

inventors of form, and slaves to their invention. And we can easily understand how, in addition to the charm which we all confess in poetic measure, the manner of preserving and communicating these verses tended to promote attention to harmonious and regular endings. The bard or jongleur who learned these poems to recite or sing in the king's court or noble's hall, would have his memory greatly assisted by the frequent recurrence of similar sounds, while the listeners, expecting them at regular intervals, would experience the pleasure of anticipation gratified. Almost every measure that has a recognized place in European literature may be found amongst these ballads, aubades, tenons, serenades, and sirventes. Perhaps it is not less an argument in favour of the assumption that "art is form" than it is an admission how far the beauty of this poetry was dependent upon rhyme and measure, to say that its sweetness and flavour are lost in a literal translation. I will borrow two stanzas from Mr. Thomas Roscoe's translation of a characteristic song by Bertrand de Born, an ardent warrior and one of the more celebrated Troubadours. His lady love is jealous, probably with sufficient reason, and Bertrand sings :

So may I lose my hawk, ere he can spring,  
Borne from my hand by some bold falcon's wing,  
Mangled and torn before my very eye,  
If every word thou utterest does not bring  
More joy to me than Fortune's favoring,  
Or all the bliss another's love might buy.

So with my shield on neck, mid storm and rain,  
With vizor blinding me and shortened rein,  
And stirrups far too long, so may I ride,  
So may my trotting charger give me pain,  
So may the ostler treat me with disdain,  
As they who tell those tales have grossly lied.

Love was the favourite subject of these southern poets. Of nature too—the coming of dawn, the falling of night, the return of spring—they sang in polished verse; nor did they wholly neglect the martial muse, though this was more assiduously cultivated in the north. Despite all the beauty, the tenderness and delicacy, the finished art of these productions, one must choose those that may be properly reproduced, for if these poets were very regular in their rhyme, they, *en revanche*, were frequently rather irregular in their habits; though they might not take great liberties of poetic licence, yet they held themselves liable to but slight moral restraint.

Their apologist must plead the times, the moral standard of their age, as their excuse. No doubt, as Sismondi and others claim, they were rather above than under these standards. If they did not condemn vice, they refined away some of its grossness. They tended to soften the manners of a warlike age, to lessen the too prevalent cruelty, and to elevate the condition of woman and surround her with that almost reverential respect which we are accustomed to speak of as chivalrous.

So many of their songs are devoted to the joy and beauty of returning spring that I give one stanza from Earl Conrad of Kirchberg :

May, sweet May, again is come,  
May, that frees the lands from gloom,  
Children, children, up and see  
All her stores of jollity ;  
O'er the laughing hedgerow's side  
She hath spread her treasures wide ;  
She is in the greenwood's shade,  
Where the nightingale has made  
Every branch and every tree  
Ring with her sweet melody ;  
Hill and dale are May's own treasures,  
Youth, rejoice in sportive measures ;  
Sing ye ! Join the chorus gay !  
Hail this merry, merry May !

It cannot be fairly taken as an argument against the alleged beneficial influence of the Troubadours, that Folquet, one of the most cruel and treacherous leaders of that infamous crusade against the Albigenes, had been one of them, or that Izarn, a Dominican Missionary and inquisitor, borrowed their measure. He testified at least his zeal in about eight hundred alexandrine verses containing an argument with one of the Albigenes. I borrow a translation of one stanza, which will illustrate the convincing nature of the argument and the spirit that animated these crusaders :

As you declare you won't believe, 'tis fit that you should burn,  
And as your fellows have been burnt, that you shall blaze in  
turn ;  
And as you've disobeyed the will of God and of St. Paul,  
Which no'er was found within your heart, nor pass'd your  
teeth at all,  
The fire is lit, the pitch is hot, and ready is the stake,  
That through these tortures, for your sins, your passage you  
may take.

The poet may find abundant opportunity to revel in this bright literature of sunny France. Much he