

Le Pétrarquisme en France au XVI^e Siècle. Par JOSEPH VIANEY. Travaux et Mémoires de Montpellier, série littéraire III. Montpellier, Coulet, 1909.

It is forbidden to the Gallic *savant* to be uninteresting even when most erudite. This work, accordingly, which is occupied with the technical task of establishing the parallel between French and Italian Petrarchism, and determining the precise limits of French indebtedness, becomes a thoroughly readable chapter in the history of French literature. M. Vianey has no patriotic bias, and allows the fact to transpire on every page that if we look to ideas, then the French poets of the sixteenth century can make little or no claim to originality. From Marot, who fell in love with Serafino dell' Aquila at Ferrara, to Desportes, whose *livres de chevet* were the *Rime* of Pamphilo Sasso and of Tebaldeo, one and all were on the alert to catch the latest breath of literary fashion that might blow northward across the Alps. Out of the 115 sonnets of *l'Olive*, for example, barely 40 are not imitations; and that only 100 out of 430 sonnets of Desportes should be direct translations, comes to seem to M. Vianey very moderate.

M. Vianey makes it clear that the Italian Petrarchists, and not Petrarch, were the admired models; and he divides the history of French Petrarchism into three periods (which make the first three of the five chapters in his book) according to the Italian masters followed in each. During the first of them, which extends up to the publication of *l'Olive* in 1549, Serafino and Tebaldeo were the arbiters; and the pages devoted to summarizing their fantastic extravagances and conceits, which constituted the fund on which the French poets drew, are the most delightful in the book. Bembo rules the second period, which produced *l'Olive*, and the *Amours* of Ronsard, of Baïf, and of Magny (and also Du Bellay's ode *Contre les Pétrarquistes*, which was itself, however, but the reflection of a passing Italian mood), and his influence was salutary, especially as to perfection of form. But it did not endure, and the third epoch, of which Desportes was king and which saw appear the exquisite *Sonnets pour Hélène*, expressed a reaction towards preciosity, as exemplified by the Serafino of the hour, Angelo di Costanzo.

The concluding chapters are entitled respectively: *Le lyrisme chrétien chez les pétrarquistes français du XVI^e siècle*, and *La méditation historique et la satire chez les pétrarquistes français du XVI^e siècle*, and reveal the fact that in these forms of expression, likewise, French poetry was abreast of the newest Italian mode. The *Muse chrestienne*, which was a Catholic counterblast to the Huguenot poetry of du Bartas and d'Aubigné,—and which apparently had to include a number of quite secular sonnets, so they only made complaint against gold or woman!—had its prototype in many an Italian volume of *Rime spirituali*. And even Du Bellay, the most original spirit of the *Pléiade*, though indeed the first Frenchman to sing

L'antique honneur du peuple à longue robbe,

was by no means the first man; while the subjective melancholy, the freedom of personal confession enfranchised from convention, which we hail in *les Regrets*, are foreshadowed in the *Cento Sonetti di M. Alisandro Piccolomini*, published at Rome in 1549.

But M. Vianey's conclusion is, though he confesses to having passed through a period of disillusionment at the results of his investigations, that the master-

pieces of French Petrarchism generously redeem its plagiarisms. Moreover, French Petrarchism had its own originality,—an independence in the matter of poetic forms. These it never took without modification. Maurice Scève borrowed the Italian *strambotto*, but expanded its eight lines into ten; the sonnet was undergoing continual reshaping. Indeed, by picking out and assembling the statements scattered through the pages of this book, we get a complete history of the development of the sonnet-form in France. From the first, the Italian rigidity of sestet was defied, Marot actually using the particular grouping always forbidden to the Italians (CC DEED or CDDC EE, either of which transforms the sonnet from an octave plus two tercets into three quatrains plus a couplet); and we trace its development thence in the hands of various craftsmen, until Ronsard fixed the form with *Francine* (1555) into something which M. Vianey suggests is perhaps not strictly a sonnet at all,—i. e., fourteen lines of Alexandrine verse, with invariable alternation of masculine and feminine rhymes, and the use of the forbidden "Marotic" sestet.

M. Vianey makes a great point of the considerable rôle played in the history of French Petrarchism by the Italian anthologies which were continually appearing; and his appendix contains a list of the most important of them arranged in the chronological order of their publication. A chronological list of the chief works published by the French and Italian Petrarchists between the years 1499 and 1600, completes the matter of the appendix. There is also an alphabetical index.

There are a few misprints, such as *lontemps* on page 88 and *pétrasquisme* on page 294, and one other (page 284) so happy as to deserve quotation in its context, especially as it occurs in a sentence which in some sort sums up M. Vianey's attitude toward this whole question of French originality:

"Disons enfin que si certains de nos pétrarquistes ont pris leur bien chez les Italiens avec un *sang gêne* qui dépasse toutes les bornes permises, beaucoup ont eu plus de discrétion qu'on ne le soutient en général, et plusieurs ont réussi à se créer une manière vraiment personnelle."

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Kaskaskia Records, 1778-1790, Collections of the Illinois State Historical Library, Volume V. By CLARENCE W. ALVORD. Springfield, Illinois, 1909. 1 + 681 pp.

This volume offers a large number of original documents, whose bearing on the early relations between the French of Illinois and the British government on the one hand and the revolutionists on the other, is of great importance. The French spelling in these documents offers material for dialect study. The picture drawn of the gradual intrusion of the "Americans," of the justice and consideration with which they were treated by the French, of their aggressions, of their seizure of power and of the long succession of crimes committed by them against the French, is one which cannot easily be forgotten. We see here the trickery, duplicity and baseness of such "American pioneers" as Thomas Bentley, John Todd, John Dodge, while George Rogers Clark (who has recently been nominated for the Hall of Fame!) appears in something like his true colors. It is difficult for a citizen of the Republic to read these pages and not blush with shame and anger at the crimes of his ancestors.

R. W.