

will discover that speaks to his Soul—many of the creations of real genius, the products of correct feeling and taste, that neither age nor antique dress can conceal. To the mere layman, perhaps the question of greatest interest is, Where was the model after which this literary building was done, whence the seed that grew into this golden harvest, or was here indeed a case of spontaneous generation?

Various theories have been held, and have in fact not yet been reconciled.

"Greek influence," say some writers, "The spirit of Greek poetry, of the pastoral poetry especially is very evident." Ampère, like many later men would, I think, favour this view, for he tries to find the Greek spirit and idiom in the French language, although his honesty drives him to overthrow his own arguments.

History would seem, at first glance, to justify this opinion. Massilia, founded B. C. 600, had to be appealed to in the fifth century to furnish a translator for a Greek letter which Nestorius had written Celestine I., Bishop of Rome. There were other Greek cities along the coast and even inland. Ampère, referring to this period, says: "Nous verrons une aureole de civilisation grecque resplendir sur notre littoral Méditerranéen." But Bonnefon, who is at least a later authority, says of Marseilles, "La civilisation grecque fut circonscrite à cette ville."

Let us allow these two witnesses to pair, and form our own judgment from such facts as we can gather.

It is not claimed that the influence of the Greek language is to be traced in the Provençal. The verse of the Troubadours was from the first rhymed. No knowledge of the Greek literature, no classic quotations or references are to be found in its poetry. Is not this of itself sufficient proof? Duruy, in his *Histoire du Moyen Age*, in enumerating the different races that went to make up the population of southern France, does not mention the Greeks. The fact seems to be that Greece and the Greek language, with all the treasures it contained, had, for the time, dropped out of the knowledge of this country.

Did it grow out of the Latin? The principal arguments against the possibility of its having arisen from the Greek will apply also against its supposed Latin origin. Some would make the argument turn on the fact of the Provençal poetry being rhymed; others maintain that, soon after the fall of the empire, rhyme

was introduced into ecclesiastical Latin. There is room for considerable discussion here, but it would not contribute to settle the main question. In fact it does not rest on this point, and it is pretty generally admitted on other grounds that the Troubadours did not find their models in the language of Rome.

There remains another theory, which Sismondi urges with some show of plausibility. It makes the Provençals, imitators of the Arabians. It is well known that the followers of the Prophet were advanced in literature, arts and science, and that modern Europe is in all these respects greatly their debtor. Before they had passed the limits of their own peninsula, they had a poetic literature, and had taken advantage of the facility which the richness of their language in synonyms afforded for rhyme. It is argued that during the early period of the Troubadours, some of the Provençals came into contact with the Moors, through the wars of the latter with the Spaniards, and thus were reached by the influence of Arabian culture, and made pupils of the Moorish poets.

There are not wanting objections to this alleged solution of the question under review. It seems a little strange that those who assert that the north and south of France exerted scarcely any mutual influence at the beginnings of their respective literatures, should find it more easy to believe that the south was subjected to Arabian influence through the occasional assistance afforded by some of her knights to the Spaniards in their Moorish wars.

Are we obliged, in spite of difficulties of race, of language and of geography, to prove a foreign origin of Provençal song? Though the Romans built their fleet after the model of the enemy's derelict, yet the South-Sea Islander hollowed his craft, and the Indian fashioned his graceful canoe after a hint that nature had furnished by some drifting log or wind-driven fragment of bark. Must we trace for every poetic literature a lineal descent from Homer or Sappho ere we admit its claim to gentility? Then the modern Pegasus is harnessed, and more than that, his pace is measured by the fancied tracks of his winged predecessor. But is there not somewhat of absurdity in our common desire to trace everything back to Eden, or, at the very least, to Hellas? Given the same general conditions, is there not enough of sameness in the human mind to produce similar