

by the Troubadours in Normandy. Its French origin appears from one of the verses I extract :

“ Lordlings, listen to our lay—
We have come from far away,
To seek Christmas.
In this mansion we are told
He his yearly feast doth hold,
’Tis to-day!
May joy come from God above
To all those who Christmas love.

* * *

“ To English ale, and *Gascon wine*,
And French, doth Christmas most incline—
And Anjou’s too!”

* * *

“ Lords, by Christmas and the host
Of this mansion hear my toast—
Drink it well.
Each must drain his cup of wine;
And I first will toss off mine;
Thus I advise.—
Here then I bid you all *Wassail*,
Cursed be he who will not say, *Drinkhail*.

The other festive carols are those in honour of the boar’s head, which, treated with scant courtesy during his life, was much honoured after death at Christmas time. On the occasion of the son of Henry II. being recognised as Heir Apparent, the King himself with great pomp brought in the boar’s head, preceded by trumpeters, who announced the coming dish with joyous blast from their instruments.

Since the year 1340 the boar’s head has been the Christmas dish at Queen’s College, Oxford, and is carried in with much state and ceremony. The ancient carol being sung as the procession moves on :

“ *Caput apri deferro,*
Reddens laudes Domino.”

The origin of this custom is said to be as follows. A student of Queen’s strolled out one day as far as Shot-over Forest, some four miles from Oxford, and sat down