

**COCKE LORELLES
BOTE: A
SATIRICAL POEM**

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Cocke Lorelles Bote: A Satirical Poem by Cocke Lorell & J. P. Edmond

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COCKE LORELL & J. P. EDMOND

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Cocke Lorelles Bote

A SATIRICAL POEM

From an unique copy printed by Wynkyn de Worde

"Come begin;
And you the judges bear a wary eye."

Hamlet.

ABERDEEN

J. & J. P. EDMOND & SPARK

MDCCCLXXXIV.

TO THE
LIBRARY OF
CALIFORNIA

P R E F A C E.

THE singularly interesting fragment of early English literature known as Cocke Lorelles Bote, is a satirical poem of four hundred and fourteen lines, in which various classes of society, chiefly of the lower order, are passed under review in rapid succession. The glimpse we obtain of each class is only momentary, but the author with some well chosen phrase, in that short time sketches their failings.

The original from which this poem is reprinted, is in black-letter, and is preserved in the Garrick Collection, British Museum. It

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is considered unique, but unfortunately it is imperfect at the beginning.

It was printed in London, by Wynkyn de Worde, and bears no date, but may safely be ascribed to the early part of the reign of Henry the Eighth. The idea of the "Bote," in which so many different characters are gathered together, is supposed to have been taken from Sebastian Brandt's "Shyp of Folys," which was translated into English by Alexander Barclay, and printed by Pynson at the beginning of the sixteenth century. What gives weight to this suggestion, is the fact that the wood-cuts with which the original of Cocke Lorell is illustrated, are similar to those used in the "Ship of Folys."

The hero of the poem was the leader of a notorious band of robbers which infested the

metropolis, and was probably alive at the time of its publication. He is mentioned by Samuel Rowlands in "Martin Mark-all, Beadle of Bridewell, his Defence and Answer to the Belman of London," printed in 1610, who describes him in these terms:—"After him, succeeded by general councell, one Cocke Lorrell, the most notorious knave that ever lived: by trade he was a tinker, often carrying a panne and a hammer for show: but when he came to a good booty, he would cast his profession in a ditch, and play the padder,* and then would away, and as hee past through the toune, crie, 'Ha you any worke for a tinker?' To write of his knaveries it would aske a long time: I referre you to the old manuscript remayning on record in

* Padder, or Rumpadder, a thief.—SLANG DICTIONARY.

Maunder's Hall. † This was he that reduced and brought in forme the Catalogue of Vagabonds, or Quarterne of Knaves, called the five and twentie Orders of Knaves : but because it is extant, and in every mans shop, I passe them over. . . . This Cocke Lorell continued among them longer than any of his predecessors before him, or after him, for he ruled almost two and twentie yeares, until the yeare An. Dom. 1533, and about the five and twenty yeare of K. Henry the Eight."

The "Catalogue of Vagabonds" to which Rowlands alludes in the above extract as having been written by Cocke Lorell, is a tract printed by John Awdely in 1565, and of which a second edition was issued by the

† Maunder, a beggar. —SLANG DICTIONARY.

same printer in 1575. It is not improbable that Awdely may have himself been the compiler of the "Catalogue." A copy of the edition of 1575 is in the Bodleian Library, the quaint title of which is as follows :—" The Fraternitie of Vacabondes. As wel of ruf-lyng Vacabondes, as of beggerly, of Women as of Men, of Gyrles as of Boyes, with their proper names and qualities. With a description of the crafty company of Cousoners and Shifters. Whereunto also is adioyned the xxv Orders of Knaues, otherwyse called a Quartern of Knaues Confirmed for euer by Cocke Lorell.

The Vpightman speaketh.

Our Brotherhood of Vacabondes,
If you would know where dwell ;
In graues end Barge which seldome standes,
The talke wyll shew ryght well.