

* 275

* CHAPTER XVI.

PROVENÇAL LITERATURE IN SPAIN.—PROVENCE.—ITS BARBARIAN CONQUERORS.—ORIGIN OF THE PROVENÇAL LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE.—BARCELONA.—DIALECT OF CATALONIA.—ARAGON.—TROUBADOUR POETS IN CATALONIA AND ARAGON.—WAR OF THE ALBIGENSES.—PETER THE SECOND.—JAMES THE CONQUEROR AND HIS CHRONICLE.—RAMON MUNTANER AND HIS CHRONICLE.—DECAY OF POETRY IN PROVENCE, AND DECAY OF PROVENÇAL POETRY IN SPAIN.—CATALONIAN DIALECT.

PROVENÇAL literature appeared in Spain as early as any portion of the Castilian, with which we have thus far been exclusively occupied. Its introduction was natural, and, being intimately connected with the history of political power in both Provence and Spain, can be at once explained, at least so far as to account for its prevalence in the quarter of the Peninsula where, during three centuries, it predominated, and for its large influence throughout the rest of the country, both at that time and afterwards.

Provence—or, in other words, that part of the South of France which extends from Italy to Spain, and which originally obtained its name in consequence of the consideration it enjoyed as an early and most important province of Rome—was singularly fortunate, during the latter period of the Middle Ages, in its exemption from many of the troubles of those troubled times.¹ While the great movement of the Northern nations lasted, Provence was disturbed chiefly by the Alani, Vandali, and Suevi, fierce tribes who

¹ F. Diez, *Troubadours*, Zwickau, 1826, 8vo, p. 5. "Breviterque Italia verius quam Provincia,"—rather another Italy than a Province,—says Pliny the elder when expressing his

great admiration for its race of men, its culture, and its wealth. (*Hist. Nat.*, Lib. III. c. 5, Ed. Franzii, 1778, Tom. III. p. 548.)

soon passed onward to Spain, leaving few traces of their character behind them; and by the Visigoths, the mildest of all the Teutonic invaders, * who did not reach the South of France till * 276 they had been long resident in Italy, and, when they came, established themselves at once as the permanent masters of that tempting country.²

Greatly favored in this comparative quiet, which, though sometimes broken by internal dissension, or by the ineffectual incursions of their new Arab neighbors, was nevertheless such as was hardly known elsewhere, and favored no less by a soil and climate almost without rivals in the world, the civilization and refinement of Provence advanced faster than those of any other portion of Europe. From the year 879, a large part of it was fortunately constituted into an independent government; and, what was very remarkable, it continued under the same family till 1092, two hundred and thirteen years.³ During this second period, its territories were again much spared from the confusion that almost constantly pressed their borders and threatened their tranquillity; for the troubles that then shook the North of Italy did not cross the Alps and the Var; the Moorish power, so far from making new aggressions, maintained itself with difficulty in Catalonia; and the wars and convulsions in the North of France, from the time of the first successors of Charlemagne to that of Philip Augustus, flowed rather in the opposite direction, and furnished, at a safe distance, occupation for tempers too fierce to endure idleness.

² Pedro Salazar de Mendoza, *Monarquía de España*, Libro I. Título III. cap. 1 and 2. Ed. 1770, fol., Tom. I. pp. 53, 55.

³ Sismondi, *Histoire des Français*, Paris, 1821, 8vo, Tom. III. pp. 239, etc.

In the course of these two centuries, a language sprang up in the South and along the Mediterranean, compounded, according to the proportions of their power and refinement, from that spoken by the Northern tribes and from the degraded Latin of the country, and slowly and quietly took the place of both. With this new language appeared, as noiselessly, about the middle of the tenth century, a new literature, suited to the climate, the age, and the manners that produced it, and one which, for nearly three hundred years, seemed to be advancing * 277 towards a grace * and refinement such as had not been known since the fall of the Roman Empire.

Thus things continued under twelve princes of barbarian blood, who make little show in the wars of their times, but who seem to have governed their states with a moderation and gentleness not to have been expected amidst the general disturbance of the world. This family became extinct, in the male branch, in 1092; and in 1113 the crown of Provence was transferred, by the marriage of its heir, to Raymond Berenger, the third Count of Barcelona.⁴ The Provençal poets, many of whom were noble by birth, and all of whom, as a class, were attached to the court and its aristocracy, naturally followed their liege lady, in considerable numbers, from Arles to Barcelona, and willingly established themselves in her new capital, under a prince full of knightly accomplishments, and yet not disinclined to the arts of peace.

Nor was the change for them a great one. The Pyrenees made then, as they make now, no very

⁴ E. A. Schmidt, *Geschichte Aragoniens im Mittelalter*, Leipzig, 1828, 8vo, p. 92.

serious difference between the languages spoken on their opposite declivities; similarity of pursuits had long before induced a similarity of manners in the populations of Barcelona and of Marseilles; and if the Provençals had somewhat more of gentleness and culture, the Catalonians, from the share they had taken in the Moorish wars, possessed a more strongly marked character, and one developed in more manly proportions.⁵ At the very commencement of the twelfth century, therefore, we may fairly consider a Provençal refinement to have been introduced into the northeastern corner of Spain; and it is worth notice that this is just about the period when, as we have already seen, the ultimately national school of poetry began to show itself in quite the opposite corner of the Peninsula, amidst the mountains of Biscay and Asturias.⁶

* Political causes, however, similar to those * 278 which first brought the spirit of Provence from Arles and Marseilles to Barcelona, soon carried it further onward towards the centre of Spain. In 1137 the Counts of Barcelona obtained by marriage the kingdom of Aragon; and though they did not at once remove the seat of their government to Saragossa, they early spread through their new territories some of the refinement for which they were indebted to Provence. This remarkable family, whose power was now so fast stretching up to the North, possessed, at different times, during nearly three centuries, different

⁵ Barcelona was a prize often fought for successfully by Moors and Christians, but it was finally rescued from the misbelievers in 985 or 986. (Zurita, *Anales de Aragon*, Lib. I. c. 9.) Whatever relates to its early power and glory may be found in Capmany (*Memorias de la Antigua Ciudad de Barce-*

lona, Madrid, 1779-1792, 4 tom. 4to), and especially in the curious documents and notes in Tom. II. and IV.

⁶ The members of the French Academy, in their continuation of the *Benedictine Hist. Litt. de la France* (Paris, 4to, Tom. XVI., 1824, p. 195), trace it back a little earlier.

portions of territory on both sides of the Pyrenees, generally maintaining a control over a large part of the Northeast of Spain, and of the South of France. Between 1229 and 1253, the most distinguished of its members gave the widest extent to its empire by broad conquests from the Moors; but later the power of the Kings of Aragon became gradually circumscribed, and their territory diminished, by marriages, successions, and military disasters. Under eleven princes, however, in the direct line, and three more in the indirect, they maintained their right to the kingdom down to the year 1479, when, in the person of Ferdinand, it was united to Castile, and the solid foundations were laid on which the Spanish monarchy has ever since rested.

With this slight outline of the course of political power in the northeastern part of Spain, it will be easy to trace the origin and history of the literature that prevailed there from the beginning of the twelfth to the middle of the fifteenth century; a literature which was introduced from Provence, and retained the Provençal character till it came in contact with that more vigorous spirit which, during the same period, had been advancing from the northwest, and afterwards succeeded in giving its tone to the literature of the consolidated monarchy.⁷

⁷ Catalan patriotism has denied all this, and claimed that the Provençal literature was derived from Catalonia. See Ant. Bastero, *Crusca Provenzale*, Roma, 1724, fol., pp. 7, sqq. Torres Amat, *Prólogo to "Memorias de los Escritores Catalanes,"* and elsewhere. But it is only necessary to read what its friends have said in defence of this position, to be satisfied that it is untenable. The simple fact that the literature in question existed a full century in Provence before there is any pretence

to claim its existence in Catalonia, is decisive of the controversy, if there really be a controversy about the matter. The "*Memorias para ayudar á formar un Diccionario Critico de los Autores Catalanes,*" etc., by D. Felix Torres Amat, Bishop of Astorga, etc. (Barcelona, 1836, 8vo), is, however, an indispensable book for the history of the literature of Catalonia; for its author, descended from one of the old and distinguished families of the country, and nephew of the learned Archbishop

* The character of the old Provençal poetry * 279 is the same on both sides of the Pyrenees. In general it is graceful and devoted to love; but sometimes it becomes involved in the politics of the time, and sometimes it runs into a severe and unbecoming satire. In Catalonia, as well as in its native home, it belonged much to the court; and the highest in rank and power are the earliest and foremost on its lists. Thus, both the princes who first wore the united crowns of Barcelona and Provence, and who reigned from 1113 to 1162, are often set down as Limousin or Provençal poets, though with slight claims to the honor, since not a verse has been published that can be attributed to either of them.⁸

Alfonso the Second, however, who received the crown of Aragon in 1162, and wore it till 1196, is admitted by all to have been a Troubadour. Of him we still possess a few not inelegant *coblas*, or stanzas, addressed to his lady, which are curious from the circumstance that they constitute the oldest poem in the modern dialects of Spain whose author is known to us; and one that is probably as old, or nearly as old, as any of the anonymous poetry of Castile and the North.⁹ Like * the other sovereigns * 280

Amat, who died in 1824, has devoted much of his life and of his ample means to collect materials for it. It contains more mistakes than it should; but a great deal of its information can be obtained nowhere else in a printed form. On the matter of the precedence of the Catalan over the Provençal, he follows Bastero; but does not, in several respects, go so far as his predecessor, who, among other extravagances, believes that the supremacy of his native dialect was once vindicated by a miracle; — a dumb child brought from Navarre to Catalonia being there gifted with speech by the intercession of the Virgin, but only so as to speak Catalan,

which her very parents could not understand; so that — as Bastero will have it — a sort of exclusive countenance was divinely given to the dialect of Catalonia. (*Crusca Provenzale*, p. 37.)

⁸ See the articles in Torres Amat, *Memorias*, pp. 104, 105.

⁹ The poem is in Raynouard, *Troubadours*, Tom. III. p. 118. It begins, —

Per mantas guizas m' es datz
Joys e deport e solatz.

The life of its author is in Zurita, "*Anales de Aragon*" (Lib. II.); but the few literary notices needed of him are best found in Latassa, "*Biblioteca Antigua*

of his age, who loved and practised the art of the *gai saber*, Alfonso collected poets about his person. Pierre Rogiers was at his court, and so were Pierre Raimond de Toulouse, and Aiméric de Péguilain, who mourned his patron's death in verse,—all three famous troubadours in their time, and all three honored and favored at Barcelona.¹⁰ There can be no doubt, therefore, that a Provençal spirit was already established and spreading in that part of Spain before the end of the twelfth century.

In the beginning of the next century, external circumstances imparted a great impulse to this spirit in Aragon. From 1209 to 1229, the shameful war which gave birth to the Inquisition was carried on with extraordinary cruelty and fury against the Albigenses; a religious sect in Provence accused of heresy, but persecuted rather by an implacable political ambition. To this sect—which, in some points, opposed the pretensions of the See of Rome, and was at last exterminated by a crusade under the Papal authority—belonged nearly all the contemporary Troubadours, whose poetry is full of their sufferings and remonstrances.¹¹ In their great distress, the principal ally

de los Escritores Aragoneses" (Zaragoza, 1796, 8vo, Tom. I. p. 175), and in the "Histoire Littéraire de la France" (Paris, 4to, Tom. XV., 1820, p. 158). As to the word *coblas*, I cannot but think—notwithstanding all the refined discussions about it in Raynouard (Tom. II. pp. 174–178) and Diez, "Troubadours" (p. 111 and note)—that it was quite synonymous with the Spanish *coplas*, and may, for all common purposes, be translated by our English *stanzas*, or even sometimes by *couplets*.

¹⁰ For Pierre Rogiers, see Raynouard, Troubadours, Tom. V. p. 330, Tom. III. pp. 27, etc., with Millot, Hist. Litt. des Troubadours, Paris, 1774, 12mo, Tom. I. pp. 103, etc., and the Hist. Litt. de la France, Tom. XV. p. 459.

For Pierre Raimond de Toulouse, see Raynouard, Tom. V. p. 322, and Tom. III. p. 120, with Hist. Litt. de la France, Tom. XV. p. 457, and Crescimbeni, Istoria della Volgar Poesia (Roma, 1710, 4to, Tom. II. p. 55), where, on the authority of a manuscript in the Vatican, he says of Pierre Raimond, "Andò in corte del Re Alfonso d' Aragona, che l'accolse e molto onorò." For Aiméric de Péguilain, see Hist. Litt. de la France, Paris, 4to, Tom. XVIII., 1835, p. 684.

¹¹ Sismondi (Hist. des Français, Paris, 8vo, Tom. VI. and VII., 1823, 1826) gives an ample account of the cruelties and horrors of the war of the Albigenses, and Llorente (Histoire de l'Inquisition, Paris, 1817, 8vo, Tom. I. p. 43) shows the connection of that war with the

of the Albigenses and Troubadours was Peter the Second of Aragon, who, in 1213, perished nobly fighting in their cause at the disastrous battle of Muret. When, therefore, the Troubadours of * Provence were compelled to escape from the * 281 burnt and bloody ruins of their homes, not a few of them hastened to the friendly court of Aragon, sure of finding themselves protected, and their art held in honor, by princes who were, at the same time, poets.

Among those who thus appeared in Spain in the time of Peter the Second were Hugues de Saint Cyr;¹² Azémar le Noir;¹³ Pons Barba;¹⁴ Raimond de Miraval, who joined in the cry urging the king to the defence of the Albigenses, in which he perished;¹⁵ and Perdigon,¹⁶ who, after being munificently entertained at his court, became, like Folquet de Marseille,¹⁷ a traitor to the cause he had espoused, and openly exulted in the king's untimely fate. But none of the poetical followers of Peter the Second did him such honor as the author of the long poem of "The War of the Albigenses," in which much of the King of Aragon's life is recorded, and a minute account given of his disastrous death.¹⁸ All, however, except Perdigon and

origin of the Inquisition. The fact that nearly all the Troubadours took part with the persecuted Albigenses is equally notorious. Histoire Litt. de la France, Tom. XVIII. p. 588, and Fauriel, Introduction to the Histoire de la Croisade contre les Hérétiques Albigeois, Paris, 1837, 4to, p. xv.

¹² Raynouard, Troub., Tom. V. p. 222, Tom. III. p. 330. Millot, Hist., Tom. II. p. 174.

¹³ Hist. Litt. de la France, Tom. XVIII. p. 586.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 644.

¹⁵ Raynouard, Troub., Tom. V. pp. 382, 386. Hist. Litt. de la France, Tom. XVII. pp. 456–467.

¹⁶ Hist. Litt. de la France, Tom. XVIII. pp. 603–605. Millot, Hist., Tom. I. p. 428.

¹⁷ For this cruel and false chief among the crusaders, praised by Petrarca (Trionfo d' Amore, C. IV.) and by Dante (Parad., IX. 94, etc.), see Hist. Litt. de la France, Tom. XVIII. p. 594. His poetry is in Raynouard, Troub., Tom. III. pp. 149–162.

¹⁸ This important poem, admirably edited by M. Charles Fauriel, who was one of the soundest and most thorough French scholars of the nineteenth century, is in a series of works on the history of France, published by order of the King of France, and begun under

Folquet, regarded him with gratitude, as their patron, and as a poet,¹⁹ who, to use the language of one of them, made himself "their head and the head of their honors."²⁰

The glorious reign of Jayme or James the Conqueror, which followed, and extended from 1213 * 282 to 1276, exhibits * the same poetical character with that of the less fortunate reign of his immediate predecessor. He protected the Troubadours, and the Troubadours, in return, praised and honored him. Guillaume Anéliar addressed a *sirvente* to him as "the young King of Aragon, who defends mercy and discountenances wrong."²¹ Nat de Mons sent him two poetical letters, one of which gives him advice concerning the composition of his court and

the auspices of M. Guizot, and by his recommendation, when he was minister of Public Instruction. It is entitled "Histoire de la Croisade contre les Hérétiques Albigeois, écrite en Vers Provençaux, par un Poète contemporain," Paris, 1837, 4to, pp. 738. It consists of 9578 verses, — the notices of Peter II. occurring chiefly in the first part of it, and the account of his death at vv. 3061, etc.

¹⁹ What remains of his poetry is in Raynouard, *Troub.*, Tom. V. pp. 290, etc., and in *Hist. Litt. de la France*, Tom. XVII., 1832, pp. 443-447, where a sufficient notice is given of his life.

²⁰ Reis d' Aragon, tornem a vos,
Car etz capz de bes et de nos.
Pons Barba.

²¹ *Hist. Litt. de la France*, Tom. XVIII. p. 553. The poem begins, —

Al jove rei d' Arago, que conferma
Merce e dreg, e malvestat desferma, etc.

A poem by him on the Civil War of Pamplona, in 1276, which drew after it such a long train of troubles, and which he describes as an eye-witness, was published at Pamplona in 1847. It consists of nearly five thousand twelve-syllable verses, each divided by a pause in the middle, and is evidently an imi-

tation of the "Histoire de la Croisade," mentioned in note 18; but what is important about it for our purpose is, that it shows the Provençal to have penetrated even to Navarre. The same rhyme, after the Provençal fashion, often runs through many verses, — sometimes forty or fifty, — but the whole is without poetical merit.

It should be noted that the Preface of this poem announces its author, Guillaume Aneliars, as an *unknown* poet. This is a mistake. He was among the more distinguished of the Troubadours. He is mentioned by Bastero, 1724, though his name (p. 85) is by him erroneously spelt Aneliars; — by Crescimbeni, 1710, Tom. II. p. 201; by Millot, 1774, Tom. III. p. 404; by Raynouard, 1817, Tom. V. p. 179; etc., etc.

It may be added, when noticing the spread of a Provençal tone to Navarre, that it was as active in Portugal as it was in Castile, so that there can be no doubt that it was recognized all over the intervening territory of Spain. King Dinis (1261-1325) seems to have introduced it into Portugal. Diez, *Über die erste Portugiesische Kunst- und Hofpoesie*. Bonn, 1863, pp. 10 sqq.

government.²² Arnaud Plagnés offered a *chanso* to his fair queen, Eleanor of Castile;²³ and Mathieu de Querci, who survived the great conqueror, poured forth at his grave the sorrows of his Christian compatriots at the loss of the great champion on whom they had depended in their struggle with the Moors.²⁴ At the same period, too, Hugues de Mataplana, a noble Catalan, held at his castle courts of love and poetical contests, in which he himself bore a large part;²⁵ while one of his neighbors, Guillaume de Bergédan, no less distinguished by poetical talent and ancient descent, but of a less honorable nature, indulged himself in a style of verse more gross than can easily be found elsewhere in the Troubadour poetry.²⁶ All, however, the bad and the good, — those who, like Sordel²⁷ and * Bernard de Rovenac,²⁸ * 283 satirized the king, and those who, like Pierre Cardenal, enjoyed his favor and praised him,²⁹ — all show that the Troubadours, in his reign, continued to seek protection in Catalonia and Aragon, where they had so long been accustomed to find it, and that their poetry was constantly taking deeper root in a soil where its nourishment was now become sure.

James himself has sometimes been reckoned among the poets of his age.³⁰ It is possible, though none of his poetry has been preserved, that he really was such; for metrical composition was easy in the flowing

²² Millot, *Hist. des Troubadours*, Tom. II. pp. 186, etc.

²³ *Hist. Litt. de la France*, Tom. XVIII. p. 635, and Raynouard, *Troub.*, Tom. V. p. 50.

²⁴ Raynouard, *Troub.*, Tom. V. pp. 261, 262. *Hist. Litt. de la France*, Tom. XIX., Paris, 1838, p. 607.

²⁵ *Hist. Litt. de la France*, Tom. XVIII. pp. 571-575.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 576-579. The poetry of Guillaume de Bergédan, or Guillem

de Berguédan, was edited by Adelbert Keller, and published at Milan and Leipzig, 8vo, 1849, pp. 61.

²⁷ Millot, *Hist.*, Tom. II. p. 92.

²⁸ Raynouard, *Troub.*, Tom. IV. pp. 203-205.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, Tom. V. p. 302. *Hist. Litt. de la France*, Tom. XX., 1842, p. 574.

³⁰ Quadrio (*Storia d'Ogni Poesia*, Bologna, 1741, 4to, Tom. II. p. 132) and Zurita (*Anales*, Lib. X. c. 42) state it, but not with proof.