

been ix worthy and the best that ever were. That is to wete thre paynynis,¹ three Jewes, and three crysten men. As for the paynynis, they were tofore the Incarnacyon of Cryst whiche were named, the fyrst Hector of Troye; the second Alysaunder the grete, and the thyrd Julyus Cezar, Emperour of Rome, of whome thystoryes ben wel kno and had. And as for the thre Jewes whyche also were tofore thyncarnacyon of our Lord, of whome the fyrst was Duc Josue, whyche brought the chyldren of Israhel into the londe of beheste; the second Dauyd, kyng of Jherusalem, and the thyrd Judas Machabeus; of these thre the byble reherceth al theyr noble hystoryes and actes. And sythe the sayd Incarnacyon haue ben the noble crysten men stalled and admytted thorough the vnyuersal world to the nombre of the ix beste and worthy, of whome was fyrst the noble Arthur, whose noble actes I purpose to wyte in this present book here folow-
yng. The second was Charlemayn, or Charles the grete, of whome thystorye is had in many places both in frensshe and englysshe, and the thyrd and last was Godefray of boloyne."

The Mab'i-no'ge-on.

It has been well known to the literati and antiquarians of Europe that there exist in the great public libraries voluminous manuscripts of romances and tales once popular, but which, on the invention of printing, had already become antiquated, and fallen into neglect. They were therefore never printed, and seldom perused even by the learned, until about a century ago, when attention was again directed to them, and they were found very curious monuments of ancient manners, habits, and modes of thinking. There was a class of manuscripts of this kind which were known, or rather suspected, to be both curious and valuable, but which it seemed almost hopeless to expect ever to see in fair printed English. These were the Welsh popular tales, called "Mabinogion," a plural word, the singular being Mabinogi, a tale. The Welsh is a spoken language among the peasantry of Wales, but is entirely neglected by the learned, unless they are natives of the principality. Of the few Welsh scholars, none were found who took sufficient interest in this branch of learning to give these productions to the English public. Southey

¹ Pagans.