

Paul Meyer¹ objects to any classification at all. He considers the popular language of France as an *ensemble* which it is arbitrary to divide into dialect groups. While it is true, as he states, that the linguistic peculiarities of one district dovetail into what is called the dialect of a neighboring district, and that often there is no single characteristic which can be set down as belonging exclusively to what is known as a certain dialect; yet the sum of all the phenomena of one district compared with the sum of all the phenomena of a neighboring district, renders a dialect separation between these two districts not arbitrary, but rational.² It is for this reason that I speak of a Picard dialect, and of a patois of that dialect.

After the dawn of European history the first people found dwelling in the territory which, afterwards, became known as Picardy, were the Belgians,—a branch of the Celtic family. These occupied the country between the Seine and the Rhine, the Vosges mountains and the Ocean. With regard to the degree of mixture which existed between this people and the Germans, nothing is known before the wandering of the German tribes whom Cæsar found inhabiting this territory, which, under Roman rule, was known as *Belgica Secunda*, were the *Suessiones* (around Soissons), the *Bellovaces* (of Beauvais), the *Amibiani* (of Amiens and Poitou), and the *Vermandui* (of the Vermandois). All these tribes were conquered during Cæsar's Expedition of 57 B. C., and, from that time, the work of romanising went on. From the time of the Roman conquest to the time of the Frankish invasion, in the fifth century, large numbers of Germans were employed as mercenaries in the Roman army, and, at the close of a war, these were frequently paid off by grants of land, on which they settled as colonists. Such a Germanic colony was founded at Amiens, but of the source of the Germans who composed it nothing is known.

After more than four centuries and a half of Roman rule, came the advance of the Teutonic hordes on Gaul, and, in the year 406, Amiens and the surrounding country fell into the hands of the Suevi, Vandals and Alans. Meanwhile, the Franks had been continually encroaching upon the northeastern part of the Gallic territory, and in the year 355, they occupied a space of three hundred *stadia* on this side the Rhine, and had devastated

¹ *Romania* iv, 294-6; *ibid.* v, 504-5.

² Ascoli: *Arch. Gloth. It.* ii, 385.