

A well-known old Roman poet has said that there were plenty of brave men before Agamemnon, but their fame and example have been lost to posterity because they did not happen to have a chronicler and sacred bard that Agamemnon was so fortunate as to meet with.

We desire to prevent the utter oblivion of the organizers and first followers of our country who did such good service in the past for us, their descendants. The same task which we have undertaken for the county of York and city of Toronto has been undertaken by the pioneer and historical societies which have lately been founded in several other counties of Ontario, and which we hope will ere long be founded in every one of the counties of Ontario.

The report of the proceedings at Brampton a few weeks ago of the General Pioneer and Historical Society of Ontario is very cheering in this respect. Of that Society we have in the present assemblage several representatives who will in due course address us. What all the societies of this description aim at is that the memory and example of our brave men in the past, our pioneers and founders of communities, should not be utterly lost. Our pioneer and historical societies are to furnish the chroniclers who are not to allow the achievements and wisdom of our worthy forefathers to perish—chroniclers either in prose or verse; and already the good work has begun.

In numerous special papers that have been read from time to time at gatherings of our historical societies, most valuable records have been made of Canadian local history in prose, and talented bards have not been wanting to sing of our heroic past as witness a Kirby, a Mair, and others, among them an honoured member of our own Toronto Society here present, Mrs. Curzon. All primitive annals, sacred as well as secular, derive much of their charm from narratives and documents, homely, miscellaneous, and often metrical in form, resembling those which the local writers referred to have put together and given to the world.

Members of the Local Government have expressed a willingness to help forward a scheme for preserving family manuscripts and fugitive documents bearing on the early history of the country, likely otherwise to be irretrievably lost. It is possible that in this way a volume may from time to time be printed containing very valuable and most interesting matter. It will be our duty to unite in pressing upon the Government the execution of some such plan. Many papers and documents now in the possession of our societies may thus be permanently enregistered and several pieces that have already been committed to print, but which from their isolation are still in some danger of being lost, may be printed again; I refer to such documents as Major Littlehale's journal and Governor Simcoe's letter to Sir Joseph Banks, both published not long since by myself, the interesting journal of Surveyor-General Ridout, to be seen in Mrs. Edgar's lately published work, the journal of Hon. Alexander Macdonnell kept during the first exploratory tour to Matchedash Bay and Penetanguishene in 1793, and other documents of a similar description not yet in print. In the Crown Lands Department of Ontario the Field Notes and other manuscript of the pioneer land surveyor, Augustus Jones, are still preserved, which would all prove of a widespread public interest could they once be made to see the light through the public press.

Members of the Local Government have likewise expressed a willingness to establish in some fitting place a museum of relics other than these literary ones, illustrative of our past and pioneer life generally. This is an idea which we must all feel pleased to promote.

Already has such an idea been broached in our Society for the County of York, and in fact we have made a slight commencement of such a collection; but I think that the formation of a museum which would be worthy of our Society and of the country at large is much beyond our capability, and it will be the wiser plan to fall in with the Government arrangement, whatever it may prove to be, when convenient quarters will doubtless be found for our collection, together with the collections probably of the other County Pioneer Societies, within the walls possibly of the new Parliament Buildings themselves.

Another project which I confidently trust all our Pioneer and Historical Societies will unite in promoting among themselves, and with the members of the Government, is the speedy erection of a monument to Governor Simcoe, the organizer of the Province of Upper Canada and founder of the city of Toronto,—this monument to be appropriately placed in front of the main entrance to the new Parliament Buildings in the Queen's Park at Toronto.

I have heard it stated that for the execution of such a statue it will be difficult to procure a proper likeness of Governor Simcoe, but this is by no means the case. A copy of the identical likeness which furnished the model for the head of Governor Simcoe on the marble monument erected to his memory in the Cathedral at Exeter, Devonshire, England, was furnished to me some twenty years ago by Capt. John Kennaway Simcoe, R.N., grandson and lineal representative of Governor Simcoe, from which the fine life-sized portrait of our first Governor was painted for the collection of gubernatorial portraits now adorning the interior of Government House, Toronto. In constructing a model for the statue proposed in front of the Parliament Buildings, no deviation from this most authentic likeness must be permitted. I make this remark because a slight confusion seems to have been created in the minds of some persons of our community, through the existence in London, Ontario, of a portrait in oil supposed to be a likeness of the first Governor of Upper Canada, which differs materially from the portrait furnished me by Capt. Simcoe.

I have at this moment in my pocket express authority in writing from the present representative of the Simcoe family to declare that the oil portrait referred to is, through a mistake, not authentic, and that the only portrait of the first Governor to be recognized is that which was furnished to me some twenty years since by Capt. Simcoe as already stated.*

It is much to be desired that the people of our Canadian London should have in their midst a truthful portrait of Governor Simcoe. It would not be difficult for them to obtain a replica of the excellent painting of the Governor by Berthon, now to be seen in Government House, Toronto.

PETRARCH'S CANZONIERE.

The idea of her life shall sweetly creep
Into his study of imagination;
And every lovely organ of her life
Shall come apparelled in more precious habit,
More moving delicate, and full of life
Into the eye and prospect of his soul,
Than when she lived indeed.

PETRARCH'S title to fame rests on the Canzoniere. This is the name given to a collection of sonnets and other lyrical poems, the composition of which extends over a period of more than forty years. Petrarch himself was inclined to undervalue it, and based his hopes of fame on his Latin writings; but the unanimous verdict of his critics has contradicted this judgment. Of Italian prose he has not left a line. His letters are in Latin, and are now interesting only as throwing light on his times; his other Latin works, philosophical and scientific, on which he prided himself, are inflated, bombastic, and void of interest, and have long been relegated to the limbo of unread books. The Canzoniere alone keeps its hold on the lovers of poetry; its verse still breathes the freshness and fragrance of the valleys of Vaucluse; the voice of Petrarch still speaks across the centuries, and quickens our hearts to sympathy with his sorrow.

The fame of the Canzoniere was not long confined to France and Italy. Petrarch's repeated travels in other countries doubtless contributed to the celebrity it soon acquired throughout Europe. In England the influence of Italian poetry was quickly felt, although not to any great extent till the early part of the sixteenth century. By that time, the invention of printing had placed the works of foreign authors within the reach of students, and Italian literature was destined to play an important part in the growth of English literature. Even in Petrarch's time this influence had begun. Chaucer, who died in 1400, seems to have been familiar with both Petrarch and Boccaccio. Although the story of his interview with Petrarch is not authenticated, it is quite possible, as Chaucer twice visited France and Italy, once, at any rate, during the lifetime of the Italian poet. He mentions in the prologue to the "Clerke's Tale" that it was first related by the

Famous Petrarche, the laureat poete,
whose rhetoric swete
Enlumined all Itaille of poetrie.

The Canzoniere consists of four divisions: the first

* Mrs. Simcoe, widow of the late Captain John Kennaway Simcoe of the Royal Navy, writes me as follows from Wolford, near Honiton, Devon, under the date March 30, 1891: And now to answer your question. The picture you mention, and which now hangs in our hall, is not authentic. My late husband detested it. It bears no resemblance to the miniature we sent you from which the medallion in the Cathedral was copied, or to the large picture of the "Three Friends," one of them being General Simcoe as a very young man, the green coat seems the only thing, and even that is not a uniform coat; the flowing hair is hideous, and the face coarse and unpleasant. We entirely repudiate it. And indeed the lady who sent it to Miss Simcoe called it a *miniature*, so we doubt that what she intended should be sent ever came, for no one could describe it as a "miniature."

and longest containing sonnets and canzoni, written during the life of Laura, the object of Petrarch's affection; the second, those sonnets and poems written after her death; the third, sonnets and poems composed on other occasions; and the fourth, six allegorical poems, which Petrarch has called "Triumphs," and which celebrate in turn the glories of Love, Chastity, Death, Fame, Time and Divinity. The sonnet was Petrarch's favourite form of verse, and of these the Canzoniere contains no less than 317. Though Petrarch was not the inventor of the sonnet, he so improved and beautified it, he gained such complete mastery over it, that much of its subsequent perfection of form is due to him. The flexibility of the Italian language, and the facility it offers of finding rhymes, render it specially suitable to this form of poetry, which imposes more limitations on the poetic faculty than any other. Petrarch accepted the limitations of this "bed of Procrustes," and very few variations are found in the forms he employs. Four, or at the most five, rhymes are used, and there is little change in the arrangement. In the 317 sonnets we find only two variations in the first two quatrains; the form most generally employed making the 1st and 4th lines of both quatrains rhyme, the intermediate couplets also rhyming with each other. The second form is that familiar to English readers in the Shakespearian sonnet, with alternate rhymes in the first eight lines, in Italian only two rhymes being used throughout. There is a little more variety in the final six lines, but even here we only find seven variations. These are the "proper" or Italian sonnets. It is only necessary to examine the small collection of sonnets in Palgrave's "Golden Treasury," to discover the licence which has since been admitted in the English sonnet. No less than twenty-three variations exist in the fifty-two sonnets it contains, and of these two or three, such as Shelley's "Azymandias," defy analysis. The first cause of their diversity was doubtless the difficulty of finding a sufficient number of rhymes in a language like the English, which, unlike the Italian, possesses such an endless variety of terminations. This difficulty was felt by the earlier translators of Petrarch. Wyatt and Surrey, in many cases, abandoned the attempt to preserve the same rhymes throughout the quatrains, and make each one rhyme independently. The other forms of verse found among Petrarch's shorter poems were derived from the Provençal poets, but he did not in every case confine himself to the rules established among them. His canzoni differ from the canzoni of the Troubadours and Trouvères, which invariably count of five stanzas and an envoy. Those of Petrarch vary considerably in length, and some stanzas contain as many as twenty lines. The finest of these are the odes contained in the third part of the Canzoniere. Of the madrigal, ballad and sestina, all of which are found among Petrarch's poems, the first two are familiar, in a different form, to all students of English poetry. They are the least conventional of any of the old Provençal poems of verse, just as the sestina is the most complicated and difficult. It consists of six six-lined stanzas and an envoy. The stanzas do not rhyme, but the six words ending each line of the first stanza are repeated in every other verse, the order being reversed, so that the 6th, 1st, 5th, 2nd, 4th and 3rd terminations of the preceding verse, always follow each other in the succeeding one. The following rude translation of three stanzas of one of Petrarch's sestinas, illustrates the order observed in the terminations:—

All living things that dwell upon the earth,
Except those few which cannot bear the sun,
Choose for their time of toil the joyous day;
But when Heaven's face is kindled by her stars,
Some in their home, some deep in lonely wood,
Seek for repose, and rest until the dawn.

And I, so soon as I behold the dawn
Break through the gloom that wraps the sleeping earth,
And rouse the beasts and birds in every wood,
Cease not to mourn while glows the radiant sun,
And soon as night awakes the myriad stars,
Weeping, I pass along, and sigh for day.

When darksome shades have chased the light of day;
When twilight hours with us make elsewhere dawn,
I look above, toward the cruel stars,
Who willed I should be framed of sentient earth,
I curse the day when first I saw the sun,
And seem some savage dweller of the woods.

Sometimes the sestina consists of twelve stanzas, and, in this case, the order of the first six is repeated. The effect is constrained and mechanical, even in Italian, and still more so in the two or three examples which exist in English.

In the "Trionfi" the poet describes in a sort of allegory, somewhat on the plan of the "Divina Commedia," from which he has largely drawn, a sequence of Triumphs, as indicated by the titles.