

PREFACE

THIS study of the poetry and life-work of the leader of the modern Provençal renaissance was submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at Columbia University. My interest in Mistral was first awakened by an article from the pen of the great Romance philologist, Gaston Paris, which appeared in the *Revue de Paris* in October, 1894. The idea of writing the book came to me during a visit to Provence in 1897. Two years later I visited the south of France again, and had the pleasure of seeing Mistral in his own home. It is my pleasant duty to express here once again my gratitude for his kindly hospitality and for his suggestions in regard to works upon the history of the Félibrige. Not often does he who studies the works of a poet in a foreign tongue enjoy as I did the privilege of hearing the verse from the poet's own lips. It was an hour not to be

forgotten, and the beauty of the language has been for me since then as real as that of music finely rendered, and the force of the poet's personality was impressed upon me as it scarcely could have been even from a most sympathetic and searching perusal of his works. His great influence in southern France and his great personal popularity are not difficult to understand when one has seen the man.

As the striking fact in the works of this Frenchman is that they are not written in French, but in Provençal, a considerable portion of the present essay is devoted to the language itself. But it did not appear fitting that too much space should be devoted to the purely linguistic side of the subject. There is a field here for a great deal of special study, and the results of such investigations will be embodied in special works by those who make philological studies their special province. In the first division of the present work, however, along with the life of the poet and the history of the *Félibrige*, a description of the language is given, which is an account at least of its distinctive features. A short chapter will be found devoted to the subject of the versifica-

tion of the poets who write in the new speech. This subject is not treated in Koschwitz's admirable grammar of the language.

The second division is devoted to the poems. The epics of Mistral, if we may venture to use the term, are, with the exception of Lamartine's *Jocelyn*, the most remarkable long narrative poems that have been produced in France in modern times. At least one of them would appear to be a work of the highest rank and destined to live. Among the short poems that constitute the volume called *Lis Isclo d' Or* are a number of masterpieces.

This book aims to present all the essential facts in the history of this astonishing revival of a language, and to bring out the chief aspects of Mistral's life-work. In our conclusions we have not yielded to the temptation to prophesy. The conflicting tendencies of cosmopolitanism and nationalism abroad in the world to-day give rise to fascinating speculations as to the future. In the Felibrean movement we have a very interesting problem of this kind, and no one can terminate a study of the subject without asking himself the question, "What is going to come out of it all?" No one can tell, and

so we have not ventured beyond the attempt to present the case as it actually exists.

Let me here also offer an expression of gratitude to Professor Adolphe Cohn and to Professor Henry A. Todd of Columbia University for their advice and guidance during the past six years. Their kindness and the inspiration of their example must be reckoned among those things that cannot be repaid.

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