

beginning of the active literary period of the South antedated that of the North by a somewhat greater interval.

For three centuries beginning about 1050, Southern France was especially a land of chivalry and song, and the Troubadours who vied to fill Provence with brilliant poetry were numbered by thousands. Italy, and Northern Spain where the same language was then spoken, caught the spirit, and even England was not too far off to faintly echo back the strain. The lion-hearted Richard—quite as much French as English, we must confess, and bound to the South by the possessions which his mother Eleanor had carried over to the English crown—added Troubadour to his other titles. Nor was he without knightly and royal company in cultivating the muse. We find in the list the names of Frederick Barbarossa of Germany, Alfonso II. and Peter III. of Aragon, Frederick III. of Sicily, and a large number of knights and nobles, while many others were patrons of humbler bards.

While the poet of lowly origin was pretty sure of recognition and material aid, yet it seems not at all improbable that rank and power enjoyed by the author imparted, at least according to the taste of his contemporaries, a special flavour to his verse. Frederick of Germany met, in 1154, at Turin, Raymond Berenger, Count of Provence. The latter was attended by a great number of the poets of his land, most of them nobles, and Frederick, who spoke several languages, testified his appreciation of their literary productions by these lines :

Plas mi cavalier Francez,
E la donna Catalana,
E l'onrar del Ginoes
E la court de Castellana
Lou cantar Provencalez
E la danza Trevisiana
E lon corps Aragones
E la perle Juliana
La mans e kara d'Angles.
E lon donzel de Toscana.

This will afford a glimpse of the *Languedoc* as well as would a better poem. Here is a translation supposed to be from Mr. Bowring :

A Frenchman I'll have for my cavalier
And a Catalonian dame,
A Genoese for his honor clear,
And a court of Castilian fame,
The Castilian songs my ear to please,

And the dances of Trevisan,
I'll have the grace of the Arragonese
And the pearl of Julian.
An Englishman's hands and face for me,
And a youth I'll have from Tuscany.

Since limited space will prevent more quotations of the Provençal, it may be permissible to suggest here a comparison between the original and the translation, or paraphrase, while bearing in mind that the former is not selected as a favourable specimen of the Troubadours' poetry. The English, if not so musical, strikes one immediately as fuller and more varied. The necessity for this is in our language—say its poverty or its strength. It does not sufficiently abound in musically rhyming syllables to permit a dozen verses to be written with only two or three terminal sounds, or to reconcile the English ear to mere assonance, or to bring the English writer to fully acknowledge that "*L'art c'est la forme.*" Sismondi, in translating a longer passage into modern French, speaks of the great difficulty of finding in the latter language words to render all the rhymes of the wealthier Provençal.

The opinion that "*art is form*" is from a modern source. Hegel goes so far as to say that "*metre is the first and only condition absolutely demanded by poetry, yea more absolutely than a figurative picturesque diction.*" England and America have lately produced some writers whose work seems to be based on a different conception. But who shall lay down the law? Who shall tell us with authority just what is poetry and at what level the effort to reach it fails? Where shall we find an invariable standard? Was Byron right in declaring: "*So far are principles of poetry from being invariable that they never are nor ever will be settled, these principles mean nothing more than the predilections of a particular age, and every age has its own, and different ones from its predecessor?*" Marmontel, speaking of the pleasures derived from rhyme, says: "*Il ressemble à l'usage de certaines odeurs, qui ne plaisent pas, qui déplaisent même à ceux qui n'y sont pas accoutumés, et qui deviennent une jouissance et un besoin par l'habitude.*" Probably it might be shown that there are both essential and variable principles, but I content myself here with stating the question.

The Troubadours took the side of form. When poetic energy appears in their poems, it is usually in spite of poetic art. They were at once masters and