

net was adopted from the French into the Italian versification. It occurs in the 'Roman de la Rose,' *Lais d'amour et sonnets courtois*.

Although the Italian owed much to the French and Provençal languages, the reverse cannot be asserted, and it was thought far more probable that the word was taken with the verse into Italy than that both were invented solely by some Italian poet. It used to be held that Guittone d'Arezzo was the actual inventor of the sonnet. Guittone flourished during the latter part of the thirteenth century. The earliest known example is now attributed to Pier delle Vigne (given in our sixth article). This Pietro de la Vigna flourished in the first half of the thirteenth century. Legend says he begged his bread in the streets; history records that he was minister or "master-councillor" to Frederick II. of Sicily; and Dante tells us of his suicide in that terrible thirteenth canto of the "Inferno." For betraying his royal master he had been blinded and imprisoned; but as Dante makes him say:—

L'animo mio per disdegno gusto
Credendo, col morir, fuggir disdegno,
Ingiusto fece me contra me giusto.

However, Pietro lived from about 1190 to 1249, and is known as one of the leaders of the Siculo-Provençal school of Italian literature. On the authority of an eminent Italian scholar, we mention that the inspiration of this Sicilian group of early Italian poets was directly obtained from the Provençal troubadours. They reproduced the heroic and erratic sentiments of love and chivalry which flourished in France at an earlier period; but which were only galvanized into a short struggle in Sicily.

Pietro de la Vigna's sonnet may be dated about A.D. 1220 with all fairness, and the poetry of the Sicilian minister was influenced mainly by the Provençal spirit of verse which had permeated all Italy.

Now the line from the "Roman de la Rose" belongs to the first and earlier part of that poem, and is allowed by all authorities to have been composed by Guillaume de Lorris, who, on the evidence afforded by his successor in the same poem, must have composed his portion before 1240. The reference is to *lais d'amour et sonnets courtois*, and in such a style as to intimate that they were well-known forms of verse in common practice. It has been urged that the terms were generic; but French *lais* were distinguished from other forms of *vers*, and the *sonnets* referred to were just as much distinct. Provençal poetry was most prolific in invented forms. *Vers* was the term applied to other than love verse, which was called *canso*. *Canso* is probably the earlier form, or, at any rate, a dialectic form of *chanson*. There were *chanson*, *tenson*, *partimen*, *pastoreta*, *serventesc*, *alba*, *balada*, *dansa*, *descort*, *sestina*, *planti*, etc., all forms invented by Provençal troubadours, among whom were to be found minstrel-poets of all classes, from the servant to the nobleman, from the monk to the knight. These troubadours in their wanderings besieged Italy, and took with them their verses to sing, and their lutes or harps whereon to play their musical accompaniments. In the twelfth century Provençal poems were written all over Italy. The native Italian forms were few compared with the Provençal. Later, we find the *ballade*, *rondeau*, *triolet*, *chant-royal*, *virelai* and other forms from the same prolific source. The indications, therefore, would appear in favour of Provence being a far more likely birth-place for the sonnet than Italy.

Now the word *chanson* is met with very early in French literature, and it has, therefore, been thought not unlikely that the diminutive *chansonnette* may also have had an early existence. *Chansonnier* is not unfrequently found. It has, therefore, been suggested that here may be found the real origin of the term, a contraction of the *chansonnette*, for the sonnet was originally sung to music, and, therefore, a little song, as the Italian derives allow. Even if the word is not found in the older Provençal literature, that is no evidence it was not used colloquially. At any rate, the word *sonnet* occurs in the "Roman de la Rose," and was not so likely to have been derived from the Italian *sonetto*, as from the French. To those who have specially studied the Provençal language, perhaps, the clue might be found through the Provençal term *canso*, or the old French *chançon*. The celebrated *servente* composed by Richard Cœur de Lion during his confinement in the Black Tower in the year A.D. 1193 has been preserved both in the *Langue d'Oc* and the *Langue d'Oïl*, and the words *canson* and *chançon* occur in each version respectively. The term *sonnet* has no affinity with this proffered derivation, being very clearly allied to *canzone*, a song or ballad, sung without musical accompaniment. The suggestion has been made as a possible solution of a disputed point, which may help to throw back the ownership of the original form to the right proprietors, and there is certainly a strong tendency towards the Provençal bards, as the inventors of the sonnet. Further argument has been offered in support of this theory, as follows:—

Diminutives were in early use in French poetry, especially when describing the charms of the fair sex. The following are a few examples from poems of the thirteenth century:—

En ataches ou en joiaus,
Ou en aguilletes d'acier.

De la Maaille.

Si me prendrai garde a la rose,
Qui d'espinetes est enclouse.

Le Dit de la Rose.

In "Des Deux Amans"—*bouchete*, *gorgette*, etc.; in "Le Sort des Dames," etc.—*simplete*, *gorgete*, *rozigonete*, *ymagete*, etc.

It is possible that a diminutive of *chanson* may have existed, viz., *Chansonnette* was *chanson* contracted to *son*, a common word in French poems of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries! In "Resveries" occur the following lines:—

Je sai faire sons et lais
Et serventois.

Je sai bien L. sons
Toz provençiaux.

In "C'est li congiés Adan D'Arras," also,

Pour faire cans, ne sons, ne lais.

If *chanson* was contracted to *son*, it is not very improbable that the diminutive *chansonnette* would be similarly decapitated to form *sonette*.

Sismondi writes as follows regarding the Provençal troubadours and their poems: "Some sonnets are also found in their language; but, at the same time, it appears to me, that they are posterior to the earliest Italian sonnet, and even to those of Petrarch."

It is true that the earliest known sonnet is Italian; but the discovery of that specimen is so recent that it would be rash to assert it to be the first one actually written. Provençal poems undoubtedly exist which have not been thoroughly examined by experts, and it is not unlikely that the suggestion made by a lady, perfectly qualified to speak on these matters, may be useful, and earlier gems are still buried in the long beds of the Romance periods.

So long as Guittone d'Arezzo was allowed the honour given to him by Redi, of being the inventor of the verse, the Italianists stood on what might fairly be called strong ground; but in finding the earliest sonnet known to have been written by a Sicilian poet, Mr. J. A. Symonds has largely helped to clear the way for proof of the Provençal origin. The influence of the poetry of Provence was acknowledged by both Petrarch and Dante, and as a matter of fact the Italian language was not formed graphically until the 13th century. Sicily was most thoroughly Provençalized.

The Provençal theory, however, has received its death-blow from Professor Paul Meyer, of Paris, whose knowledge of old Romance language and literature is unsurpassed. He has favoured us with the following note upon the subject: "In order to understand the derivation of French and English sonnet, it must be borne in mind that old French and old Provençal *sonet*, and Italian *sonnetto* apply to two entirely different sorts of poetry. In the old French and Provençal, *sonet* is simply a song; from such expressions as *sonet leng-er* in Provençal, it seems that it was a song of a somewhat popular kind. In fact the songs where the name *sonet* appears present generally a very simple strophic disposition. *Sonet* is of course derived (it is a diminutive) from *son*. It can have no possible connection with *chanson*, *chansonnette*. The *sonetto* is generally applied to a special kind of poetry, viz., to the 14 line stanza. That kind of poetry is certainly of Italian origin. There is no doubt about that. The authors who were inclined to assume a Provençal origin have been misled, either because they misunderstood the meaning of Provençal *sonet* (supposing wrongly it had the same meaning as Italian *sonetto*), or because they believed that the Provençals made *sonetti* in the Italian sense. Now there are some Provençal *sonets* similar in construction to the Italian *sonetti*; but they are 16th century forgeries. I proved some eighteen or twenty years ago in my 'Derniers Troubadours' that the sonnets edited by Jehan de Nostredame were forged by him, and it is sure now that Dante Maiano's Provençal *sonets* have not, as supposed, been written in the 13th century, but belong to the 15th or 16th. It is certain that the sonnet in the Italian sense (the 14 line stanza) has been adopted by French poets from Italian models about the end of the 15th century."

Amabrichi, who died in A.D. 1321, wrote a very perfect sonnet in Provençal to Robert, King of Naples; but this was an imitation of the Italian form. It is relevant to remark that some French scholars still claim the origin of the sonnet to be Provençal; but it must be admitted that, so far as direct evidence and rational argument lead to a conclusion, the Italian derivation and origin must be allowed to the sonnet both in name and form.

If any lover of sonnets would prefer another origin of this form of verse, there are several theories to select from. The Greek epigram, the Latin ode, the Greek ode, and the Arabian *ghazale* have been suggested; but in each case the theory is a creation of fanciful bias.

The Greek epigram was originally an inscription of some kind, and afterwards became the embodiment of a particular thought or fact; its satirical development being still more recent. The unity of idea necessary to epigrammatic expression has some analogy to the sonnet unity; but beyond this there is no similarity. In construction they are entirely opposed; the epigram not being structurally defined or limited, whereas the sonnet is rigidly prescribed as to form.

The ode has little to recommend it as the sonnet's ancestor. A regular arrangement of its parts—strophes, antistrophes, epodes, and antepodes—occur; and attention has been called to the fact that strophes and antistrophes of fourteen lines in length are to be found in the odes of Pindar. Certain unrhymed octosyllabic poems of Anacreon also contain the fatal fourteen lines, and the sonnet has been referred to these. The Arabians were particularly fond of rhyme, and the sonnet has found some admirers of Oriental taste, who prefer a Saracenic origin.

If, however, mere external form is to be considered, the sonnet may be ascribed to any poem, from a couplet to an epic. If, on the other hand, the essential unity of thought or feeling is alone looked to, the old Greek epigram, or the Italian *stornello*, have equal claims. The fact remains, however, that the sonnet has been always a combination of these two points: a definite structure of fourteen lines, only varied to be destroyed, and an expression of one thought or feeling. It is in this dual harmony the sonnet can only exist, and therein it also differs from any other known form of verse. The fallacy of deriving it either from mere structural analogy or from internal similarity is at once apparent. Such ingenuity is only fanciful, and there is no need to say more than that two sonnets are derived from a ballade because the latter is twenty-eight lines in length, and therefore contains the *raison d'être* of the sonnets.

Edwin Guest, in his valuable history of English rhythm, after speaking of some Italian staves, writes thus: "But of all the importations from Italy the most important was certainly the sonnet. This celebrated stanza is said to have been invented by the Sicilians; but to Petrarch it owes its celebrity, and to his works should we look for its peculiarities of structure."

We cannot altogether agree with this, for it seems only right that the whole range of early sonnet literature should be viewed in order to thoroughly understand its structure. The sonnet has had a remarkable development, occasionally retarded by periods of degeneracy. To learn fully the structure of a plant it is necessary to watch its growth from the first appearance, and it would be folly to ignore it until it came into full bloom. With Petrarch the sonnet was in splendid florescence; but we must find earlier specimens if we would learn its history and progress toward perfection. Mr. Theodore Watts has said: "That the sonnet was invented, not in Provence, as French critics pretend, but in Italy in the thirteenth century, is pretty clear; but by whom, is still, perhaps, an open question." The "perhaps" is an unnecessary limitation. It is undoubtedly, an open question, not only as to the actual inventor, but also as to the place of invention. Mr. Symonds' discovery of the Pier della Vigne sonnet of A.D. 1220 (circ.) dislodged the older pretensions of those who claimed Guittone d'Arezzo, A.D. 1250 (circ.), as the inventor, and changed the locality of the first sonnet from the Tuscan to the Siculo-Provençal school of poetry. SAREPTA.

THE WORLD.

THE world, 'tis said, hath never aught but thorns,
Wherewith to crown her prophets, and she scorns
Each word of theirs as idle, babbling breath,
Till hands fall down and lips are mute in death.
If this be true, let's look to it; for, to-day
And always, prophets 'mongst us point the way.
Let us their message read aright, and try
Their hands to raise; for, oh, friend, you and I,
We are the world!

KATHERINE B. COUTTS.

CULTURE AND PRACTICAL POWER.

WE have been frequently told that we live in a democratic country. Happy is that democracy which has an aristocracy of knowledge. The power of adapting means to ends is that which astonishes us in instinct, excites our admiration in man, and fills us with awe, bewilderment and worship when we contemplate the works of God. The power of adapting means to ends is what we call practical power, and in proportion as we can adapt means to ends are we practical men.

Man is distinguished from all other animals in that he can contemplate himself as an object of cultivation and improvement. Happily or unhappily we are debarred from applying heredity to man. But there can be little doubt that as education becomes more diffused, and the sense of duty to the future becomes more sensitive and vegete, principles of action will do for mankind what man does now for the lower animals. We all feel instinctively that the education of any human being should begin three or four generations before he was born. Why else do we want to know who was the father, who the mother of a distinguished man? Why does a wise biographer tell us not only about his father and mother but about his grandfather and grandmother as well? Why is it that men go still farther back? It is because we know from observation that not only does God visit the sins of the fathers on the children, but he has so ordered it that the character of each generation shall reflect characteristics of those immediately preceding, thereby making progress and deterioration possible, widening, deepening, lengthening responsibility, and giving a fearful meaning to the words "that no man liveth for himself." But when the ancestry has been all that we could desire or the reverse, the character and capacity of the mature human being will greatly depend on his environment during the period of growth, nay, our characters all through life to the last hour are shaped, coloured, qualified by the air we breathe, the food we eat, what we drink, our companions, the books we read, and to an incalculable extent by the ideas or no ideas we may have respecting the unseen world.

Therefore you cannot ask a more momentous question regarding a child than, How shall I educate him? I might have chosen to speak to you to-night on the religious sentiment as an educational force, and shown that an