

columns. The large universities publish dailies and weeklies which attend to all this work and accordingly can afford to get out purely literary publications, but we smaller institutions must forego that pleasure.

---

◆◆◆

*THE MODERN PROVENÇAL REVIVAL.*

---

The literature of Southern Europe has in its origin everywhere a vigorous native growth. Of no other branch is this truer than of the Provençal. From the earlier times, *the* Province had been noted for its independent development of the civilization received in large part from Rome, in part through Marseilles from Greece. Julius Cæsar attributes the greater rudeness of the Belgians to the fact that "they are farthest distant from the culture and refinement of the Province." Pliny was so impressed by this evident culture that he declares the region "rather another Italy than a province." So when the Roman power was no more, Latin a dead language, and a new and local dialect, Provençal, the common medium of communication, a fresh manifestation of this native grace and force began, far in advance of other Latin countries. In that mild climate and upon that fertile soil, a premature refinement of thought and manners started up, which flourished through a short and brilliant season and was then as suddenly checked and blighted by the influences of the surrounding barbarism. It had reached a development not known since the fall of the Roman Empire, and had set the style of poetic diction for even the earliest Italian writers. Swept away at the beginning of the twelfth century by the fierce and cruel persecution of the Albigenses,—less a religious crusade than a movement of the most implacable, political ambition,—the Provençal literature was almost destroyed on its native soil, finding a few representatives still at the courts of petty princes with whom the exiled poets found protection, and where their art was still held in honor. From the end of the XIII century, their songs were rarely heard; with the

beginning of the XIV century, the purity of their language disappeared; and, a little later, that refined idiom which had long anticipated and even inspired some of the finest literary efforts of France and Italy sinks to the position of a dialect; which, with varying fortune, it has remained until this day.

Not until 1323 did even the Provençal people themselves realize what had been lost in the destruction of their literature, and in that year a desperate attempt was made to revive it. At Toulouse the authorities of the city formed a guild of the "Ever gay Company of the seven Troubadors." In a letter elaborately prepared in prose and verse they summoned all poets to resort to their city on the 1st of May, 1324, and there "with joy of heart contend for the prize of a golden violet," to be the reward for the best poem. With this event begins the more artificial period of Provençal verse with which we are all more or less familiar; in 1355 the board of managers was made a corporate body, under whose successors a festival of some sort has been celebrated every year at Toulouse on the 1st of May, under the names of the Floral Games.

The traveller in the south of France in our days is impressed at once with the fact that the polished language of Paris, although serving his needs in the cities and on all the main routes of travel, does not permit him to converse with the bulk of the population, whose dialect he can make nothing of. If he asks the average Frenchman of the North what these people talk, the answer is generally given with a shrug of the shoulders and a single word "Languedoc,"—the name of the dialect since its representative centre was fixed at Toulouse. Even the more learned tourist who reads the Old Provençal and is perfectly conversant with the history of the land cannot understand the present idiom, so utterly has it changed its vocabulary, its form, and its construction. Only a term here and there sounds familiar to him. The cultivated native despises the dialect and wil-