

the old French Provençal Troubadours in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, revived of late in France, and introduced into English poetry in 1872 by Mr. Andrew Lang, Mr. Austin Dobson, Mr. Edmund Gosse, and other writers, have attained such popularity that a rather extensive collection of them, edited by Mr. Gleeson White, has appeared in a volume of Mr. Walter Scott's Canterbury Poet's Series. This volume appeared in 1887, and so it is rather too late for a review of it, but yet I may be pardoned, even at this late date, for calling attention to it, and to some few of the many beauties it contains.

In dealing with these new forms, a catalogue and some definitions may not be amiss. I shall not attempt a complete list of the classes which have found a place in this anthology. The more important are the Ballade, with its variation the Chant Royal, the Rondeau and Roundel, and the Triolet. The catalogue over, we may turn to definition and description. Of the Ballade there are several varieties. In its more common aspect it consists of three stanzas of eight lines each, and a short stanza, called the envoy, of four lines. Only three rhymes may be used throughout, and every stanza must end with the same line, which thus becomes a refrain, and should strike the keynote of the whole poem. This order may be varied by making the long stanzas of ten lines each, the envoy of five lines, and by admitting a fourth rhyme. Occasionally we meet with the *Ballade with double refrain*, in which there are two refrains instead of one. The Chant Royal consists of five verses with eleven lines, and an envoy of five, with five rhymes. The Rondeau consists of thirteen lines, composed on two rhymes, and two unrhymed refrains, which are generally the first half of the first line. The Rondel, Roundel and Rondeau Redouble are less important variations of this form. Finally, the Triolet consists of eight lines, with two refrains, one of which is introduced three times, and the other twice.

This short and dry description may have given my readers some idea of the difficulty of these forms; they certainly have not been given any idea of their grace and beauty. The only way to do this is to quote, and I purpose giving some examples—that is, if the editorial space forbid not.

The Ballade so far is the most popular, and I think deservedly so. Restricted as its construction undoubtedly is, it yet, in able hands, has a great variety of expression, ranging from the sadness of "Ashes and dust in the place of a heart," and the pessimism of the "Song of the sea wind," to the flippancy of the "Ballade of Dead Thinkers," which I have selected in a spirit of tender recollection of ancient woes and essays. The examples I have quoted of the Rondeau and Roundel show their characteristics sufficiently. For the dainty elaboration of a single thought, this form is, perhaps, unsurpassed. The artificiality of the verse is forgotten, even becomes a new beauty, when the rhymes come freely and naturally, and when the refrain is the climax of the idea—in short, when the form has been handled with skill. And that the Triolet, well handled, is charming in its saucy grace. I expect no one to deny who has looked over the few instances I have culled almost at random from the many choice examples in the collection, which is the basis of all this article. And having done my part of introduction, I may retire in favor of the poems themselves, tarrying only to express the hope that these few selections will stimulate some curiosity about these new and noteworthy forms.

C.F.H.

[The selections are unavoidably held over till the next number.—Ed.]

TO — —

What would you have my friend? A measured measure?

A ripple of sweet sounds? A rhythmic flow
Of words that overrun the heart's deep silence
To fall in song below?

Nay, 'tis not mine to wake that wondrous music,

Whose raptures thrill the soul;
Not mine, in joy, to swell the glad hosannahs
That sound from pole to pole.

At best I can but gather up the fragments
Of broken music made by mine own heart,
And know that if I sing them into gladness,
I shall have done my part.

Then take my song, my friend, not for its sweetness,

Nor for the charm of subtle underflow—
Perchance it has none—but or sweet, or
wanting,

My heart hath made it so,

E.J.M.