

Romances at Henry III.'s Court are examples.* In 1249 Alexander III. King of Scotland, at his coronation spoke in Latin and French; and in 1291 the English Chancellor addressing the Scotch Parliament did so in French. At certain of the Oxford Colleges as late as 1328 it was an order that the students should converse *colloquio latino vel saltem gallico*.† Late in the same century Gower had not ceased to use French, composing many poems in it, though apologizing for his want of skill therein:—

“Et si jeo nai de Francois la faconde

* * * *

Jeo suis Englois; si quier par tiele voie
Estre excusé.”‡

Indeed down to nearly 1385, boys in the English grammar-schools were taught to construe their Latin lessons into French.§ St. Francis of Assisi is said by some of his biographers to have had his original name changed to Francesco because of his early mastery of that language as a qualification for commerce. French had been the prevalent tongue of the Crusaders, and was that of the numerous Frank Courts which they established in the East, including Jerusalem and the states of the Syrian coast, Cyprus, Constantinople during the reign of the Courtenays, and the principalities of the Morea. The Catalan soldier and chronicler Ramon de Muntaner tells us that it was commonly said of the Morean chivalry that they spoke as good French as at Paris.|| Quasi-French at least was still spoken half a century later by the numerous Christians settled at Aleppo, as John Marignolli testifies;¶ and if we may trust Sir John Maundevile the Soldan of Egypt himself and four of his chief Lords “*spak Frensche righte wel!*”** Gházán Kaan, the accomplished Mongol Sovereign of Persia, to whom our Traveller conveyed a

* Lucès du Gast, one of the first of these, introduces himself thus:—“Je Lucès, Chevaliers et Sires du Chastel du Gast, voisins prochain de Salebieres, comme chevaliers amoureux enpres à translater du Latin en François une partie de cette estoire, non mie pour ce que je sache gramment de François, ainz apartient plus ma langue et ma parleure à la manière de l'Engleterre que à celle de France, comme cel qui fu en Engleterre nez, mais tele est ma volentez et mon proposement, que je en langue françoise le translaterai.” (*Hist. Litt. de La France*, xv. 494.)

† *Hist. Litt. de la France*, xv. 500.

‡ *Ibid.* 508.

§ *Tyrwhitt's Essay on Lang., etc., of Chaucer*, p. xxii. (Moxon's Ed. 1852.)

|| *Chroniques Etrangères*, p. 502.

¶ “*Loquuntur linguam quasi Gallicam, scilicet quasi de Cipro.*” (See *Cathay*, p. 332.)

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