

after the Conquest ; it does not *originate* in the Oriental genius (immemorially addicted to Allegory), but it instinctively *appropriates* all that Saracenic invention can suggest to the more sombre imagination of the North,—it unites the flying Griffin of Arabia to the Serpent of the Edda ; the Persian Genius to the Scandinavian Trolld,—and wherever it accepts a marvel, it seeks to insinuate a type. This peculiarity, which distinguishes the spiritual essence of the modern from the sensuous character of ancient poetry, especially the Roman, is visible wherever a tribe allied to the Goth, the Frank, or the Teuton, carries with it the deep mysteries of the Christian faith. Even in sunny Provence it transfuses a subtler and graver moral into the song of the lively troubadour,*—and weaves “The Dance of Death,” by the joyous streams, and amidst the glowing orange groves, of Spain. Onwards, this undercurrent of meaning flowed, through the various phases of civilization :—it pervaded alike the popular Satire and the dramatic Mystery ; —and, preserving its thoughtful calm amidst all the stirring passions that agitated mankind in the age subsequent to the Reformation, not only suffused the luxuriant fancy of the dreamy Spenser, but communicated to the practical intellect of Shakespeare that subtle and recondite wisdom which seems the more inexhaustible the more it is examined, and suggests to every new inquirer some new problem in the philosophy of Human Life.

* ‘Rien n’est plus commun dans la poésie provençale que l’allégorie ; seulement elle est un jeu d’esprit au lieu d’être une action. . . . Une autre analogie me paraît plus spontanée qu’limitée—la poésie des troubadours qu’on suppose frivole, a souvent retracée des sentimens graves et touchants,’ &c.—VILLEMARIN, *Tableau du Moyen Age*.”