INTRODUCTION

The influence of Italy has been stronger than that of any other nation upon the literature of England. This influence has been most marked at the most productive periods of English poetry. The use of the sonnet-form is one of the manifestations of this influence. The sonnet-form which is the only fixed form that has established itself in English poetry has maintained its place because it is the most perfect form yet produced in which to express an isolated poetical impulse.

CHAPTER I.

The sonnet-form originated in Sicily about 1300 A. D. from the union of two forms of the strambotto, a species of popular poetry. Its earliest arrangement was a, b, a, b, a, b, a, b, c, d, c, d, c, d. Its content was chivalric love. In the same century the sonnet-form passed into Northern Italy where it underwent many experimental changes which resulted in a new arrangement of its rhymes, a, b, b, a, b, a, b, c, d, c, d, c, e, and in a new content, that of a philosophical formulation of love. Francesco Petrarca (1304-1374) the greatest sonnet writer of Italy, used both arrangements of rhymes and to a small extent both kinds of material but he began a new species of poetry, the purely subjective. His collection of sonnets and lyrics, the Canzoniere, became widely known and influential.
CHAPTER II

The sonnet-form was introduced into England by a group of poets in the court of Henry VIII. Their poetry was published posthumously in 1557. A very few occasional sonnets were written between that date and 1580 when Sidney's *Astrophel and Stella*, the first collection of connected sonnets, was composed. In 1591 began a succession of collections of amatory sonnets by English poets which continued for five years. After this came four similar collections by Scotch poets. Shakespeare's sonnets (pub. 1609) ended the formative period of English sonneteering. The sonnets of this formative period included many translations of Petrarch's poetry. The poets themselves and their critics expressed their recognition of the dominance of the influence of Petrarch upon their work.

CHAPTER III

There are two distinct sonnet-forms in English poetry the Italian and the English. The latter was invented by Wyatt and Surrey the poets who first borrowed the former. These two forms differ in two ways, one the number of rhyme-sounds permissible, the other the use of the closing couplet. The Italian sonnet-form has not more than five rhyme-sounds, of which two are restricted to the first eight lines, and it has no closing couplet. The English has seven rhyme-sounds, two for each successive four lines, and it closes with a couplet. In the formative period of sonnet-writing in England the Italian form was little used, the preference being given either to the English form or to hybrids of the Italian and the Eng-
lish such as the Spenserian, a b a b b c b a c d c d e e or the Sidneian, a b b a a b b a c d c d e e; hence the influence of Petrarch on the sonnet-form in England was not great.

CHAPTER IV

The similarity between the content of Elizabethan amatory sonnets and that of Petrarch's Canzoniere is shown in (1) the general tone which is always sad and complaining, (2) the descriptions of the lady addressed (3) the egoistic attitude of the poet (4) the conflicts between love and reason (5) the renunciation sonnets, (6) the apostrophe sonnets, such as those to the nightingale, to the poet's bed, to the lady's mirror, to her native river. The similarity of style is evident from the use of like figures and conceits.
Chapter II. The sonnet form was introduced into England by a group of poets in the court of Henry VIII. Their poetry was published posthumously in 1537, in a book known as Totels Miscellaneous. A very few occasional sonnets were written after that date until 1580 when Sidney's Astrophel and Stella, the first collection of connected sonnets, was composed. In 1591 began a succession of collections of amatory sonnets by English poets which continued for five years. After this came similar collections by Scotch poets. Shakespeare's sonnets (pub. 1609) ended the formative period of English sonneteering. The sonnets of this formative period included many translations of Petrarch's poetry. The poets themselves and their critics recognized the recognition of the dominance of the influence of Petrarch upon their work.
Introduction. The influence of Italy has been stronger than that of any other nation upon the literature of England. This influence has been most marked at the most productive periods of English pastoral poetry. The use of the sonnet form is one of the manifestations of this influence. The sonnet form, which is the only fixed form that has established itself in English poetry, has maintained its place because it is the most perfect form yet produced in which to express an isolated poetic impulse.

Chapter I. The sonnet form originated in Sicily about 1208 A.D. from the union of two forms of the Strofa Torre, a species of popular poetry. Its earliest form was a b a b a b ab a b ab ed ed ed. Its content was chivalric love. In the same century it passed into Northern Italy where it underwent many experimental changes which resulted in a new arrangement of the rhymes, a b a b a b ab a c d e ed e, and in a new content that of a philosophical formulation of love. Francesco Petrarca (1304-1374) the greatest sonnet writer of Italy, used both arrangement of rhymes and both kinds of material but added a new form. He began a new species of poetry, the purely subjective. His collection of sonnets and lyrics, the Canzoniere, became widely known and influential.
Chapter III. There are two distinct sonnet forms in English poetry, the Italian and the English. The latter was invented by Wyatt and Surrey, the former was first borrowed by the latter. There are two principal differences between these two forms, one the number of rhyming sounds permissible, the other the use of the closing couplet. The Italian sonnet form has not more than five rhyming sounds, of which two are restricted to the first eight lines, and it has no closing couplet. The English has seven rhyming sounds, using two for each successive four lines, and it closes with a couplet. In the formative period of early sonnet writing in England, the Italian form was little used, the preference being given either to the English form or to hybrids of the Italian and the English, such as the Spenserian, ababbbaccedee or the Sidneyan, abababbbacdedee; hence the influence of Petrarch on the sonnet form in England was not great.
Chapter IV. The influence of Petrarch on the
themes of Elizabethan sonnets is shown by (1) the similarity in the poet’s attitude toward
the lady addressed.

Chapter IV. The Elizabethan sonnet sonnets

The similarity between Elizabethan sonnet
sonnets and Petrarch’s Canzoniere is shown
in (1) the general tone which is always very sad and
complaining, (2) the description of the lady addressed
in verse (3) the syzygic attitude of the poet, (4) the conflicts
between love and reason, (5) the manipulation sounds,
the sonnets’ poetic subjects center (5) the apostrophe
sounds, such as those to the nightingale, to the poet’s bed,
to the lady’s mirror, to her nature river.

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of like figures and conceits.