only gone astray. Its temporary loss was quite accidental, and no one was to blame ; and it is at present again reposing in its ancient home, none the worse for its protracted absence. The circumstances were given in detail in a letter by Mr. Aldis Wright, which appeared in the *Times* of July 13, 1896. In company with some printed books belonging to the same library, it was accidentally packed up and sent away to a former fellow of the college. It so happened that the parcel was never opened, and after thirty-three years was returned to the college without having been interfered with. Mr. Aldis Wright had suspected that some of the college books had thus gone astray, and wrote to inquire about them ; whereupon he not only regained the books which he sought, but, much to his astonishment, found the long-lost MS. amongst them.

As Dr. Morris had no opportunity of consulting the MS., it is only necessary to notice the editions by Wright and Kemble.

It is clear that Wright's text, issued in 1841, was printed from a transcript without being corrected by the MS. when in type.

Kemble's text, in 1848, was printed, no doubt, from a transcript which Kemble had himself made independently; but it also appears that, whilst in the press, Kemble took the opportunity of consulting, not the MS. itself, but Wright's printed copy. In consequence of this, he has repeated a very remarkable mistake. But before I proceed, I must say a word as to my mode of reference.

Morris numbers the lines throughout, but he has rearranged
the sections, so as to make them agree with those of the Jesus MS.
He also unluckily reduces the 37 sections to 34 ; still, the num-
bering by sections is the only one that really helps us in comparing
one text with another.   He gives them in the following order,
viz., 1-8, 10, 9, 11-13, 16, 17, 21, 20, 25, 19, 23, 29, 26, 14,
15, 18, 22, 24, 27, 28, 30-34; and includes sections 35-37 as
part of 34.   The confusion thus introduced makes it a troublesome
task to compare the different copies, as so much time is lost in
finding the place.   And the confusion is rather increased than
diminished by numbering the lines as if the order of sections were
the correct one.   Whenever this piece is re-edited, some better mode
of reference should, if possible, be devised.   As it is, I can only
refer to the lines in Morris's edition, although they do not at all
correspond with the lines in the MS.   Fortunately, however,
Morris gives Kemble's numbering of the sections, with which he
agrees up to section 34, and the few sections at the end are all
in the right order.

I now return to my promised curious example, in Morris,
l. 294.

Here the scribe of the MS., wishing to write the word *tre*,
a tree, had the misfortune to write *ter*.   Wright copied this faith-
fully, but it is clear that he also made a note, in his margin, that
tre was meant.   Hence his printer naturally substituted *tertre*, all
as one word.

When Kemble printed his text, he evidently had his doubts
as to this queer word.   So he consulted Wright's text, but
evidently thought that *ter* might be some part of another word;
hence he printed it *ter tre*, as two words.   Morris went back to
Wright's text, and again printed *tertre* as one word, with a note
in the Glossary, to the effect that *tertre* is an error for *tre*.

The result is, of course, that all three texts are wrong.   The
reading is simply *ter*, which is a mere error for *tre*, which Kemble
had already translated by "tree," as the context demands.

I give this example in order to show that none of the texts
can be depended upon.   Kemble's text to some extent depends
on Wright's, so that Wright's is the text which requires most
attention.

Accordingly, I have collated it with the MS. throughout, and
found many errors.   The difficulties are numerous, but can mostly
be surmounted.   And here comes in my chief discovery, viz., that

none of the editors had any clue to the peculiar nature of the spelling.

On this I am able to throw a flood of light, as will soon appear. * The moment that I opened the MS., I noticed the peculiar handwriting ; and observing the peculiar forms of some of the letters, particularly the occasional use of the double *v* for *w*, I felt tolerably sure that I had to do with a MS. written by a Norman or Anglo-French scribe. Fortunately, this admits of the most positive and conclusive proof ; for, as Mr. Aldis Wright pointed out to me, we find at the bottom of the first page of the poem, these four characters, each with an explanation above it, viz. : ? (glossed *iye*) ; p (marked *w* in the French form, made with two interlaced *v*'s) ; ꝯ (glossed *ant*) ; and þ (glossed *iþorn*).

The meaning of this interesting note is most significant. The scribe had a piece of English to write out ; and before he could do so, he had to learn four new characters. The first was ?, which was named *yee* (pronounced as mod. E. *yea*) ; but, being a Norman, he was unable to sound the initial *y* without prefixing the very slight vowel-sound *i*. In trying to say *yea*, he said *i-yea* ; and dared to write it down so. For a precisely similar reason, he found it easier to say *ithorn* than *thorn*, and he actually so wrote it.[1] As for the A.S. *w*, represented by the old *wen*, he naturally explained it by a French *w* ; and lastly, in explaining the usual contraction for *and*, he gave to this rather common English word a French pronunciation, and called it *ant*.

We have now the clue to the whole process ; and it proves a master-key. It frequently happens that out of his four new symbols, the scribe forgets which was which, and freely writes one for the other. Nearly every *w* throughout the piece is wrong, except when the French *w* is employed ; in other places, the A.S. *w* is made with its first stroke too high, so that it sometimes looks like a short *thorn* ; and not seldom, it cannot be distinguished from the thorn-letter at all, and we are left to guess which will best suit.

In l. 147, Wright has the form *swinkin*, which is doubtless meant. Kemble, more conscientiously, prints it as *sginkin*. The MS. itself has neither of these forms, which shows how little

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[1] I have no doubt that, for a similar reason, the symbol *z* was sometimes called *i-zed* or *i-zod*, which is the origin of *izzard* ; a word which has so puzzled the etymologists that they usually explain it as *s hard* ; a rather unlucky guess, seeing that it is a *soft s*.

we can depend on the printed texts. The MS. has "s;inkin," where ; is one of the scribe's new letters. He has actually for-gotten, as I have said, which was which, and has written ; in place of the A.S. *w*. This is the obvious and easy solution **of** this extraordinary word. So also *ro;en* for *rowen*, 145; *;erlde* for *werlde*, 182.

This leads us at once to the worst fault of the editions, viz., that they make no distinction between ; and *g*, but print them both, quite impartially, as *g*. It is hard upon the scribe, because he has done his best; and, barring such errors as that last noted, has frequently distinguished them with perfect accuracy. Thus, in ll. 14, 15, where the editions have *mugen* and *gure*, the scribe has *mu;en* and *;ure*, which are quite right; *mu;en* means "we may"; and *;ure* means "your." The spelling *gure* is misleading; and *gu* for *;u*, i.e. you, which occurs repeatedly, is equally bad.

It is material to observe further, that the MS. copy, though written continuously, is divided into lines and couplets by the alternate use of a dot and a sort of inverted semicolon. This is a source of some errors in Wright's text. Thus, l. 51 ends with the word *mon*, followed by the latter of the above marks; which Wright turns into *mones*, as if the mark meant *es*, an error which Morris follows. Kemble has *mon* correctly, showing that his transcript was made independently. As a matter of fact, *mon* is wrong; it ought to be *monne*, gen. pl., "of men," as in the Jesus MS. But here, again, the clue to the error is to bear in mind that the Norman scribe was not very strong in his English declen-sions; he evidently thought that *mon* would do. But *mones* is wrong, anyhow.

Similarly, in l. 47, where Kemble has *gleu* and Wright has *gleues*, Wright has again turned the symbol denoting the end of the former half of the couplet into a suffix *-es*, which destroys the sense. *Gleu* is the A.S. *gléaw*, which Kemble translates by "wise." As it is a singular nominative, the suffix *-es* is impossible.

It would be easy to give a large number of examples in which the MS. is better than the editions; but I prefer to proceed to what is the true subject of this paper, viz., to show what are the spellings and peculiarities which a Norman scribe would most revel in or be likely to adopt. We must put ourselves in his place. In the thirteenth century, when Anglo-French was still the native language of some of the most learned scribes, there must have been many a well-taught man, well acquainted with

French and Latin, who was determined to learn English, and would soon be able to talk it fluently enough, though he could not always pronounce it. The pronunciation presented great difficulties, and the temptation to express sounds by French symbols, according to his own pronunciation, was naturally a strong one. However this may have been, this is what this scribe certainly did; and it may easily be shown that the scribe of Havelok was just such another. I am inclined to go further, and say that, in *all* our thirteenth-century pieces, we should always be on the watch for such possibilities; for it can hardly be doubted that the Normans were, on the whole, wealthier and better educated than the humbler English. Such men could read and write and talk English so as to be understood; but they must have had a desperate struggle before they finally triumphed over the sound of the *thorn* and of the guttural which some of them denoted by the symbol *gh*. In the fourteenth century they had learnt their lesson, and we find that their old difficulties had, by that time, disappeared. But in the course of the struggle the guttural *gh* perished, and only its symbol survived. To take the case of the M.E. *gh* in *might* and *night*, from the A.S. *miht* and *niht*. The nearest sound, for a Norman, was that of *s*; if he said *mist* and *nist*, he could make himself understood, though the sound, to an Englishman, must have sounded oddly enough. At any rate, the Normans constantly wrote *st* for *ght* or *ht*. Thus, in l. 539, Wright and Kemble, like the MS., have the form *miste*, with the sense of *might*. This seems to have been the point to which Morris alludes in his note 5 on p. ix, where he says: " It is somewhat strange that Kemble and Wright should have both, in very many cases, mistaken a short stumpy *g* for an *s*." Accordingly, in his text, the word appears as *migte*. The point is, of course, that the MS. spelling *miste* was intentional; and the remark about the " short stumpy *g* " is unlucky. The MS. has in this word and many others, the long *s* (ſ), which is totally unlike *g*. In fact, the sound of the M.E. *ght* is usually denoted, throughout the piece, by a long *s* and a *t*.

Still, the scribe was aware that *st* was not correct. So he sometimes adopts other methods. In l. 79, he has *rict* for right, showing that he knew that the sound was guttural. But in l. 78 he writes *cnit* for *knight*; he evidently could not abide the look of such a form as *cnict*. However, in l. 87 he writes *cnith*, a form which I will explain presently.

Next, as to the sound of *th*. When the *th* was voiceless, a Norman of course pronounced it as *t*. This occurs repeatedly at the end of a word, where the substitution does not much matter: hence we have *souit* for *soweth*, l. 82; *biouit* for *bihoveth* (behoves), l. 87; *gryt* for *gryth*, security, l. 91; *frit* for *frith*, peace, l. 92; *wenit* for *weneth*, l. 160; and many more. So also *blitnesse* for *blithnesse*, l. 50. The voiced *th* (as in *that*) he could replace, when final, by a *d*. Hence, in l. 492, the word *mud* means "mouth." So also *widutin*, without, 119. That the scribe found a special difficulty in the sound of *th*, is proved further by the fact that he also uses *d*, in suffixes, for the voiceless *th*. Examples are: *mused*, mouseth (said of a cat), 295; *weped*, weepeth, 326. Sometimes he has þ, correctly; as in *bringeþ*, 333; *folewiþ*, followeth, 332.

Of course, he is troubled by the initial *h*, and not unfrequently inserts it, strangely enough, in the wrong place; as in *heke*, eke, 9, 33; the *herl* and the *heþeling*, i.e. the earl and the atheling, 74; *helde* for *elde*, old age, 153. If the editors had understood this, they would not have gone so sadly astray in l. 148. Here Wright has *hineselþe*, and Kemble has *heni selþe*. However, Morris made an excellent guess, and nearly got it right; for his glossary says, "miswritten for *uniselþe*, misfortune." But the right solution is somewhat simpler; the number of down-strokes has been miscounted, and the word has been simply misread; the MS. actually has *hunselþe*, which is perfectly correct, when the needless *h* is removed.

It is curious that the sound of the English final *t* was not always caught. It seems to have differed from the French *t*; and, as the scribe of Havelok constantly writes *th* for it, it may have been more explosive. However, our scribe frequently renders it as *d*; writing *wid* for *wit*, 119, 221; *hid* for *hit*, it, 328; *þad* for *þat*, 332. In l. 132, Kemble has *it*, which Morris follows; but Wright has *id*, and so has the MS. itself.

On the other hand, the scribe writes *hunt* for *hund*, a hundred, 122; *isait* for *isaid*, i.e. said, 328. And when, as said above, he writes *cnith* for *cniht*, he does not mean *th* to express the sound of the thorn-letter, but wishes to express what sounded to him like a strong explosive final *t*, whilst he ignores the preceding guttural.

Very characteristic of French is the strong trill of the *r*; as in *cherril* for *cherl*, i.e. churl, 92; *arren*, are, 582. Such

a combination as *lth* must have been difficult; hence we find *weleþe* for *welþe*, wealth, 220 ; cf. *salit* for *salt*, 470. Final combinations like *ld, nt,* were not easy : hence *chil* for *child,* 430 ; *wen* for *went,* i.e. wendeth, wends or goes, 221. So in Havelok, we find *shel* for *sheld,* shield.

A peculiarly English sound was *ng.* The scribe betrays his embarrassment by writing *kinhis* for *kinges,* kings, 2 ; *kinc* for *king,* 36 ; *brinhit* for *bringeth,* 257 ; *þinhes* for *thinges,* 48 ; *tunke* for *tunge,* tongue, 282 ; *Enkelonde* for *Engelonde,* 12, 17. On the other hand, he has *biþeng* for *biþenk,* i.e. bethink, 399.

Another difficulty was the initial *wh,* which a Norman treated as *w,* like a modern Cockney : hence we find *wad* for *what,* 131 ; *wen* for *when,* 172, 175 ; *wanne* for *whanne,* when, 170, 186 ; etc.

The Normans disliked *wu* at the beginning of a word, and simply dropped the *w,* just as when we hear 'ooman for *woman,* and 'ood for *wood.* Curiously enough, in writing, they omitted, not the *w,* but the *u;* as in *wrsipe,* worship, 32 ; just as in Havelok we find *wlf* for *wulf,* a wolf. Sometimes two Norman pronunciations occur in one word, but it is easily deciphered when we have the key. In l. 120, we have *unwrd,* where the *w* is put for *wu,* and the final *d* for *th;* hence *unwrd=unwurþ,* i.e. of little value. The Jesus MS. has *vnwurþ.* Similarly, the *wrsipe* quoted above stands for *wurshipe;* for *s = sh,* see below.

We also find confusion between *w* and *v,* which again is, or rather used to be, a characteristic of London talk. In l. 54, we have the mysterious word *frowere;* but it merely means *frovre,* from the A.S. *frofor,* consolation ; see *frofre* in Stratmann. The Jesus MS. has *frouer,* with *u* for *v,* as usual. On the other hand, *ville* (so in the MS.) is put for *wille,* will, 294.

Another trouble was the English *sh;* for, at that date, the French *ch* was pronounced like the *ch* in *church,* as in modern English. Hence, when the unfortunate man has to write down *shal,* he spells it *scal* in l. 163, and *sal* two lines below.

Returning once more to my point of departure, viz., the confusion between the symbols þ, ȝ, and the A.S. *w,* I note that, in l. 136, *ȝise* is written for *wise;* the Jesus MS. has *wyse.* In l. 65, the MS. has *þif;* here Morris suggests that we should read *yif,* because the Jesus MS. has *if.* This is not quite the right answer; what we ought to read is *ȝif.* On the contrary, we find *wraȝed* for *wraþed,* made angry, 276.

In every case where the contraction for *and* occurs, Morris naturally prints *and* in italics. But we ought to observe, nevertheless, that the scribe's own spelling was *ant*, as already shown.

In connection with the curious form *ter* instead of *tre*, there is more to be said. The scribe seems, for some personal reason, to have been troubled with the letter *r*, which he is wont to misplace. I wish here to draw attention to a sound principle of criticism, viz., that such a form as *ter* for *tre* should not be passed over as if it were a mere blunder, void of significance. We should carefully note it, because the fact of such a transposition may recur. Indeed, there are at least two more examples of a like kind.

In l. 320, Wright has—"for þanne hue bed i-wuarþed (?) "; and places a note of interrogation after the last word. The Jesus MS. has—"If heo beo i-wreþþed," i.e. if she be made angry. We thus see that, as in other places, *þanne* really means *wanne*, i.e. when. *Hue* means "she"; *bed* is put for *beth*, i.e. "is." And *i-wuarþed* must stand for *iwraþed*, made angry. Knowing this, one comes to examine the MS. more closely, and lo! it is a case of transposition. The scribe first of all wrote *iwarþed*, and then found out his mistake; so he tried to correct it by writing a small *r* (which Wright misread as *u*) above the line, just between the *w* and *a*. This does not mean that we are to have two *r*'s in the word, but that the *r* is in the wrong place; i.e. we are to read *iwraþed*, which is quite right.

This enables us to set right a most difficult passage, which would otherwise be almost hopeless. In ll. 125, 126, we find: *so gres deit on þe reiþe*, where the Jesus MS. has *so gres doþ on eorþe*, i.e. as grass doth on earth. Of course *deit* is the same as *det* elsewhere, and represents the A.S. *dëð*, doth; so this word is easily disposed of. But when we come to look at þe *reiþe* closely, we find the same phenomenon as before. The scribe first of all wrote þe *reþe*, and then discovered that the *r* was in the wrong place. So he wrote a small *r*,[1] as before, above the line, just between the *e* and þ. As before, he does not mean us to retain both the *r*'s, but only that we should alter the *r*'s position. Hence the simple solution of the difficulty is that we are to read þe *erþe*, i.e. the earth. On the other hand, we must not put upon the scribe blunders which he never made; there is a remarkable one in l. 323, where all three editions have *fro* in the place of *for*,

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[1] Hence Wright has *reiþe*; he misread this small *r* as *i*.

which alone will suit the sense. And when the MS. is re-examined, the word turns out to be *for*, correctly and plainly written. I suspect that this was due to a simple misprint in Wright's text, which Kemble followed.

The strange form *Uretu* in l. 318 is to be thus explained. In the first place, the MS. really has *Aretu*, though the *A* is ill formed. Next observe that *Aretu noth* is equivalent to *Eure þu ne arede* in the other text. Hence it stands for *Ared þu not*, i.e. accept not as counsel, do not agree to; cf. A.S. *ārǣdan*. A Norman would pronounce *Arēd þu* as *Arēd tu* or *Arēt tu*; which (when the words are run together) becomes *Arētu*, one *t* being dropped because the preceding vowel is long. Just because the pronunciation was not understood, the word was easily misread.

A collation of Wright's text with the original MS. is given at the end of this paper.

The next question of interest is this : Are there any other pieces of a similar character?

No doubt, there are several such.[1] I can at once instance the "Lay of Havelok the Dane," in which nearly all the same peculiarities occur; and I regret that I did not see the full significance of them at the time of editing the work. I noticed several of them in the Preface, without knowing what they really meant. But it now becomes obvious that the poem was written out by a Norman scribe, better conversant with the pronunciation of Anglo-French than he was with English.

The chief peculiarities are these :—

1. Misuse of initial *h*; as in *holde* for *olde*, *hete* for *ete*, *Henglishe* for *Englishe*; see H in the Glossary. Conversely, we find *auelok* for *Hauelok*, *aueden* for *haueden*, i.e. had, *osed* for *hosed*, i.e. provided with hose or stockings.

2. Loss of final *d* after *l* or *n*; as in *hel* for *held*, *bihel* for *biheld*, *shel* for *sheld* (shield), *gol* for *gold*; *lon* for *lond*, i.e. land.

3. Uncertainty as to initial *wh*. At one time we have the traditional spelling *hwan* for *whan*, when ; *hwere* for *where*; *hwil*

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[1] In "Reliquiae Antiquae," i, 48, 144, Wright prints two more poems *from the same MS.*; viz. "The Five Joys of the Virgin" and "Judas." Both afford examples of similar Anglo-French spellings, such as *brist* for *bright*, *ant* for *and*, and the rest. Curious examples are *suc* for *such* (*scal* for *shal* being in the same line); *yemme* for *yef me* (give me); *e* for *he*; *herude* for *heruþ*, hear ye; *wi* for *whi*; *yboust* for *y-bought*.

for *while*, while.   At another time, the French symbol *qu* is employed for this sound, as in *qual*, a whale, *qui*, why, *quan*, when.   But not unfrequently, the scribe drops into his natural habit of substituting a mere *w*, as in *wo* for *who*, 4, *wil* for *whil*, while, 6, *wat* for *what*, 118.

4. For initial *wu*, only *w* is used, and this *w* was a vowel merely ; as in *wlf*, i.e. *ulf*, a wolf, *wluine*, i.e. *ulvine*, a she-wolf ; *wman*, a 'ooman, a woman.   That *w* was used as a vowel, is apparent from such words as *hw*, how, 93 ; *w*, how, 120, 288 ; *yw*, you, 453 ; *hws*, a house, 1141.

5. The symbol *th*, quite distinct from þ, is used to denote a final strong explosive *t*, especially when a preceding guttural is suppressed.   Hence we have *neth*, a net ; *uth*, out ; *woth*, I wot, I know ; *leth*, let.   Also *brouth*, brought ; *nouth*, naught ; *rioth*, right ; *knicth*, knight.   In the strange-looking word *with*, meaning *white*, we have *w* for *wh*, and *th* for the final *t*.   The difficulty of the final *ght* in *knight* is shown by its variations of form ; thus we find *knict*, 32 ; *knicth*, 80 ; *knith*, 87 ; i.e. *ght* appears as *ct*, *cth*, and *th*, all three.

6. The final E. *th* was commuted for simple *t*, as in *hauet* for *haveth*, hath, 564 ; *seyt*, saith, 647 ; *herknet* for *herkneth*, hearken ye, 1 ; *wit* for *with*, 100.

7. The scribe found the E. *ng* a difficult sound.   Hence we find *bringhe* for *bringe*, *þinghe* for *þinge*, 65, 66.

8. He is not quite sure as to how he should give the sound of *sh* ; hence *sho*, she, *scho*, she, in two consecutive lines, 125–6 ; *same* for *shame*, 1941.   Here again are three symbols, viz., *sh*, *sch*, and *s*, for one simple sound.

9. The French trilled *r* comes out in such spellings as *arum* for arm, *harum* for *harm*, *koren* for *korn*.

A careful examination of the poem proves that similar characteristics occur in it repeatedly, throughout the 3001 lines.   Quite near the end we find *douthres* for *doughters*, i.e. daughters ; *hw*, how, followed by *hwou*, with the same sense, in the next line ; *rith* for *right* ; *euerildel* for *euerilk del*, every bit ; *nihtes* for *nightes*, nights.

In some poems we find the same characteristics, but less frequent and less strongly marked.   Thus, the earlier text of Layamon follows the traditions of Old English spelling ; but the latter text shows some tolerably clear cases of Anglo-French.   If

we take, e.g., the short piece in Morris's Specimens, vol. i, we soon observe such things as the following :—

1. A difficulty as to E. *sh* ; *sipes* for *shipes*, ships, 7 ; *sipe*, ship, 184 ; *salt* for *shalt*, 378 ; *sal* for *shal*, 180.

2. The use of *w* for initial *wh*; *wat* for *what*, 53 ; *wane* for *whanne*, when, 377 ; *ware* for *whare*, where, 419 ; etc.

3. A trouble as to initial *h* ; *his* for *is*, is, 68, 122, 124 ; *hin* for *in*, i.e. inn, lodging, 262 ; *heoldre* for *eoldre*, elder ones, 374 ; *haxede* for *axede*, asked, 530.

4. The occasional loss of initial *y* ; as in *ou* for *you*, 165.

5. A difficulty as to *ng* and *nk*. Hence we find *dringe*, to drink, 546; *dringe drinɡþ*, drinks a drink, 550 ; *dronɡ*, drank, 565.

The traces of French pronunciation are not very marked, but they are quite discernible, and should not be overlooked. If, for example, we should be disposed to regard *sal* for *shal* as being, in this case, a mark of Northern dialect, as is so frequently the case, we should of course be wrong. For the whole poem abounds with marks of a Southern dialect.

On the other hand, there are many good examples in which the spelling is reasonably free from such foreign influences ; I do not observe such in the Ancren Riwle, or in the older text of Layamon, or in the Ormulum. And, of course, it is always possible that some of these peculiarities may be dialectal; we cannot trust to one test alone, but must find several of them exemplified in the same piece before we draw a conclusion.

Take, for example, the "Old Kentish Sermons," No. 13 in Morris's Specimens, Part I, supposed to be written about A.D. 1250. They occur in a MS. in the Bodleian Library, together with their originals in French. It is certain that the translator must have known French, and the chances are that he was a Norman. They abound with French words, such as *conseil*, *aparailed*, *aperede*, *glorius miracle*, *ensample*, *cuuenable*, *sacrefise*, *signifieth*, all in the first 50 lines. And we find unmistakable signs of French spellings, such as these; all within the first 85 lines.

1. The use of *w* for *wh* ; *wer* for *where*, 13, 18 ; *war* for *whare*, where, 27 ; *wat* for *what*, 27 ; *wet* for *what*, 46 ; *wanne*, when, 56 ; *werefore*, 77.

2. The use of *s* for *sh*; *solde* for *sholde*, 14, 18, 32, etc. ;

seywinge, a showing, 34; *seauinge,* a showing, 6; *seawede,* showed, 41. In the last three cases, *sh* is denoted by *se.*

3. A difficulty as to initial *h*; *hic* for *ic,* I, 74; *hi-funde* for *i-funde,* found, 22.

4. A difficulty as to *ng*; *kink* for *king,* 41; *offrinke* for *offringe,* 37, 39.

5. A difficulty as to initial *y*; as in *hye* for *ye,* i.e. ye, 71.

6. A difficulty as to sounding *lk* together; hence we find *ileke* for *ilke* in 1. 84. This spelling Dr. Morris relegates to a footnote, but it is quite correct from a purely Anglo-French point of view; and that is why it recurs twice, in the very next line.

7. Such a spelling as *blisce* for *blisse,* bliss, would hardly have occurred to a Saxon scribe; the use of *ce* for *se* is French.

8. But it is when we come to examine the use of the thorn-letter in final unaccented syllables that the case becomes quite certain. Thus the word *signifieth,* 59, also appears both as *signi-fiet,* 62, and *signified,* 55. In addition to this we find *amuntet,* amounteth, 57; *defendet,* defendeth, 60; *habbet,* have, 70; *ofseruet,* deserveth, 78; *luued,* loveth, 83; and the remarkable form *hatedh,* hateth, 82. The reader who has not the clue might imagine that *signified* is a past tense; but this it assuredly is not. And this shows the importance of examining a given piece in order to see whether it has come under the pen of a Norman scribe. For when this is ascertained, such a word as *mudh,* occurring farther on in 1. 126, presents no difficulty; it was the natural way in which a Norman would write the word for *mouth.*

"The Story of Genesis and Exodus," edited by Dr. Morris for the Early English Text Society, and expressly stated to be a translation from the Latin, has some very suspicious points about it. Thus we find the following:—

1. Confusion as to initial *h*; as in *adde,* had, 1918, 2060; *eðen* for *heðen,* hence, 2188; *hunkinde,* unkind, 534; and many more.

2. A difficulty as to *wh*; hence *wan,* when; in fact, no word beginning with *wh* occurs in the Glossary, but a large number begin with *qu.* The occurrence of *wað,* for *quað,* quoth, is surely remarkable.

3. A difficulty as to *sh,* which occurs but seldom, as in *shauen,* shaven, *shent,* destroyed, *sheren,* to shear, etc., in the Glossary. But *s* is much used instead, as in *sal,* shall; *salt,* shalt; *soren* for *shoren,* shorn, *srud* for *shrud,* shroud, clothing, etc.; see the

Glossary. Cf. *weis* for *weish*, he washed; and observe that the word *she* is written both as *she* and *sge* (=*sȝe*).

4. Uncertainty as to *th*; thus we find *wid* for *wið*, with, repeatedly; *dat* for *ðat*, that, *dan* for *ðan*, then, etc. But the fact is that the symbols for *d* and *ð* only differ by a fine stroke, which is sometimes wrongly omitted. Still, such spellings as *dhogt* for *thoght*, thought, *ðhing* for *thing*, and the like, are very un-English; and it is remarkable that *ð* is used for *þ* throughout. The very characteristic letter *þ* does not appear to be used at all.

5. More certain is the substitution of *semet* for *semeth*, seemeth, 2169, *haued* for *haueth*, hath, 3746, 4006, 4121, etc.; of which I daresay there are more examples, although verbs seldom occur in the present tense in this poem.

6. We find *coren* for corn, 2155, 2159.

7. The word *offiz* contains the French letter *z*, which is worth notice, as we have observed that *þ* is absent.

Perhaps it requires a more careful investigation before this can be quite settled; but I have not much doubt as to the probable result.

In some cases it will doubtless be found that the Norman scribe had learnt his lesson fairly well, and is very seldom guilty of any lapse. Such seems to have been the case with the copy of King Horn given in Morris's Specimens. Yet I notice just one or two points as to this copy which can best be explained by the supposition that the scribe was a Norman.

Thus, in l. 8, is the characteristic spelling *miste* for *mighte*. In l. 249, we find *doster* for *doghter*, daughter. In l. 410, *plist* for *plight*. In all three cases the *s*, as usual before *t*, is the long *s*. In l. 445, we find *uel* for *wel*; and in l. 923, *wanne* for *whanne*, which is correctly spelt in l. 925. In four instances at least, we find *suþe* for *swiþe*, very; as if *swi* were difficult to sound; ll. 178, 375, 810, 860. In l. 603, *wulleȝ* is miswritten for *wulleþ*, by confusion between *ȝ* and *þ*; letters which an English scribe would hardly confuse. I notice one other point which I do not understand, viz. the use of *i* for *e* in many places; as in *diþes* for *deþes*, 640; *tires* for *teres*, 654, 676, 972; *iȝe* for *eȝe*, 759, 987; *isiȝe* for *iseȝe*, 760, 988; *ires* for *eres*, 971. If this means that *e* was already beginning to be sounded as *i* (in *machine*) in 1300, it is a very extraordinary fact.

In particular, it would be well if some one with the necessary leisure would make a careful study of the spelling of the famous

Domesday Book. As far as I have been able to examine the question, I have every reason to believe that, in the course of the preceding remarks, the guiding principles of the peculiarities of spelling which there occur have been sufficiently indicated above. It is clear that the scribes were Norman, and that they spelt English names according to *their own* pronunciation, which was frequently far from correct. In glancing, for example, at the portions of Domesday Book for the counties of Middlesex and Surrey, which have been edited with indexes referring to the place names, I find illustrations of most of the peculiarities that have been already pointed out. The following are examples taken from these indexes, in which the English names are given in their modern forms :—

1. We find *w* for *wh*; as in *Watendone*, Whattingdon.

2. Also *s* for *sh* or *s-h*; as in *Gomeselle*, Gomshall. Compare *Scepertone* for Shepperton. And *c* for *ch* ; as in *Celeorde*, Chilworth ; *Cebeham*, Chobham; *Cisendone*, Chessington.

3. The omission of *h* ; as in *Orselei*, Horsley ; *Merstan*, Merstham.

4. *N* for *ng* ; as in *Beddintone*, Beddington ; *Codintone*, Cuddington ; *Edintone*, Addington ; *Padendene*, Paddington ; *Cisendone*, Chessington. Cf. *Waletone*, Wallington, where *ng* is suppressed.

5. Loss of *d* in final *ld, rd*; as in *Notfelle*, Nutfield ; *Herefelle*, Harefield ; *Scaldefor*, Shalford ; *Northala*, Northolt.

6. Final *d* for final *th* ; as in *Sudwerche*, Southwark; *Becesworde*, Betchworth. So also initial *t* for *th* ; as in *Torp*, Thorpe.

7. Simple *u* (written *o*) for initial *wu* or *wo*; as in *Odetone*, Wotton. Hence, in combination with the preceding change, the final *-worth* regularly becomes *ord* or *orde*; as in *Celeorde*, Chilworth ; *Orde*, Worth ; *Tadeorde*, Tadworth ; *Taleorde*, Talworth ; *Waleorde*, Walworth. Such spellings are easily understood, now that their principles are known.

Perhaps the most remarkable use is that of *ch* for the A.S. hard *c*; it clearly means a strongly pronounced *k*, the *h* being added to denote this ; for the Norman *ci* was pronounced as *si*. Hence it is that Kingston appears as *Chingestone*, Kingsbury as *Chingesberie*, and Kempton as *Cheneton*. Cf. *Bocheham*, Bookham ; *Wochinges*, Woking ; *Sudwerche*, Southwark.

I cannot now pursue the subject further ; but I hope I have shown how necessary it is, in consulting Early English MSS., to

examine not only the dialect, but the possibility of Norman influence, as betrayed by the difficulty of pronouncing certain English consonants, especially *gh, th, sh, wh* ; sometimes *w*, especially in the combination *wu*; initial *h*; *ng*; and some final combinations, such as *ld, lt, lk*. It is quite as necessary to observe the traces of Norman influence as to know the dialect in which pieces are written. As many of our earlier pieces are Southern, we should be particularly careful when examining pieces in that dialect.

One more consideration, and I have done. The general result is one of the highest interest. It is likely enough that, in the earliest times after the Conquest, the Normans despised the English language, and would gladly have suppressed it; a view which is encouraged in many of our books on history. Yet it expresses nearly the reverse of the main truth. As time wore on, many a Norman student, well instructed in some monastic school, and capable, from his knowledge of French, of learning Latin easily, was attracted rather than repelled by such native English literature as he could attain to, having very likely learnt to talk it, more or less correctly, from his mother or his nurse or some of the servants. It is notorious that English was respelt upon French models, and this implies a close practical acquaintance with English on the part of Norman scribes. Finding that the lower classes, and even many others among the English, steadily declined to learn French, the Norman, with his greater capacity and flexibility, gradually made up his mind to learn English. His hardest task was to pronounce some of the consonants correctly; but it is clear that he and his successors persevered in it till they finally conquered every sound but that of the *gh* in *might*, which was at last abandoned by general consent. Let us remember that the Norseman, on conquering Normandy, learnt a wholly foreign language, viz. French ; and with equal adaptability, on arriving in England, again learnt what was to him, at that time, a foreign language, though it happened to be nearly akin to the Norse of his forefathers. This reveals a capacity, a readiness, an adaptability, amounting almost to genius; and we can hardly wonder that the fusion of such a race with the duller but very resolute and determined Saxon has resulted in producing a modern nation which is fit to lead the world, especially in the very matter of language in which our Philological Society is particularly interested. So far from suppressing the native literature, we have

clear evidence that the Normans sought after it, cherished it, edited it, respelt it, and frequently translated into it their own lays, such as the lays of Horn and of Havelok; or if indeed those lays were translated by Englishmen, it is nevertheless certain that they were transcribed by Normans, who saved them from loss. We can none of us tell, at the present day, whether we are more Norman or more Saxon by descent; wherefore it behoves us to honour our ancestors of both races, and to give them their due. For myself, I propose to abandon for ever the notion in which I was once brought up, viz. that the Normans tried to destroy our English literature. On the contrary, in many cases, they did all that lay in them to save it, with considerable success.

COLLATION OF WRIGHT'S TEXT WITH THE MS.

It would be a long task to bring Wright's text into perfect agreement with the MS. throughout, because he has ignored the usage of the scribe as regards the A.S. *w* (wen) and the A.S. ʒ. This would not have mattered, if the scribe had used only one form of *w*, and one of *g*. But as he uses two forms of *w*, one of which is liable to confusion with þ and ʒ, whilst the other is always a *w*; and as he uses both ʒ and *g*, with quite different sounds (the former of which is sometimes confused with þ and A.S. *w*, whilst the other is used regularly), the complication can only be put right by a reprint of the whole piece, which I hope hereafter to achieve. I shall therefore take Wright's text as the only safe basis, and here notice such departures from the MS. as are more or less puzzling. I must also number the lines as in Morris, though it is certainly wrong in more ways than one. I may also observe here, that all the editors neglect the metrical points in the MS., which, as shown above, Wright sometimes turns into *es*. I print the A.S. *w* in italics.

14. muʒen. 15. ʒure. 27. *we* (*error for* ʒe); nu (*not* mi). 28. ʒure. 29. ʒu. 31. ʒu (with a capital); *error for* *w*u = how, *as in* 71. 33. ʒure. 34. samne. 35. werin. 37. Armo *may fairly be read as* Arme. 38. of liuis dō. 42. ʒure. 47. gleu. 51. mon. 67. hi[s], *for* he; *the* s *is cut away*. 69. cunnie. 82. aftir. 83. alsuipich (!); *meant for* al sui*w*ich, *error for* al swich. 85. oʒe. 88. kenliche (*with latter stroke of* n *cut away*).

97. cnich³ (*the* s *above the line*). 122. h de (*with letters cut away after* h). 123. *ant* he as heȝed saȝin (*with letter cut away after* d; saȝin *is for* sawin, i.e. sown). 125. gre (*with letters cut away after* e). 126. þe reþe (*altered to* þe erþe, *as shown above*). 127. i (*with letter cut away after* i). 128. wrþere (*with French* w; Kemble *has it right*). 131. g . . . (*with letters cut away*). 134. ȝise (*sic*; *not* guge, *as in* Wright; *error for* wise).¹ 136. he his ȝife (*with long* s; *read* he his wise). 137. like (*nothing lost*). 138. þeoh. 140. ȝiuen. 143. se (i.e. so; *not* ge, *which* Morris *explains as* yea). 145. . . . nge (*beginning cut away*); roȝen (*error for* rowen). 146. aȝen. 147. . o (*first letter cut away*); his; sȝinkin (*for* swinkin). 148. hunselþe. 149. . ch wel is him aȝueþe. 151. yanen (*with dot over the* y, *altered to* yapen *in later ink, absurdly*; Morris *suggests to read* wanne, *which gives no sense; read* wunen, i.e. to dwell). 153. . . . he muȝe (*beginning cut away*). 154. he mift (*with long* s; *part of the* h *is cut away; but read* he). 157. *First letter out off*; ȝueþe (*as in* 149). 158. bitoȝen (*perhaps for* bitowen). 163. leȝen. 165. oȝene. 167. wdode (*error for* wode). 168. þ (*with a flourish above*; *for* þat); muȝe; helden. 170. rimen (*alt. to* rinen?). 181. ȝif. 182. iwif ȝerlde ne þinc þu neure (*read* i þis werlde ne þinc þu neure; *in* þinc, *the* n *and* c *are run together*; *hence* Wright *read* þin; *the next word is* þu, *not* wil, *as the sense shows*). 183. wurþen (*all one word*). 184. Acte (*plainly*). 185. loue *or* lone. 186. þanne (*or* wanne) hit is. 187. þer fro. 188. oȝene. 196. syiþe (*with dot over* y; *for* swiþe). 198. ȝif. 202. driftin (*with long* s). 203. Moni mon. 204. eire *or* erre (*probably for* erre). 206. forlesed (*one word*). 207. betere. 208. iborin. 212. lust me. 213. lef dere (*nothing before* lef). 214. ȝu. 217. ou (*at the end of a line*; *next line begins with* re, *close against the edge*; *read* ou[e]re-goð, i.e. surpasses, *as in* Jesus MS.). 219. *The word before* senden *is illegible*; *it is* nuðe *or* mide (*not* nu). 227. ȝif. 228. areȝe. 235. Soreȝe ȝif. 236. ten areȝe. 237. bimenid. 243. þiru (*sic*) herte one (*a letter before* one *has been erased*). 244, 245. areȝe. 246. þ, *with flourish above; for* þat, *as in* 168). 250. achte. 251. her (= ere; *no stop after it*). 252. for achte. 259. þat (*misprinted* þai). 273. seȝe. 276. wraȝed (*error for* wraþed). 281. wimmon. 282. swift (*error for* swift). 283. þauc. 287. ȝung. 291. ȝif;

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¹ Of course the scribe is quite wrong; he had to copy ȝunge (young); but missed his place, and caught up ȝise from l. 136.

for-swúken (*for* for-swunken). 292. wuere (*with* wu *for* w). 294.
þat ter ben ne ville. 298. is. 299. drei3e. 306. brit on.
315. wer3e (*for* we3e?). 318. *Not* Uretu, *but* Aretu (*for*
Ared þu). 320. iwarþed, *altered to* iwraþed, *as explained
above.* 323. ofter þanne for. 326. Hue weped (*two words*).
333. seru3e (*sic*). 337. vimmon. 349. at hinden. 350. welþe
(*one word*). 351. Gin. 358. bitechen, *altered, apparently, to*
bikechen. 361. sa3e. 362. þurch. 363. lesin (*end cut off*).
386. wure (*for* ure). 391. mift (*for* mi3t; *not* nust). 399. *Not*
þe we mus; *perhaps we* þeuuif (*with a smudge after* þe); cf. l. 500.
401. leren. 402. mu3e. 406. wif is þad wel doþ; *altered to* if þad
wel doþ wis. 407. hwile he is in þis werld; *altered to* hwile he in
þis werld is. 408. þe nende. 410. quad. 412. a3en. 413. manie.
414. a3en. 416. tellen. 429. 3if. 436. wurþen. 437. 3if. 442.
ta3te. 445. were. 464. amor3e. 469. sii3h (*former* i *not dotted*);
sore3e. 473. mor3e. 474. ben muchillestin (*so* Kemble). 487.
lo.e (*for* loþe; *one letter erased after* o). 489. viste. 492.
þanne (*or* wanne). 497. 3if; bi-3ete. 498. bi3ete. 500. þeuues.
506. troyþe (*for* trowþe); de3h. 507. 3if. 508. awei. 516.
3if; du3e. 522. wer; *may be* þer. 524. sai3e. 525. 3if.
530. mid muþe mone3en. 536. doþ; mon. 542. þiin helde.
544. gin. 546. da3es du3en. 555. for-3eten. 557. 3if. 561.
mo3e; stren3he. 566. da3is. 570. atenende. 576. sigen (*error
for* se3en). 578. fele; Wright *has* fale (*sic*); *but it is* fele, *with
some later alteration.* 579. her (*not* hert); i.e. hair. 582. da3is. 593.
wuidewis (*with* wu *for* w). 594, 595, 596. ginne. 596. riften.
597. miften. 613. 3unge. 617. 3ef. 621. fot (=sot). 624. ginne.
634. taite; *or* tatte; *I think it is* tatte. 638. listis. 641. helder
mon. 647. wile. 651. þe (*twice*). 654. deit; *or* dett. 657. wiþinnin.
666. onsuerren. 667, 668. uole (=wole). 684. ten (*not* teir).
685. is (*not* his); ben (*not* beir). 696. da3es. 702. aquet. 703.
iwil. 708. þis *may be* wis (i.e. wise).