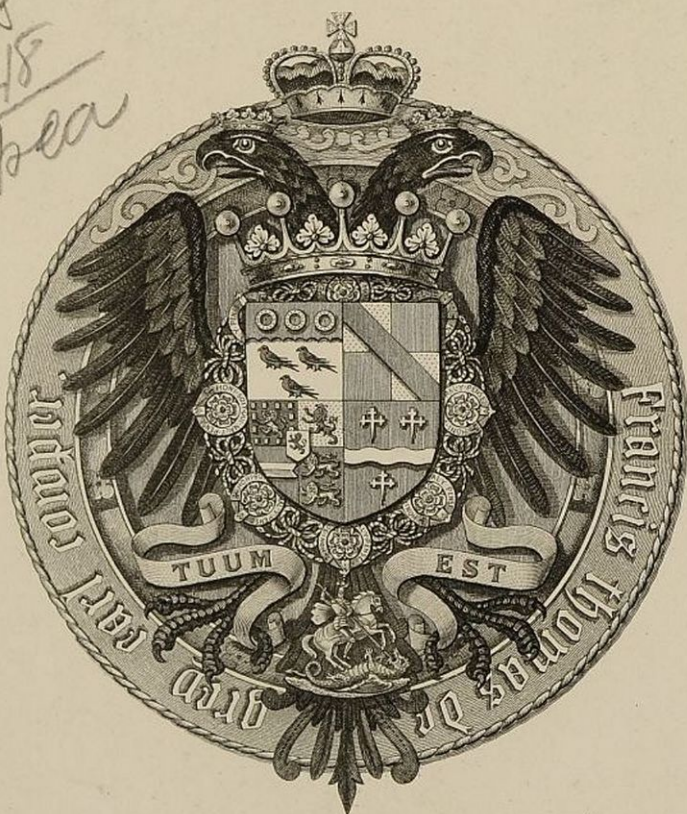


Ayuntamiento de Madrid

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Ayuntamiento de Madrid

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From the Author

Hon^{ble}
William Lamb



Scriven sculp.

Frey Lope Felix de Vega Carpio.

Nat. 1562. Ob. 1635.

Published by Longman, Hurst, Ross & Orme, June 23^d 1806.

Ayuntamiento de Madrid

SOME ACCOUNT
OF THE
LIFE AND WRITINGS
OF
LOPE FELIX DE VEGA CARPIO.

BY
HENRY RICHARD LORD HOLLAND.



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1806.

DEDICATION.

TO

DON MANUEL JOSEF QUINTANA.

SIR,

IN dedicating the following pages to you, I am not without apprehensions that my readers may accuse me of being actuated by motives very different from those which I should wish to assign. What is offered as a testimony of friendship, and an acknowledgment of obligations, they may

very plausibly suspect of being an artifice of authorship, and a gratification of vanity. Indeed, if I were disposed to assume authority with my countrymen on subjects of Castilian literature, how could I accomplish it more effectually than by insinuating that my researches were directed, and my studies assisted, by a Spaniard so eminent for purity of taste and discernment in literature as yourself? How could I more artfully imply my qualifications for judging of celebrated Spanish poets who are dead, than by proclaiming the intimacy and friendship with which I am ho-

noured by one who is living? As, however, I had rather incur the imputation of vanity with the public, than deserve that of ingratitude from you, I cannot allow these sheets to go to the press without acknowledging the advantages I have derived from your advice and conversation in collecting the materials necessary to the task which I had undertaken. Indeed, the only circumstance which could make me contemplate a work so imperfect and superficial with any complacency, would be, that it is associated in my mind with the recollection of the many pleasant hours I

passed, and the many valuable acquaintances I formed, in the country to the literature of which it is devoted.

VASSALL HOLLAND.

Holland House, Kensington,
July 19, 1806.

SOME ACCOUNT
OF THE
LIFE AND WRITINGS
OF
LOPE DE VEGA.

It is so trite an observation, that the life of a man of letters is too uniform to render the relation of it interesting, that the remark is become as regular an introduction to literary biography, as the title-page and dedication are to a book. But if in compliance with established usage we place it in our account of a Spanish poet, it must be for the sole purpose of refuting it. The advancement of literature has, in many instances, kept pace with the political influence of a country ; but it has happened more frequently in Spain than elsewhere, that the same persons have contributed to

B

the progress of both. Garcilaso* de la Vega, whose family is celebrated for military exploits both in history and romance, and who is himself, from the harmony of his verse, called the Petrarch

* The surname of La Vega was, according to the romantic history of the wars of Grenada, bestowed on Garcilaso, a young Spaniard, for his prowess in vanquishing a gigantic Moor who had defied the Christian warriors by parading before Ferdinand's camp in the *Vega de Granada* with the words *Ave Maria* fixed to his horse's tail: but this story is related of another man, with very little variation, in the Chronicle of Alonzo XI., written long before the siege of Grenada. The poet Garcilaso, though he has written little more than pastorals and sonnets, may safely be pronounced the most classical poet in the Castilian language. Indeed there are few authors, antient or modern, who, had they died at the same period of life, would have left more perfect compositions behind them. He unfortunately did not live long enough to fix the taste of his countrymen; and the race of poets who succeeded him were more remarkable for wit and imagination than for correctness of thought, or purity of expression. Because Horace ran away from Philippi, or for some reason equally cogent, courage has been supposed to be a rare virtue among poets; and Menage observes, that Garcilaso is the only bard upon record who actually fell in the field.

of Spain, fell at the age of thirty-three before a little fortress near Frejus ; and his death became the more remarkable, from the merciless manner in which Charles V. avenged it, by putting the whole garrison to the sword. The negotiations and personal character of Mendoza* had no inconsiderable influ-

* Don Diego Hurtado de Mendoza was born at Grenada very early in the 16th century. His abilities in various embassies to Rome, Venice, and Trent, were universally acknowledged by his contemporaries, though an infamous plot formed by him against the liberties of Sienna seems to have been as imprudently conducted as it was wickedly designed. His literary reputation is founded on his munificent patronage of learning, as well as on his own works. He wrote the history of the revolt of the Moriscoes of Grenada, which is highly esteemed both for style and matter. It is a professed imitation of Sallust; but his terseness often degenerates into affectation, and he wants that perspicuity of method so remarkable in his model. He does justice however to the Moors; and as they had a better cause, the speech in which their motives to insurrection are urged, does not yield to that of Catiline in energy of diction or sentiment. He is the supposed author of *Lazarillo de Tormes*, a popular novel. Some of his best poems are too licentious for the prudish press of Spain, which tolerates no indecency but in the works of a casuist. His printed

ence on the fate of Italy and Europe. + *Ercilla* * was a witness of the scenes he describes, an actual soldier in the wild wars which he recounts ; and *Cervantes*, the inimitable *Cervantes*, went through a series of adventures † which might have composed a volume in the library of *Don Quixotte* himself.

The wonders of *Lope de Vega*'s life consist indeed more in the number of his productions than the singularity of his adventures ; yet at an early period of life he was not exempt from that spirit of enterprise which pervaded all ranks

verses are full of sprightliness, and display wit as well as learning ; but in correctness of taste and sweetness of numbers he falls very short of *Garcilaso*.

+ * The author of the *Araucana*. For an account of him and his work, I must refer the reader to *Mr. Hayley's* notes on his *Epistle on Poetry*. If that good-natured critic's judgment of the poem be somewhat too favourable, he gains over the English reader to it by the most agreeable of methods, the improvement of the Spanish author in his translation.

† Various Lives of *Cervantes*.

and descriptions of his countrymen. His friend and encomiast Perez de Montalvan* relates that at about the age of thirteen or fourteen he was impelled by so restless a desire of seeing the world, that he resolved to escape from school ; and having concerted his project with a schoolfellow, they actually put it into execution. They had taken the precaution of providing some money for their expedition, but they had not been equally provident in calculating the duration of their finances; for, after buying a mule at Segovia, it was not till their arrival at Astorga that they perceived that the scantiness of their purse would not permit them to proceed any farther on their travels. This unforeseen difficulty disconcerted our young adventurers, and they resolved to abandon their scheme as hastily as they had undertaken it.

* Elogio por Montalvan, published in Sancha's edition of Lope de Vega's works.

They had returned as far as Segovia, when the necessity of procuring money compelled them to offer some trinkets to sale at a silversmith's. The tradesman was a cautious Spaniard : he suspected that they had stolen the trinkets, and prudently conducted them before the magistrate of the place. He was fortunately a man of moderation, and confined the exercise of his authority to appointing a constable to conduct them back to Madrid.

The admiration and surprise with which the wisdom of this decision and the small expence attending its execution are mentioned by Montalvan, are striking proofs that vexatious and expensive practices had already infected the administration of police in Spain.

Lope, according to his biographers*, betrayed marks of genius at a very early

* Parnaso Español.—Montalvan.

age, as well as a singular propensity to poetry. They assure us that at two years old these qualities were perceptible in the brilliancy of his eyes ; that ere he attained the age of five he could read Spanish and Latin; and that before his hand was strong enough to guide the pen, he recited verses of his own composition, which he had the good fortune to barter for prints and toys with his playfellows. Thus even in his childhood he not only wrote poetry, but turned his poetry to account ; an art in which he must be allowed afterwards to have excelled all poets antient or modern. The date however of his early productions must be collected from his own assertions, from probable circumstances, and the corresponding testimony of his friends and contemporaries ; for they were either not printed at the time, or all copies of the impression have long since been lost.



He was born at Madrid on the 25th of November 1562 ; and as he informs us in the *Laurel de Apolo* that his father was a poet, we may conjecture that his example had its effect in deciding Lope's early propensity to versification. He implies, however, in the same passage, that the discovery of his father's talent was accidental and after his death. The exact period when that event happened is uncertain ; but Lope was an orphan when he escaped from school, and before that time he had by his own account not only written verses, but composed dramas in four acts, which, as he tells us, was then the custom :

El capitan Virues, insigne ingenio,
 Puso en tres actos la comedia, que antes
 Andaba en quatro como pies de niño,
 Que eran entonces niñas las comedias.—
 Y yo las escribí de once y doce años
 De a quatro actos, y de a quatro pliegos,
 Porque cada acto un pliego contenia*.

* Arte de hacer comedias.

Plays of three acts we owe to Virues' pen,
 Which ne'er had crawl'd but on all fours till then;
 An action suited to that helpless age,
 The infancy of wit, the childhood of the stage,
 Such did I write ere twelve years yet had run,
 Plays on four sheets, an act on every one.

Upon his return to Madrid* he abandoned this mode of composition, and ingratiated himself with the bishop of Avila by several pastorals, and a comedy in three acts called *La Pastoral de Jacinto*. In his prologue to the *Pelegrino*, where he enumerates the plays he had then published, this comedy is not mentioned; from which we must infer that he did not print it, or that it is there inserted by some other name; as it is extremely common for Spanish plays of that period to have two titles. His friend Montalvan represents the production of this comedy as an epoch in the annals of the theatre, and a pre-

* *Parnaso Español*.—Montalvan.

lude to the reform which Lope was destined to introduce. It is probable that during this interval, between school and university, he composed several juvenile poems, which he may have retouched at a period when his name was sufficient to make any performance acceptable to the public. But the obscurity in which this part of his life is involved seems to prove that his efforts for literary fame were not hitherto attended with any extraordinary success. He shortly after studied philosophy at Alcala; and Montalvan makes a pompous relation of the satisfaction and delight which the duke of Alva experienced in receiving the young poet among the crowds that thronged to pay him court, and of the eagerness with which he engaged him in his service upon his return from the university. A passage in the eclogue to Claudio implies that this event did not take place

till after the unsuccessful expedition of the Armada. At any rate it does not appear what wonders he had hitherto performed to render his incense so peculiarly acceptable at so powerful a shrine, and the subsequent events of his life seem to contradict Montalvan's improbable relation. He wrote however his *Arcadia* at the instance of the duke of Alva. It is a mixture* of prose and verse; of romance and poetry; of pastoral and heroic; the design of which was avowedly taken from Sannazaro, though its execution is pronounced by the Spanish critics to be decidedly superior to the model.

Pastoral works, however, in prose and verse, had already met with considerable success in Spain; of which the *Diana* by Montemayor was the first in point of merit, and I believe in time.

* Montalvan.

The species of composition is in itself tedious, and the conduct of the *Arcadia* evidently absurd. A pastoral in five long books of prose run mad, in which the shepherds of *Arcadia* woo their Dulcineas in the language of *Amadis* rather than of *Theocritus*, in which they occasionally talk theology, and discuss in verse the origin and nature of grammar, rhetoric, arithmetic, geometry, music, astrology, and poetry, and which they enliven by epitaphs on Castilian generals, and a long poem on the achievements of the duke of Alva, and the birth of his son, is not well adapted to the taste of common readers, or likely to escape the censure of critics. In most instances, however, the abstract of a work of this nature, for it must be considered as a poem, forms a very unfair criterion of its merit. The chief objects of poetry are to delineate strongly the characters and passions of mankind, to

paint the appearances of nature, and to describe their effects upon our sensations. To accomplish these ends the versification must be smooth, the language pure and impressive, and the images just, natural, and appropriate ; our interest should be excited by the nature of the subject, and kept up by the spirit of the narration. The probability of the story, the connexion of the tale, the regularity of the design, are indeed beauties ; but beauties which are ornamental rather than necessary, which have often been attained by persons who had no poetical turn whatever, and as often neglected by those whose genius and productions have placed them in the first rank in the province of poetry. Novels and comedies derive indeed a great advantage from an attention to these niceties. But in the higher branches of invention they are the less necessary, because the justness of the

X
imitation of passions inherent in the general nature of man, depends less upon the probability of the situations, than that of manners and opinions resulting from the accidental and temporary forms of society.

To judge therefore by another criterion of the parts of the *Arcadia* which I have read, and especially of the verses, there are in it many harmonious lines, some eloquence, great facility and occasionally beauty of expression, and above all a prodigious variety of maxims, similes, and illustrations. These merits however are disfigured by great deformities. The language, though easy and fluent, is not the language of nature; the versification is often eked out by unnecessary exclamations and unmeaning expletives, and the eloquence is at one time distorted into extravagant hyperbole, and at another degenerates into low and tedious common-place.

The maxims, as in all Spanish authors of that time, are often trivial and often untrue. When they have produced an antithesis, they think they have struck out a truth. The illustrations are sometimes so forced and unnatural, that though they may display erudition and excite surprise, they cannot elucidate the subject, and are not likely to delight the imagination. They seem to be the result of labour, and not the creation of fancy, and partake more of the nature of conundrums and enigmas than of similes and images. Forced conceits and play upon words are indeed common in this as in every work of Lope de Vega; for he was one of the authors who contributed to introduce that taste for false wit, which soon afterwards became so universally prevalent throughout Europe. Marino*, the

* *Essequie poetique*, vol. xxi. Lope de Vega.

champion of that style in Italy, with the highest expressions of admiration for his model, acknowledges that he imbibed this taste from Lope, and owed his merit in poetry to the perusal of his works. There is one species of this false taste, which is particularly common in the *Arcadia*, and at the same time very characteristic of the poet's style in general. It is an accumulation of strained illustrations upon some particular subject, each generally included in the same number of lines, and all recapitulated at the end of the passage. The song of the Giant to Chrisalda in the first book is the most singular instance of this conceit, but is much too long to be transcribed. It is divided into seven strophes or paragraphs, most of which are subdivided into seven stanzas of four lines; in each stanza the beauty of Chrisalda is illustrated by two comparisons; and the names of the things to

which she is compared are enumerated in the last stanza of each strophe, which alone consists of six lines, and which is not unlike a passage in the *Propria quæ maribus*, being chiefly composed of nouns substantive without the intervention of a single verb. In the first strophe she is compared to fourteen different celestial objects; in the next to ten species of flowers; in the third to as many metals and precious stones; in the fourth to eleven birds of different sorts; in the fifth to twelve trees of different names; in the sixth to as many quadrupeds; and in the last to the same number of marine productions. After having recapitulated each of these in their respective strophe, in a strain not unworthy of a vocabulary, he sums up the whole by observing with great truth,

Y quanto el mar, el ayre, el suelo encierra,
Si mi quieres, ofrezco a tu belleza.

C

Thus what contains or sea, or earth, or air,
I to thy form, if you approve, compare.

I subjoin another instance of this strange and laborious species of conceit in a sonnet from the first book of the *Arcadia*, which contains many of the common-place illustrations which form so large a portion of that voluminous work :

No queda mas lustroso y cristalino
Por altas sierras el arroyo helado ;
Ni esta mas negro el evano labrado ;
Ni mas azul la flor del verde lino ;
Mas rubio el oro que de oriente vino ;
Ni mas puro, lascivo y regalado
Espirar olor el ambar estimado ;
Ni esta en la concha el carmesi mas fino,
Que frente, cejas, ojos, y cabellos,
Aliento, y boca de mi nymphea bella,
Angelica figura en vista humana.
Que puesto que ella se parece a ellos,
Vivos estan alli, muertos sin ella,
Cristal, evano, lino, oro, ambar, grana.

Not winter crystal ever was more clear,
That checks the current of the mountain stream ;
Not high-wrought ebony can blacker seem ;
Nor bluer doth the flax its blossom rear ;

Not yellower doth the eastern gold appear ;
 Nor purer can arise the scented steam
 Of amber, which luxurious men esteem ;
 Nor brighter scarlet doth the sea-shell bear ;
 Than in the forehead, eyebrows, eyes, and hair,
 The breath and lips of my most beauteous queen,
 Are seen to dwell on earth, in face divine.
 And since like all together is my fair,
 Lifeless elsewhere, alive in her are seen,
 Ice, ebon, flax, gold, amber, and carmine.

In the second book there are some
 verses on jealousy in the metre de Re-
 rondilla mayor, which are not devoid
 of that peculiar merit which distin-
 guishes what Johnson has called meta-
 physical poetry. They are full of inge-
 nuity and fancy, which

“ Play round the head, but come not to the heart.”

The Spanish writers, I know not on
 what authority, affirm with great confi-
 dence that Metastasio was a constant
 reader and avowed admirer of Castilian
 poetry. Those who recollect the cele-
 brated verses to Nice, may compare the

different sentiments which a similar subject suggests to Lope in the following ode of the fifth book. It is no unfavourable specimen of his style; and from the satisfaction with which he mentions it in the second part of his *Philomena*, we may infer that it was a great favorite with the author:

La verde primavera
 De mis floridos años
 Pasé cautivo, amor, en tus prisiones,
 Y en la cadena fiera
 Cantando mis engaños,
 Lloré con mi razon tus sinrazones;
 Amargas confusiones
 Del tiempo, que ha tenido
 Ciega mi alma, y loco mi sentido!

Mas ya que el fiero yugo
 Que mi cerviz domaba,
 Desata el desengaño con tu afrenta,
 Y al mismo sol enjugo*,
 Que un tiempo me abrasaba,
 La ropa que saqué de la tormenta,
 Con voz libre y essenta

* Here is an evident confusion of metaphor; for though the sun may formerly have scorched him, and may now

Al desengaño santo
 Consagro altares, y alabanzas canto.

Quanto contento encierra,
 Contar su herida el sano,
 Y en la patria su carcel el cautivo,
 Entre la paz la guerra,
 Y el libre del tyrano ;

dry his garments dripping from the storm, it cannot possibly be identified with the storm, nor in any way be represented as the cause of the condition of his garments : but such are the unavoidable blunders of hasty writers. Though Lope imitated Horace and Garcilaso, he learnt this careless way of writing neither from the *Quis multâ gracilis*, &c., of the former, nor from the following sonnet of the latter, in which most of his allusions may be found, but in which there is no confusion of metaphor, nor, as far as I can judge, any thing inconsistent with the strict simplicity of a sonnet :

Gracias al cielo doy, que ya del cuello
 Del todo el grave yugo he sacudido ;
 Y que del viento el mar embravecido
 Veré desde la tierra, sin temello ;
 Veré colgada de un sutil cabello
 La vida del amante embebecido,
 En engañoso error adormecido,
 Sordo á las voces que le avisan dello.

Alegraráme el mal de los mortales ;
 Aunque en aquesto no tan inhumano
 Seré contra mi sér quanto parece ;
 Alegraráme, como hace el sano,

Tanto en cantar mi libertad recibo.
 O mar! O fuego vivo!
 Que fuiste al alma mia
 Herida, carcel, guerra, y tyrania.

Quedate, falso amigo,
 Para engañar aquellos
 Que siempre estan contentos y quejosos ;

No de vér á los otros en los males,
 Sino de vér que dellos él carece *.

A good sonnet is not easily translated into any language, especially into English ; and as in the following I have not surmounted the difficulties, I subjoin it merely to show the English reader how much Lope de Vega has borrowed from his predecessor :

Thank heaven, I've lived then from my neck to tear
 The heavy yoke that long my strength opprest ;
 The heaving sea which boisterous winds molest
 I now can view from shore, and feel no fear ;
 Can see suspended by a single hair
 The lover's life, with fancied bliss possest,
 In danger slumbering, cheated into rest,
 Deaf to advice that would his ills declare.

So shall I smile at other mortals' ill ;
 Nor yet, though joy to me their pains afford,
 Shall I unfeeling to my race be found ;
 For I will smile as one to health restored
 Joys not to see his fellows suffering still,
 But joys indeed to find himself is sound.

* Parnaso Español, ii. 20.

Que desde aqui maldigo
 Los mismos ojos bellos,
 Y aquellos lazos dulces y amorosos
 Que un tiempo tan hermosos
 Tuvieron, aunque injusto,
 Asida el alma y engañado el gusto.

1.

In the green season of my flowering years,
 I liv'd, O Love! a captive in thy chains;
 Sang of delusive hopes and idle fears,
 And wept thy follies in my wisest strains:
 Sad sport of time when under thy controul,
 So wild was grown my wit, so blind my soul.

2.

But from the yoke which once my courage tam'd
 I, undeceiv'd, at length have slipp'd my head,
 And in that sun whose rays my soul enflam'd,
 What scraps I rescued at my ease I spread.
 So shall I altars to *Indifference** raise,
 And chaunt without alarm returning freedom's praise.

3.

So on their chains the ransom'd captives dwell;
 So carols one who cured relates his wound;
 So slaves of masters, troops of battle tell,
 As I my cheerful liberty resound.
 Freed, sea and burning fire, from thy controul,
 Prison, wound, war, and tyrant of my soul.

* There is no word in our language for desengaño.

Remain then, faithless friend, thy arts to try
 On such as court alternate joy and pain ;
 For me, I dare her very eyes defy,
 I scorn the amorous snare, the pleasing chain,
 That held enthrall'd my cheated heart so long,
 And charm'd my erring soul unconscious of its wrong.

There are several imitations and even translations of the antients in the course of this pastoral which have great merit ; for as the chief defect of Lope was want of judgment, and his great excellence facility of verse and happiness of expression, his genius was peculiarly adapted to translation, where the sense of the original confined his imagination and gave a full scope to the exercise of his happiest talent. The Arcadia furnishes striking instances of the defects and of the beauties of Lope's style ; and by the passionate defence he published of it in his prologue to the Pelegrino, and in the Philomena, he seems himself to have been singularly partial to it. These

reasons have induced me to dwell upon it longer perhaps than its merits appear to justify.

Soon after he had executed the command of the duke of Alva, he left his service and married. The duties of matrimony did not interfere with his favorite studies, which he seems to have cultivated with increased enthusiasm, till an unfortunate event compelled him to quit Madrid and his newly-established family*. A gentleman of considerable rank and importance having indulged his wit at the expence of Lope and his compositions, the poet was incensed, hitched his critic into verse, and exposed him to the ridicule of the town in a poem called *a Romance*†. His an-

* Parnaso Español.

† *Romance*, which was originally the name of the vernacular tongue in Spain, has become to signify *a ballad* in that country, a novel in France, and a tale of knight-errantry or wonderful adventures in England.

tagonist took fire, and challenged him to a contest in which he hoped to meet a poet to greater advantage than in a war of wit ; but Lope de Vega had not neglected his fencing-master in his education, and accordingly

Tomando ya la espada, ya la pluma*,

Now taking up the sword, and now the pen,

wounded his adversary so severely, that his life was despaired of, and Lope compelled to fly. He fixed upon Valencia as the place of his retreat. Here he probably first formed a friendship with Vicente Mariner, a Latin poet of that town, whose muse was as prolific as that of Lope himself, and not more parsimonious of her praise†. He wrote panegyrics on most contemporary poets, and composed those on Quevedo in Greek. Among the millions of lines preserved

* Laurel de Apolo.

† Pellicer, Life of Cervantes. Velasquez.

in the king of Spain's libraries, are to be found several to the honour and memory of Lope, and one written in answer to his enemies, which, if it does not leave a favourable impression of the manners or of the poetry of the author, proves that he made common cause with talents so congenial to his own. The unhappy critic who had ventured to attack the phœnix of Spain, was sufficiently refuted by being called an ass :

*Voce onager, vultuque onager, pedibusque sinuque,
Ut nil non onagri nunc tua vita refert*.*

An ass in voice, face, feet, and senses too,
Nothing remains that is not ass in you.

It is to be hoped that the two bards employed themselves better at Valencia than in composing such strains as these.

Lope returned to Madrid in a few years, when all apprehensions of evil consequences from his adventure were al-



* Pellicer, *Life of Cervantes*.

layed. He was probably soothing his
 imagination with prospects of domestic
 happiness, which his late absence had
 suspended, when he had the misfortune
 to lose his wife*. The residence of
 Madrid, which he had so lately regarded
 as the summit of his wishes, now be-
 came insupportable ; and scenes which
 had long been associated in his mind
 with ideas of present comfort and future
 reputation served only to remind him
 of their loss. To fly from such painful
 recollections he hastily embarked on
 board the memorable Armada†, which
 was then fitting out to invade our coasts.
 The fate of that expedition is well
 known ; and Lope, in addition to his
 share in the difficulties and dangers of
 the voyage, saw his brother, to whose
 society he had run for refuge in his late

* Montalvan.

† Montalvan, and Ecloga a Claudio.

calamity, expire in his arms. If there be any truth in the supposition that poets have a greater portion of sensibility in their frames than other men, it is fortunate that they are furnished by the nature of their occupations with the means of withdrawing themselves from its effects. The act of composition, especially of verse, abstracts the mind most powerfully from external objects. The poet therefore has always a refuge within reach ; by inventing fictitious distress, he may be blunting the poignancy of real grief ; while he is raising the affections of his readers, he may be allaying the violence of his own, and thus find an emblem of his own susceptibility of impression in that poetical spear which is represented as curing with one end the wounds it had inflicted with the other. Whether this fanciful theory be true or not, it is certain that poets have continued their pursuits with



ardour under the pressure of calamity. Some indeed assert that the genius of Ovid drooped during his banishment ; but we have his own testimony, and what, notwithstanding all such criticisms, is more valuable, many hundreds of his verses, to prove that this event, however it might have depressed his spirits, riveted him to the habits of composition, and taught him to seek for consolation where he had hitherto only found amusement. Thus, in an eclogue which the friendship of Pedro de Medina Medivilla consecrated to the memory of Lope's wife, the lamentations of the husband are supposed to have been actually furnished by our author. Two or three odes on the same subject are to be found in his works, and he informs us himself that during his unfortunate voyage he composed* the Her-

* Ecloga a Claudio.

mosura de Angelica, a poem which professes to take up the story of that princess where Ariosto had dropped it. The motive he assigns for this choice is curious. He found in Turpin that most of her remaining adventures took place in Spain, and, thinking it for the honour of his country, related them in twenty cantos.

To complete what Ariosto had begun was no light undertaking, and the difficulty was not diminished by the publication only two years before of a poem on the same subject called *Las Lagrimas de Angelica*. This was written by Luis Barahona de Soto, and has always been esteemed one of the best poems in the Spanish language. It is mentioned with great praise by the curate in the examination of Don Quixotte's library.

The first canto of Lope's poem is taken up with the invocation, and with the ri-

valship between Lido king of Seville and Cardiloro son of Mandricardo; in the second, the latter enters a cave where are painted the Moorish wars in Spain, and all the events of Ariosto's poem. These are related in about twenty stanzas without spirit, circumstance, or poetry, if we except the indignation of Cardiloro at the sight of his father's death :

Y con Rugero

Viene á dar de su vida el postrer passo,
Que aun viendole pintado Cardiloro
Matar quisiera al victorioso Moro.

How with Rogero in unlucky strife,
He closed the last sad passage of his life,
Fain, as he saw, had angry Cardilore,
E'en in the picture, slain the conquering Moor.

The death of Clorinarda, who died of grief on her marriage with Lido, is lamented at length by her disconsolate husband ; but in a strain which bears no traces of the author having so lately experienced a similar calamity. But if the grief expressed in the speech of his

hero falls short of that which we must suppose to have passed in the breast of Lope, yet in the violence of its effects it must be allowed to surpass it; for Lido actually dies of his despair, and leaves his kingdom of Seville to the most beautiful man and woman who shall appear. Most of the third and all the fourth canto are taken up with the enumeration and description of the persons who thronged to Seville for the prize. There is some sprightliness and more quaintness in his remarks on the old, the ugly, and the decrepid, leaving their homes, and travelling through dangers and difficulties in the hopes that their personal charms may procure them a kingdom. After much discussion, he seems inclined to attribute this vanity to the invention of looking-glasses, and ridicules with some spirit the pedantry of those who wished to decide the contest by the exactness of proportion in features and

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limbs, and to prove the beauty of a woman by rule and by compass. Angelica and Medoro arrive the last ; and immediately after Zerdan king of Numidia, and Nereida queen of Media, the most hideous of mankind. Of Angelica he gives a long, cold, minute, and common-place description ; but there is more discrimination in the character of Medoro's beauty than is usual in Lope's poetry :

Entró con ella aquel que tantos daños
Causó en el mundo por su dicha y gozo,
Aquel esclavo rey de mil estraños,
Aquel dichoso y envidiado mozo ;
Era Medoro un mozo de veinte años,
Ensortijado el pelo, y rubio el bozo,
De mediana estatura, y de ojos graves,
Graves mirados, y en mirar suaves.

Tierno en extremo, y algo afeminado,
Mas de lo que merece un caballero,
Gran llorador, y musico extremado,
Humilde en obras, y en palabras fiero ;
Guardado en ambar, siempre regalado,
Sutil, discreto, vario, lisongero,

Noble, apacible, alegre, generoso,
A pie gallardo, y á caballo ayroso.

And with her he, at whose success and joy
The jealous world such ills had suffer'd, came,
Now king, whom late as slave did kings employ,
The young Medoro, happy envied name!
Scarce twenty years had seen the lovely boy,
As ringlet locks and yellow down proclaim;
Fair was his height; and grave to gazers seem'd
Those eyes which where they turned with love and
softness beam'd.

Tender was he, and of a gentler kind,
A softer frame than haply knighthood needs;
To pity apt, to music much inclin'd,
In language haughty, somewhat meek in deeds;
Dainty in dress, and of accomplish'd mind,
A wit that kindles, and a tongue that leads;
Gay, noble, kind, and generous to the sight,
On foot a gallant youth, on horse an airy knight.

After the decision in their favour, and
a short but not inelegant compliment to
his mistress Lucinda, who at this time
must have been an imaginary person, he
proceeds to the love which the beauty
of Medoro and Angelica inspired in
some of their rivals, and the rage which

they excited in others. Among these, the speech of Rostubaldo, king of Toledo, affords a specimen of a different kind of poetry from any we have hitherto inserted :

Qué furia, dixo, O barbaro senado
De mugeres al fin cerrado entorno,
Te incita inadvertido, acelerado,
Movido de lascivia y de soborno
A dar el premio á un hombre afeminado,
Con habla, trage, y mugeril adorno,
Adonde están con tan famosos nombres
Robustos cuerpos de perfectos hombres?

Mandaba el muerto rey, ó mandar quiso,
Si bien la ley entiendo y interpreto,
Que en este breve termino improviso
Juzgassedes qual era el mas perfeto.
En un caso tan grave y indeciso,
Digno de advertimiento y de secreto,
Por un estruendo de mugeres locas
Dais lauro á un hombre que merece tocas?

A un hombre que es verguenza que se llame
Hombre, quien tanto á la muger parece.
Neron por qué fue vil? Comodo infame?
Bastante causa su retrato ofrece.
Hile, tuerza, devane, texa, trame,
Guarde el estrado, oficios que merece,

O que á su muger, pues es su espejo,
Mas no trate las armas, ni el consejo.

Bordarle puede ropas y basquiñas
Con perlas y oro, lazos y perfiles;
O con ella cazar por las campiñas
Liebres cobardes y conejos viles;
Los ojos alce, &c. &c. &c.

What rage your barbarous councils has possest,
Senate beset with women round? he cries;
That heedless, hasty thus, by love carest,
Won by the wanton tricks their sex devise,
To one in lisp, in dress, in air confest
A woman more than man, you grant a prize
Due to the nervous arm and daring face
Of those whose mighty limbs proclaim a manly race?

The dying king or said or meant to say,
For so I dare interpret his bequest,
That you ere long should choose, the realm to sway,
Of graceful knights the fairest and the best.
Then in the mighty business of the day
Shall the wild noise of women half possest
Accord the prize to one whose girlish air
Deserves, instead of crowns, the caps his patrons wear?

One whom I call not man, for that's a name
I blush to squander on so soft a mien.
What covered Nero, Commodus with shame?
In their unmanly cheeks the answer's seen.—

The loom, the distaff, be Medoro's fame,
 So let him spin, or deck his beauteous queen,
 For mirror-like his form reflects her charms,—
 But quit the cares of state, and shun the din of arms.

So may he trim her robe, her gems may place,
 Adjust the gold, and wreath her flowing hair;
 Secure with her o'er open meads may chase
 The harmless rabbit or the tim'rous hare;
 May turn his eyes enamour'd on her face, &c. &c.

He pursues the same train of thought for several stanzas, and concludes his speech with an insult and threat that many will deem too ludicrous for any thing approaching to epic poetry :

Pues defended el reyno rostros bellos,
 Que yo pondre la planta en vuestros cuellos.
 Your crown then let your pretty looks defend,
 For on your abject necks to trample I intend.

Being vehemently opposed by Turcatheo the Scythian, a general war ensues; and in the course of two or three cantos, in which the adventures of Linodoro and Thisbe are related, and a

long list of Spanish kings since Tubal inserted, Nereida succeeds in bewitching Medoro to love her. She conveys him and Angelica to an island, where the latter is carried away by Zerban. In the mean while Rostubaldo besieges Seville. The thirteenth canto is taken up with the story of a man who falls in love with Belcorayda upon seeing her picture; which, as it has no connexion with the subject of the poem, seems to have been introduced for the sake of an eulogium upon painting, and a compliment to Spagnoletto and the king of Spain. Lope was extremely fond of painting, and, among his many accomplishments, had I believe made some little proficiency in that art. Medoro is persecuted in various ways by Nereida, and Angelica is in the utmost danger of violence from Zerban. Rostubaldo visits a cave where the glories of the Spanish arms till the final conquest of Grenada

are foretold. In the seventeenth canto, the subject of which is the siege of Seville, Cardiloro, the original lover of Clorinda, coming to the assistance of the besiegers, vents his grief at her death, in dull, common-place, and miserable antitheses. At last Nereida changes the object of her love from Medoro to Rostubaldo; and, after a variety of adventures, Medoro finds his son in an island, and his speedy recovery of Angelica is foretold by a prophetess. This fortunate event is however delayed; for the poet sees a vision in the beginning of the twentieth canto, in which all the kings of Arragon as well as Castile, and most of the battles of Philip II. and the duke of Alva are represented by images. He sees also an inscription under a golden statue of Philip III., which, unless the imaginary vision was a real prophecy, proves that much of the poem was written after the period to which he refers it. I transcribe

the passage, as they are probably the only eight Latin lines of titles and names which are to be found in modern metre, and in a poem written in a modern language :

Phillippo Tertio, Cæsari invictissimo,
 Omnium maximo regum triumphatori,
 Orbis utriusque et maris felicissimo,
 Catholici secundi successori,
 Totius Hispaniæ principi dignissimo,
 Ecclesiæ Christi et fidei defensori,
 Fama, præcingens tempora alma lauro,
 Hoc simulacrum dedicat ex auro.

At the end of this canto Medoro finds Angelica ; laments his late delusion ; embraces her as Atlas does the heavens ; she dies away with joy, and the converse of the soul beginning, the lovers, as well as the recording muse, with great propriety become mute.

Such was the employment of Lope during this voyage of hardships, which, however alleviated, seem never totally to have been forgotten. The tyranny,

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 cruelty, and above all the heresy of queen Elizabeth, are the perpetual objects of his poetical invective. When in 1602 he published this poem, written on board the Armada, he had the satisfaction of adding another on the death of a man who had contributed to complete the discomfiture of that formidable expedition. The Dragontea is an epic poem on the death of sir Francis Drake; and the reader is informed, by a note in the first page, that wherever the word Dragon occurs, it is to be taken for the name of that commander. Tyrant, slave, butcher, and even coward, are supposed to be so applicable to his character, that they are frequently bestowed upon him in the course of the work without the assistance of an explanatory note.

He returned a second time to Madrid in 1590, and soon after married again.

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 In 1598, on the canonization of St. Isidore, a native of Madrid, he entered

the list with several authors, and overpowered them all with the number if not with the merit of his performances. Prizes had been assigned for every style of poetry, but above one could not be obtained by the same person. Lope succeeded in the hymns; but his fertile muse, not content with producing a poem of ten cantos in short verse, as well as innumerable sonnets and romances, and two comedies on the subject, celebrated by an act of supererogation both the saint and the poetical competition of the day, in a volume of sprightly poems under the feigned name of Tomé de Burguillos*. These were

* Parnaso Español, and late edit. of Lope de Vega's works. It is true that these poems were lately printed at the Imprenta Real with a preface, asserting Tomé de Burguillos to be a real personage, and author of the works which bear his name: but there seems to be no ground for depriving Lope of compositions which his contemporaries, as well as subsequent critics, have all concurred in attributing to him.

probably the best of Lope's productions on the occasion; but the concurring testimonies of critics agree that most of his verses were appropriate and easy, and that they far excelled those of his numerous competitors. This success raised him no doubt in the estimation of the public, to whom he was already known by the number and excellence of his dramatic writings. Henceforward the licences prefixed to his books do not confine themselves to their immediate object, the simple permission to publish, but contain long and laboured encomiums upon the particular merit of the work, and the general character and style of the author. This was probably the most fortunate period of his life. He had not, it is true, attained the summit of his glory, but he was rising in literary reputation every day; and as hope is often more delightful than possession, and there is something more

animating to our exertions while we are panting to acquire than when we are labouring to maintain superiority, it was probably in this part of his life that he derived most satisfaction from his pursuits. About this time also we must fix the short date of his domestic comforts, of which, while he alludes to the loss of them, he gives a short but feeling description in his Eclogue to Claudio :

Yo vi mi pobre mesa in testimonio,
 Cercada y rica de fragmentos mios,
 Dulces y amargos rios
 Del mar del matrimonio,
 Y vi pagando su fatal tributo,
 De tan alegre bien tan triste luto.

The expressions of the above are very difficult, if not impossible, to translate, as the metaphors are such as none but the Spanish language will admit. The following is rather a paraphrase than a translation :

I saw a group my board surround,
 And sure to me, though poorly spread,

'T was rich with such fair objects crown'd,
 Dear bitter presents of my bed !
 I saw them pay their tribute to the tomb,
 And scenes so cheerful change to mourning and to
 gloom.

Of the three persons who formed this family group, the son died at eight years and was soon followed by his mother : the daughter alone survived our poet. The spirit of Lope seems to have sunk under such repeated losses. At a more enterprising period of life, he had endeavoured to drown his grief in the noise and bustle of a military life ; he now resolved to sooth it in the exercise of devotion. Accordingly, having been secretary to the Inquisition, he shortly after became a priest, and in 1609 a sort of honorary member* of the brotherhood of St. Francis. But devotion itself could not break in upon his habits of composition ; and as he had

* Pellicer Life of Cervantes.

about this time acquired sufficient reputation to attract the envy of his fellow poets, he spared no exertions to maintain his post, and repel the criticisms of his enemies. Among these the Spanish editors reckon the formidable names of Gongora* and Cervantes†.

The genius and acquirements‡ of Gongora are generally acknowledged by those most conversant in Spanish literature, and his historical ballads or romances have always been esteemed the most perfect specimens of that kind of composition. But his desire of novelty led him in his other poems to adopt a style of writing so vicious and affected that Lope with all his extravagancies is

* The jealousy between Gongora and Lope sufficiently appears from their works. For further proof, vide Prologo to the Treatise Sobre el Origen y Progressos de la Comedia, by Casiano. Pellicer ed. Madrid, 1804.

† La Huerta and Pellicer.

‡ Don Nicholas Antonio in Bibliotheca Novâ.

a model of purity in comparison with him. He was however the founder of a sect in literature*. The style called in Castilian *cultismo* owes its origin to him. This affectation consists in using language so pedantic, metaphors so strained, and constructions so involved, that few readers have the knowledge requisite to understand the words, and yet fewer the ingenuity to discover the allusion or patience to unravel the sentences. These authors do not avail themselves of the invention of letters for the purpose of conveying, but of concealing their ideas. The art of writing reduces itself with them to the talent of puzzling and perplexing; and they require in their readers a degree of ingenuity at least equal to their own†. The

* Luzan's Poetica, c. 3. l. 1.

† For a specimen of this style I have only to refer my readers to Luzan's criticism on a sonnet of Gongora, ch. 15. l. 2. of his Poetica. He will there find that the

obscurity of Persius is supposed to have ruffled the temper of a saint, and an indignant father of the church is said to have condemned his satires to the flames, with this passionate but sensible observation: *Si non vis intelligi non debes legi*. It might be reasonable to suppose that the public would generally acquiesce in the truth of this maxim, and that the application of it would be one of the few points of taste in which their judgment might be trusted. But it is the fate of genius undirected by judgment to render its very defects the chief object of applause and imitation: of this the example of Gon-

pen of the historian opens the gates of memory, and that memory stamps shadows on mounds of foam. By these expressions Gongora means to give a poetical description of the art of writing on paper. Luzan, whose object was to explode this taste, which was prevalent even in his time, does not do ample justice to the merits of Gongora, and quotes only his defects without mentioning those poems which are exempt from them, or those beauties which rendered this extravagant style so palatable to the public.

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gora furnishes a singular illustration. For near a century after his death, his works had such an influence on Castilian poetry, that little or nothing was admired which could be easily understood. Every word appeared a metaphor, and every sentence a riddle. This revolution in the taste of his countrymen was not however sudden or immediate ; for Gongora himself was disappointed at the reception given to what was termed the *new poetry*, and the little success that attended his first efforts at innovation is supposed to have inflamed his animosity against his more popular contemporaries*. Lope did not escape his censures ; and galled by his virulent lampoons, as well as alarmed at the progress which his new style of writing was gradually making, he occasionally satirised the style without naming the authors.

* Parnaso Español, vol. vi.

Even in his plays are to be found several strokes of ridicule on this subject. Thus, when Severo comes to recommend himself as a poet to a bridegroom in the *Amistad y Obligacion*, Lope the bridegroom asks him :

Lop. Sois vulgar o culterano ?

Sev. Culto soy.

Lop. Quedaos en casa

Y escribireis mis secretos.

Sev. Sus secretos ! por que causa ?

Lop. Porque nadie los entienda

Lop. A plain or polish'd bard ?

Sev. My style's polite.

Lop. My secrets then remain with me to write.

Sev. Your secrets? Why ?

Lop. Because, politely penn'd,

Their meaning sure no soul shall comprehend.

And again in the *Bizarrias de Belisa*, the heroine of that piece, in describing the bad qualities of her rival, represents her as a pupil of the new school :

Aquella que escribe en culto,

Por aquel Griego language ;

Que no le supo Castilla,

Ni se le enseñó su madre.

She who writes in that fine polish'd style,
 That language so charmingly Greek,
 Which never was heard in Castile,
 And her mother ne'er taught her to speak.

His plays indeed abound in such passages ; but not content with these random shafts of wit, he seriously examined its principles, and exposed its absurdities, in a letter prefixed to an eclogue on the death of doña Ysabel de Urbino in 1621. This is written with great temper and judgment, but in a tone which evinces an apprehension that the stamp of Gongora's authority might very possibly give currency to his new invention. The character of Lope throughout this contest appears indeed to great advantage, and exhibits a degree of moderation, which though generally attributed to him by his admirers, is not discernible in any other of his literary disputes. For though the virulence of his antagonist's expressions was such as to

prevent the publication of most of his satirical performances, Lope confined himself to a calm investigation of the system of writing ; and to a few good-humoured parodies of the extravagant style with which he was contending. He had also the generosity to celebrate, in his *Laurel de Apolo*, the unquestionable merits of Gongora, without any allusion to those defects which had been the objects of his animadversion. In the mean while, though Gongora was himself neglected, the contagion of his style spread every day*, and perhaps

* Among those of his contemporaries who professedly imitated his style, the most remarkable both for rank and talents was the count of Villa Mediana, the extraordinary circumstances of whose death are now better known in Spain than his poetry. Few days had elapsed after the accession of Philip IV. when the confessor of Balthazar de Zuñiga (uncle to the count duke Olivarez) bade Villa Mediana *look to himself, for his life was in danger*. He not only received this advice with great confidence in his own security, but with the utmost disdain and insolence to the adviser. However, that very evening, as he was driving

the latter works of Lope himself are not altogether free from the infection.

The origin of his dispute with Cervantes is unknown, and the existence of any open warfare between them is

with don Lewis de Haro along one of the principal streets of Madrid, the coach was stopped, and he by name was requested to get out upon some important business. He had scarce reached the carriage step in his haste to descend, when he received a blow near the heart, and in attempting to follow the assassin he fell lifeless and bloody on the ground. No inquiry was made, no suit was instituted, and one of the principal men of the country was thus openly murdered in the streets of the capital without any public notice being taken of the crime. Quevedo seems to attribute this murder to the vengeance which a dissolute life, a satirical muse, and a sarcastic tongue, might naturally excite; but the rashness of the attempt, the impunity of the assassin, and the unusual supineness of the police, joined with other circumstances, have given rise to a suspicion that it was perpetrated at the instigation of the court. Gongora, in whose ambiguous phrases it always seems that

“ More is meant than meets the ear,”

says that *the hand was treacherous, but the impulse sovereign*. There is indeed a tradition current in Spain, which, could it be ascertained, would leave little doubt to whose jealousy and revenge the count fell a victim. It is said that Philip IV., having imperceptibly glided behind the

in some measure problematical. La Huerta, the editor of a late collection of Spanish plays, and himself no despicable dramatic writer, in a zealous defence of Lope accuses Cervantes very

queen in a passage of the palace, clapped his hands before her eyes with the intention of surprising or alarming her. She was off her guard, and having often permitted such liberties, and probably yet greater, to Villa Mediana, exclaimed, *Que quieres, Conde?—What would you, Count?* and thus inadvertently betrayed the familiarities which had passed between her and a person of that title. She thought however that she had quieted the king's suspicions, when upon being questioned on her exclamation, and discovering her husband, she reminded him that he was count of Barcelona. But the king, who only affected to be contented with this explanation, was soon satisfied of her attachment to Villa Mediana, and in the space of a few days he fell a victim to his ambitious gallantry. Of this queen, sister to our Henrietta Maria, a more idle story is related of a grandee setting fire to the palace for the pleasure of touching her person in rescuing her from the flames. Yet more idly this story is told of Villa Mediana, though he died several years before the fire at the Buen Retiro, which most probably gave rise to this anecdote. I am more inclined to give credit to the account which shows, that in order to approach the royal beauty, it was not necessary to have recourse to such desperate expedients.

unjustly of detraction and malignity. Wherever Cervantes has mentioned the poet in his printed works, he has spoken of his genius not only with respect but admiration. It is true that he implies that his better judgment occasionally yielded to the temptation of immediate profit, and that he sometimes sacrificed his permanent fame to fleeting popularity with the comedians and the public. But in saying this, he says little more than Lope himself has repeatedly acknowledged; and throughout his works he speaks of him in a manner which, if Lope had possessed discernment enough to have perceived the real superiority of Cervantes, would have afforded him as much pleasure as the slight mixture of censure seems to have given him concern. The admirers or rather the adorers of Lope, who had christened him the Phoenix of Spain, were very anxious to crush the reputation of Cervantes. With

this view they excited rivals on whom they lavished extravagant praises ; they at one time decried novels and romances, and at another extolled all those who wrote them, except the one who was most deserving of their praise. If the sonnet published in the Life prefixed to Don Quixotte of Pellicer be genuine, Cervantes was at length provoked to attack more directly the formidable reputation of their idol. In this sonnet, which contains a sort of play upon words, by the omission of the last syllable of each, that cannot be translated, the works of Lope are somewhat severely handled ; a sonnet compiled in four languages from various authors is ridiculed, the expediency of a sponge is suggested, and he is above all advised not to pursue his Jerusalem Conquistada, a work upon which he was then employed. Lope, who parodied the sonnet of Cervantes, rejected his

advice, and published that epic poem, in which his failure is generally acknowledged even by his most fervent admirers. Marino the Italian poet must however be excepted ; who, as he does not hesitate in his funeral eulogium to prefer the Angelica to the Orlando Furioso, and the novels of Lope to those of Boccace, could not decently exempt Tasso from this act of general homage, and makes his poem bow submission to the Spanish Jerusalem Conquistada. Cervantes, though discouraged by Lope, and decried by his admirers, had moderation or prudence enough to acknowledge his merits in his *Viage del Parnasso*, and still more strongly in the prologue* to

* Nasarre, the editor of the eight comedies of Cervantes, considers them as parodies of Lope de Vega, and maintains that his description of a bad play alludes to a particular composition of our author. But Nasarre's opinions are too paradoxical to have any weight, and those who will give themselves the trouble of examining his assertions will find them still less deserving attention or respect.

his comedies. In the former he addresses him thus :

Insigne poeta, acuyo verso o prosa
Ninguno le avantaja ni aun llega.

Distinguished bard, whom no one of our time
Could pass or even match in prose or rhyme.

The passage in the prologue we shall have occasion to refer to in another place. Whether these expressions of praise were the genuine sentiments of Cervantes, and whether they satisfied Lope and his friends, we cannot now ascertain. Lope had not long to contend with so formidable a rival; for Cervantes died soon after this publication, and left his enemy in full possession of the admiration of the public. How different has been the judgment of posterity on the writings of these two men ! Cervantes, who was actually starving in the same street* where Lope

* Pellicer.

was living in splendour and prosperity, has been for near two centuries the delight and admiration of every nation in Europe; and Lope, notwithstanding the late edition of his works in twenty-two volumes, is to a great degree neglected in his own.

Before the death of Cervantes, which happened on the same day as that of Shakspeare*, the admiration of Lope was become a species of worship in Spain. It was hardly prudent in any author to withhold incense from his shrine, much less to interrupt the devotion of his adherents. Such indeed was their intolerance, that they gravely asserted that the author of the *Spongia*, who had severely censured his works, and accused him of ignorance of the Latin language, deserved nothing short of death for such literary heresy. Nor

* Pellicer.

was Lope himself entirely exempt from the irritability which is supposed to attend poets: he often speaks with peevishness of his detractors, and answers their criticisms, sometimes in a querulous, and sometimes in an insolent tone. The word Vega in Spanish signifies garden. In the title-page of his book was engraved a beetle expiring over some flowers, which he is upon the point of attacking. That the emblem might not be misunderstood, this distich was also subjoined:

*Audax dum Vegæ irrumpit scarabæus in hortos,
Fragrantis periit victus odore rosæ.*

At Vega's garden as the beetle flies,
O'erpower'd with sweets the daring insect dies.

The vanity of the above conceit is at least equal to the wit.

But in the prologue to the *Pelegrino*, and in some posthumous poems*, he most unreasonably complains of the

* Huerto deshecho.

neglect, obscurity, and poverty in which his talents have been left. How are the expectations of genius ever to be fulfilled, if Lope, laden with honours and with pensions, courted by the great, and followed by the crowd, imagined that his fortunes were unequal to his deserts?

He seldom passed a year without giving some poem to the press; and scarcely a month or even a week without producing some play upon the stage. His *Pastores de Belen*, a work in prose and verse on the Nativity, had confirmed his superiority in pastoral poems; and rhymes, hymns and poems without number on sacred subjects had evinced his zeal in the profession he embraced. Philip IV., the great patron of the Spanish theatre, to which he afterwards is said to have contributed * composi-

* *Conde de Sex* (Earl of Essex) *o dar la vida por su dama*, and others under the name of the *Ingenio de esta corte* are ascribed to him; but, I suspect, upon very slight authority.

tions of his own, at the era of his accession, found Lope in full possession of the stage, and in the exercise of unlimited authority over the authors, comedians, and audience. New honours and benefices were immediately heaped on our poet, and in all probability he wrote occasionally plays for the royal palace. He published about the same time *Los Triumphos de la Fe*; *Las Fortunas de Diana*; three novels in prose (unsuccessful imitations of Cervantes); *Circe*, an heroic poem, dedicated to the count duke of Olivarez; and *Philomena*, a singular but tiresome allegory, in the second book of which he vindicates himself in the person of the nightingale from the accusation of his critics, who are there represented by the thrush.

Such was his reputation that he began to distrust the sincerity of the public, and seems to have suspected that there was more fashion than real opinion



in the extravagance of their applause. This engaged him in a dangerous experiment, the publication of a poem without his name. But whether the number of his productions had gradually formed the public taste to his own standard of excellence, or that his fertile and irregular genius was singularly adapted to the times, the result of this trial confirmed the former judgment of the public; and his Soliloquies to God*, though printed under a feigned name, attracted as much notice and secured as many admirers as any of his former productions. Emboldened probably by this success, he dedicated his *Corona Tragica*, a poem on the queen of Scots, to pope Urban VIII.†, who had himself composed an epigram on the subject. Upon this occasion he received from that pontiff a letter written in his own

* *Parnaso Español*. Montalvan.

† Dedication to *Corona Tragica*.

hand, and the degree of doctor of theology. Such a flattering tribute of admiration sanctioned the reverence in which his name was held in Spain, and spread his fame through every catholic country. The cardinal Barberini followed him with veneration in the streets; the king would stop to gaze at such a prodigy; the people crowded round him wherever he appeared; the learned and the studious* thronged to Madrid from every part of Spain to see this phoenix of their country, this "monster of literature;" and even Italians, no extravagant admirers in general of poetry that is not their own, made pilgrimages from their country for the sole purpose of conversing with Lope. So associated was the idea of excellence with his name, that it grew in common conversation to signify any thing perfect in its kind;

* Montalvan, Parnaso Español, &c.

and a Lope diamond, a Lope day, or a Lope woman, became fashionable and familiar modes of expressing their good qualities. His poetry was as advantageous to his fortune as to his fame: the king enriched him with pensions and chaplaincies; the pope honoured him with dignities and preferments; and every nobleman at court aspired to the character of his Mæcenas, by conferring upon him frequent and valuable presents. His annual income was not less than 1500 ducats, exclusive of the price of his plays, which Cervantes insinuates that he was never inclined to forgo, and Montalvan estimates at 80,000. He received in presents from individuals as much as 10,500 more. His application of these sums partook of the spirit of the nation from which he drew them. Improvident and indiscriminate charity ran away with these gains, immense as they were, and rendered his life unpro-

fitable to his friends and uncomfortable to himself. Though his devotion gradually became more fervent, it did not interrupt his poetical career. In 1630 he published the *Laurel de Apolo*, a poem of inestimable value to the Spanish *philologists*, as they are called in the jargon of our day, for it contains the names of more than 330 Spanish poets and their works. They are introduced as claimants for the Laurel, which Apollo is to bestow ; and as Lope observes of himself that he was more inclined to panegyric than to satire, there are few or any that have not at least a strophe of six or eight lines devoted to their praise. Thus the multitude of Castilian poets, which at that time was prodigious, and the exuberance of Lope's pen, have lengthened out to a work of ten books, or sylvas, an idea which has often been imitated in other countries, but generally confined within the limits

of a song*. At the end of the last sylva he makes the poets give specimens of their art, and assures us that many equalled Tasso, *and even approached Ariosto* himself; a proof that this celebrated Spanish poet gave the preference to the latter. After long disputes for the Laurel, the controversy at length ends, as controversies in Spain are apt to do, in the interference of the government; and Apollo agrees to refer the question to Philip IV., whose decision, either from reserve in the judge, or from modesty in the relator, who was himself a party concerned, is not recorded. Facts however prove that our poet could be no loser by this change of tribunal. He continued to publish plays and poems, and to receive every remuneration that adulation and generosity could bestow, till the year 1635, when religi-

* Session of the Poets; &c. &c.

ous thoughts had rendered him so hypochondriac that he could hardly be considered as in full possession of his understanding. On the 22d of August, which was Friday, he felt himself more than usually oppressed in spirits and weak with age; but he was so much more anxious about the health of his soul than of his body, that he would not avail himself of the privilege to which his infirmities entitled him, of eating meat; and even resumed the flagellation*, to which he had accustomed himself, with more than usual severity. This discipline is supposed to have hastened his death. He fell ill on that night, and having passed the necessary ceremonies with excessive devotion, he expired on Monday the 26th of August 1635.

The sensation produced by his death, was, if possible, more astonishing than

* Montalvan.

the reverence in which he was held while living. The splendour of his funeral, which was conducted at the charge of the most munificent of his patrons, the duke of Sesa, the number and language of the sermons on that occasion, the competition of poets of all countries in celebrating his genius and lamenting his loss, are unparalleled in the annals of poetry, and perhaps scarcely equalled in those of royalty itself. The ceremonies attending his interment continued for nine days. The priests* described him as a saint in his life, and represented his superiority over the classics in poetry as great as that of the religion which he professed was over the heathen. The writings which were selected from the multitude produced on the occasion fill more than two large volumes. Several circumstances indeed concurred to

* See Funeral Sermons.—Sancha's edit. of Lope.

raise his reputation at the period of his death. Had he fallen sooner, the public would not have been disposed to regret a dramatic writer so deeply ; had he lived longer, they would have had more certain prospects of supplying the loss. The passion of Philip IV. for the theatre had directed the attention and interest of Spaniards to all that concerned it. Calderon and Moreto, who shortly after enriched the stage with plays at least equal, and in the judgment of many superior to those of Lope, were as yet so young that they might be considered as his scholars rather than his rivals.—We may add that his posthumous works were calculated not only to maintain but advance his poetical character.

Of the many encomiasts of Lope (among whom are to be found Marino and several Italians), not one gives any account of his life, if we except his in-

intimate friend Montalvan; and even in his eulogium there is little that can throw any light upon his character as a man, or his history as an author. He praises him in general terms as a person of a mild and amiable disposition, of very temperate habits, of great erudition, singular charity, and extreme good breeding. His temper, he adds, was never ruffled but with those who took snuff before company; with the gray who dyed their locks; with men who, born of women, spoke ill of the sex; with priests who believed in gipsies; and with persons who, without intentions of marriage, asked others their age. These antipathies, which are rather quaint sallies of wit than traits of character, are the only peculiarities which his intimate friend has thought proper to communicate.

As he is mentioned more than once, by himself and his encomiasts, employed

in trimming a garden, we may collect that he was fond of that occupation; indeed his frequent description of parterres and fountains, and his continual allusion to flowers, seem to justify his assertion—that his garden furnished him with ideas as well as vegetables and amusement. But I fear we cannot from the primitive simplicity of this employment conclude, with his partial friend Montalvan, that his fortunes did not alter the modesty of his address, or the unaffected mildness and humility of his temper. His ostentatious display of vanity in assuming arms to which he was not entitled, and his ill-founded pretensions to an illustrious pedigree, circumstances which escaped not the keen observation of Cervantes and of Gongora, seem to imply that he was far from that philosophical equability of temper which meets the buffets and rewards of fortune with great indifference.

On the other hand; if he was intoxicated with prosperity, he was not contented: nor could wealth, honours, or reputation, cure him of the habit of complaining of ill usage, neglect, and even poverty. Who can read without surprise mixed with indignation his letter to his son, dissuading him from the study of poetry as unprofitable; and, in confirmation of his precepts, lamenting his own calamities, in a strain more suited to the circumstances of Camoens and Cervantes than to the idol of the public and favourite of princes *?"

This unreasonable propensity to murmur at his lot is the greatest blemish in his character. The prodigious success

* Pellicer, p. 165. *el Origen y Progreso de la Comedia*. This is there transcribed from the dedication to the *Verdadero Amante*: and if, as Pellicer supposes, it was written in 1620, the querulous tone in which Lope speaks of himself is quite inexcusable; but I am inclined to assign it an earlier period, because his son died before his wife, and she could not be alive when he took orders,

of his compositions, and the general adulation of his contemporaries, were sufficient to palliate some occasional instances of vanity ; and though he speaks in some passages of his performances with complacency, in others he criticizes his own works with considerable severity. This is however a privilege which he was by no means inclined to extend to others ; on the other hand he was extremely lavish of his praise where he expected a reasonable portion in return.

As an author he is most known, as indeed he is most wonderful, for the prodigious number of his writings*. Twenty-one million three hundred thousand of his lines are said to be actually printed ; and no less than eighteen hundred plays of his composition to have

* Parnaso Español.

been acted on the stage. He nevertheless asserts in one of his last poems, that,

No es minima parte, aunque es exceso,
De lo que está por imprimir, lo impreso.

The printed part, though far too large, is less
Than that which yet unprinted waits the press.

It is true that the Castilian language is copious ; that the verses are often extremely short, and that the laws of metre and of rhyme* are by no means severe. Yet were we to give credit to such accounts, allowing him to begin his compositions at the age of thirteen, we must believe that upon an average he wrote more than nine hundred lines a day ; a fertility of imagination, and a celerity of pen, which, when we consider the occupations of his life as a soldier, a secretary, a master of a family, and a priest ; his acquirements in Latin,

* Appendix, No. III.

Italian, and Portuguese ; and his reputation for erudition, become not only improbable, but absolutely, and, one may almost say, physically impossible.

As the credibility however of miracles must depend upon the weight of evidence, it will not be foreign to the purpose to examine the testimonies we possess of this extraordinary facility and exuberance of composition. There does not now exist the fourth part of the works which he and his admirers mention, yet enough remains to render him one of the most voluminous authors that ever put pen to paper. Such was his facility, that he informs us in his *Eclogue to Claudio*, that more than a hundred times he composed a play and produced it on the stage in twenty-four hours. Montalvan declares that he latterly wrote in metre with as much rapidity as in prose, and in con-

firmation of it he relates the following story * :

“ His pen was unable to keep pace with his mind, as he invented even more than his hand was capable of transcribing. He wrote a comedy in two days, which it would not be very easy for the most expeditious amanuensis to copy out in the time. At Toledo he wrote fifteen acts in fifteen days, which make five comedies. These he read at a private house, where Maestro Joseph de Valdebieso was present and was witness of the whole ; but because this is variously related, I will mention what I myself know from my own knowledge. Roque de Figueroa, the writer for the theatre at Madrid, was at such a loss for comedies that the doors of the theatre de la Cruz were shut ; but as it was in

* Montalvan's Eulogium.

the Carnival, he was so anxious upon the subject that Lope and myself agreed to compose a joint comedy as fast as possible. It was the Tercera Orden de San Francisco, and is the very one in which Arias acted the part of the saint more naturally than was ever witnessed on the stage. The first act fell to Lope's lot, and the second to mine ; we dispatched these in two days, and the third was to be divided into eight leaves each. As it was bad weather, I remained in his house that night, and knowing that I could not equal him in the execution, I had a fancy to beat him in the dispatch of the business ; for this purpose I got up at two o'clock, and at eleven had completed my share of the work. I immediately went out to look for him, and found him very deeply occupied with an orange-tree that had been frost-bitten in the night. Upon my asking him how he had gone on with his task,

he answered, ' I set about it at five ; but I finished the act an hour ago ; took a bit of ham for breakfast ; wrote an epistle of fifty triplets ; and have watered the whole of the garden : which has not a little fatigued me.' Then taking out the papers, he read me the eight leaves and the triplets ; a circumstance that would have astonished me, had I not known the fertility of his genius, and the dominion he had over the rhymes of our language."

As to the number* of his plays, all contemporary authors concur in representing it as prodigious. " At last appeared," says Cervantes in his prologue, " that prodigy of nature, the great Lope, and established his monarchy on the stage. He conquered and reduced under his jurisdiction every actor and author in the kingdom. He filled the world

* For the list of those now extant see Appendix, No. I.

with plays written with purity, and the plot conducted with skill, in number so many that they exceed eighteen hundred sheets of paper; and what is the most wonderful of all that can be said upon the subject, every one of them have I seen acted, or heard of their being so from those that had seen them; and though there have been many who have attempted the same career, all their works together would not equal in quantity what this single man has composed *.” Montalvan asserts that he wrote eighteen hundred plays, and four hundred *autos sacramentales* †; and asserts, that if the works of his literary idol were placed in one scale, and those of all antient and modern poets in the other, the weight of the former would decide the comparison in point of quantity, and

* This was written near twenty years before Lope's death.

† A species of dramatic composition resembling our old mysteries.

be a fair emblem of the superiority in point of merit of Lope's verses over those of all other poets together. What Lope himself says upon this subject will be most satisfactorily related in his own words, though the passages are far from poetical. Having given a list in his prologue to the *Pelegrino*, written in 1604, of three hundred and forty-three plays, in his *Arte de hacer Comedias*, published five years afterwards, he says :

Mas ninguno de todos llamar puedo
 Mas barbaro que yo, pues contra el arte
 Me atrevo á dar preceptos, y me dexo
 Llevar de la vulgar corriente, a donde
 Me llamen ignorante Italia y Francia.
 Pero que puedo hacer ? si tengo escritas,
 Con una que he acabado esta semana,
 Quatro cientos y ochenta y tres comedias,
 Por que fuera de seis, las demas todas
 Pecaron contra el arte gravemente.

None than myself more barbarous or more wrong,
 Who hurried by the vulgar taste along,
 Dare give my precepts in despite of rule,
 Whence France and Italy pronounce me fool.

But what am I to do? who now of plays,
 With one complete within these seven days,
 Four hundred eighty-three in all have writ,
 And all, save six, against the rules of wit.

In the eclogue to Claudio, one of his
 last works, are the following curious
 though prosaic passages :

Pero si ahora el numero infinito
 De las fabulas comicas intento,
 Diras que es fingimiento
 Tanto papel escrito,
 Tantas imitaciones, tantas flores
 Vestidos de rhetoricos colores.

Mil y quinientas fabulas admira
 Que la mayor el numero parece;
 Verdad, que desmerece
 Por parecer mentira,
 Pues mas de ciento en horas viente quatro
 Passaron de las musas al teatro.

Should I the titles now relate
 Of plays my endless labour bore,
 Well might you doubt the list so great,
 Such reams of paper scribbled o'er;
 Plots, imitations, scenes, and all the rest,
 To verse reduced, in flowers of rhetoric drest.

The number of my fables told
 Would seem the greatest of them all;
 For, strange, of dramas you behold
 Full fifteen hundred mine I call;
 And full a hundred times,—within a day
 Passed from my muse upon the stage a play.

And again :

Mas ha llegado, Claudio, la codicia
 A imprimir con mi nombre las ajenas
 De mil errores llenas;
 O Ignorancia ! O Malicia !
 Y aunque esto siento mas, menos condeno
 Algunas mias con el nombre ageno.

Cortes perdona, O Claudio, el referirte
 De mis escritos barbaros la copia;
 Pero puedo sin propia
 Alabanza decirte
 Que no es minima parte, aunque es exceso,
 De lo que esta por imprimir, lo impreso.

The public, Avarice oft deceived,
 And fix'd on others' works my name;
 Vile works ! which Ignorance mine believed,
 Or Malice call'd, to wound my fame:
 That crime I can't forgive, but much incline
 To pardon some who fix'd their names on mine.

Then spare, indulgent Claudio, spare
The list of all my barbarous plays ;
For this with truth I can declare,
And though 'tis truth, it is not praise,
The printed part, though far too large, is less
Than that which yet unprinted waits the press.

Though these passages seem to confirm the assertions of his biographers and contemporaries ; yet the complaint contained in the last, which is yet more strongly urged in his prologue to the *Pelegrino*, proves the light authority upon which his name was given to dramatic compositions, and consequently may suggest a probable mode of explaining the exaggeration which must have taken place with regard to their number. That there must be some exaggeration all will be disposed to admit. It is but just however to observe, that though Lope is the most wonderful, he is not the only Spanish author the number of whose verses approaches to a miracle. La Cueva mentions one who had

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written one thousand plays in four acts; some millions of Latin lines were composed by Mariner; and many hundred dramatic compositions are still extant of Calderon, as well as of authors of inferior merit. It was not uncommon even for the nobility of Philip the Fourth's time to converse for some minutes in extempore poetry; and in carelessness of metre, as well as in common-place images, the verses of that time often remind us of the improvisatori of Italy.

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Whatever may have been the original number of Lope's productions, enough yet remain to render an examination of them all nearly impossible. The merit, independent of those intended for representation, consists chiefly in smoothness of versification and purity of language, and in facility rather than strength of imagination. He has much to say on every subject, and he expresses what he has to say in an easy style and flowing

numbers; but he seldom interests the feelings, and never warms the imagination of the reader, though he often pleases by the facility and beauty of his language, and occasionally surprises by the exuberance and ingenuity of his illustrations. From this character of his writings it will naturally be supposed that his epic poems are among the least brilliant of his compositions. Even the faculty of inventing an interesting story, for which as a dramatic writer he was so deservedly celebrated, seems to have forsaken him when he left the stage. His novels and epic poems are alike tedious and uninteresting. The *Hermosura de Angelica*, which I have examined above, is perhaps the best of his heroic poems, though during his life the *Corona Tragica*, his poem on Mary queen of Scots, attracted more notice and secured him more praise. When however we consider the quarter in which these encomiums

originated, we may suspect that they were bestowed on the orthodoxy rather than the poetry of the work. When Lope published it, the passions which religious dissension had excited throughout Europe had not subsided. The indiscriminate abuse of one sect was still sufficient to procure any work a favourable reception with the other; and the *Corona Trágica*, the subject of which was fortunately chosen for such a purpose, was not deficient in that recommendation. Queen Elizabeth is a bloody Jezebel, a second Athaliah, an obdurate sphynx, and the incestuous progeny of a harpy. He tells us also in the preface, that any author who censures his king and natural master is a perfidious traitor, unworthy and incapable of all honours, civil or military. In the second book he proves himself fully exempt from such a reproach by selecting for the topics of his praise the actions of the Spanish monarch, which

seem the least to admit of apology or excuse. He finds nothing in the wisdom or activity of Charles V. so praise-worthy as his treachery to the protestants. Philip II., whom he does every thing but blame for not murdering queen Elizabeth during her sister's reign, is most admired for sacrificing the interest of his crown, the peace and prosperity of his dominions, at the shrine of orthodoxy :

Que le costó de Flandes al segundo

No conceder la libertad *injusta* !

Que antes de darla aventurara el mundo,

Catholico valor, grandeza augusta :—

Por el tercero santo, el mar profundo

Al Africa passó, sentencia *justa*,

Despreciando sus barbaros tesoros,

Las ultimas reliquias de los Moros.

How much the second Philip did it cost

Freedom *unjust* from Flanders to withhold !

Rather than yield the world he would have lost,

His faith so steady, and his heart so bold :

The third, with *just* decree, to Afric's coast

Banish'd the remnants of that pest of old

The Moors ; and nobly ventured to condemn

Treasures which flowed from barbarous hordes like
them.

This praise of the fourth Philip is founded on an anecdote with which I am unacquainted, viz. of his adoration of the sacrament in the presence of English heretics *. There is no supernatural agency in this poem; but it has not sufficient merit in other respects to allow us to draw from its failure any argument in favour of such machinery. The speech of Mary when her sentence is announced is the only passage I found in it rising at all above mediocrity :

Gracias os debo dar, nobles varones,
 Por esta nueva aventura dixo;
 Aunque terrible de sufrir lastima,
 Esta porcion mortal que el alma anima.

Confieso ingenuamente que si fuera
 En Francia ó en Escocia con mi esposo,
 Aunque en extrema edad, la nueva oyera,
 Me diera horror el caso lastimoso.

* This, I suspect, alluded to some transaction which took place during the celebrated visit of prince Charles and the duke of Buckingham at Madrid.

Mas cinco lustros de una carcel fiera,
 Donde solo escuchaba el temeroso
 Ruido de las armas circunstantes
 Y el miedo de la muerte por instantes.

Que genero de pena puede darla
 Mas pena que las penas en que vive
 A quien solo pudiera consolarla
 La muerte que la vida apercibe ?
 La muerte es menos pena que esperarla ;
 Una vez quien la sufre la recibe ;
 Pero por mucho que en valor se extreme
 Muchas veces le passa quien la teme.

Que noche en mi aposento recogida
 No vi la muerte en su silencio oscuro ?
 Que aurora amaneci6 de luz vestida
 Que el alma no assaltase el flaco muro
 En que sustento no perdí la vida ?
 Que lugar para mi dexo seguro
 Naturaleza, sin ponerme luego
 Veneno al labio, 6 á la torre fuego.

Ahora que ya ves á luz tan clara
 Llegar mi fin, carísimos amigos,
 Donde la vida en solo un golpe para
 Y de mi fe tendre tantos testigos
 Mi firme aspecto lo interior declara
 Y libre de asechanzas y enemigos
 La muerte esperaré, mejor dixera
 Que esperaré la vida quando muera.

Howard die many times &c

Thanks for your news, illustrious lords, she cried ;
 I greet the doom that must my griefs decide :
 Sad though it be, though sense must shrink from pain,
 Yet the immortal soul the trial shall sustain.

But had the fatal sentence reach'd my ears
 In France, in Scotland, with my husband crown'd,
 Not age itself could have allayed my fears,
 And my poor heart had shudder'd at the sound.
 But now immur'd for twenty tedious years,
 Where nought my listening cares can catch around
 But fearful noise of danger and alarms,
 The frequent threat of death, and constant din of
 arms,

Ah ! what have I in dying to bemoan ?
 What punishment in death can they devise
 For her who living only lives to groan,
 And see continual death before her eyes ?
 Comfort's in death, where 'tis in life unknown ;
 Who death expects feels more than he who
 dies :—

Though too much valour may our fortune try,
 To live in fear of death is many times to die.

Where have I e'er repos'd in silent night,
 But death's stern image stalk'd around my bed ?
 What morning e'er arose on me with light,
 But on my health some sad disaster bred ?
 Did Fortune ever aid my war or flight,
 Or grant a refuge for my hapless head ?

Still at my life some fearful phantom aim'd,
 My draughts with poison drugg'd, my towers with
 treachery flamed.

And now with fatal certainty I know
 Is come the hour that my sad being ends,
 Where life must perish with a single blow;
 Then mark her death whom steadfast faith attends :
 My cheeks unchang'd, my inward calm shall show,
 While free from foes, serene, my generous friends,
 I meet my death—or rather I should say,
 Meet my eternal life, my everlasting day.

The last line of the second stanza,
 quoted above, reminds one of a similar
 sentiment in Shakspeare :

“ Cowards die many times before their deaths,
 The valiant never taste of death but once.”

Julius Cæsar, act 2. sc. 2.

With regard to Lope's other epic
 poems, I have never read the *Circe* or
 the *Andromeda*. The *Dragontea* is full
 of virulent and unpoetical abuse, and
 gives a false account of the death of sir
 Francis Drake. The *Arcadia* is, I be-
 lieve, the best of his pastorals. They

are not in general very accurate representations of the manners of shepherds, nor do they even afford many specimens of simple or natural poetry ; but they all, especially the Pastores de Belen, contain translations, elegies, songs, and hymns, of considerable merit. In them are also to be found some of his most celebrated odes. Indeed Spanish critics, and more especially Andres, who is far from being partial to his countrymen, seem to consider him as a great lyric poet. I do not venture to express any opinion upon compositions of that nature, because, after humorous and burlesque works, they are those of which a foreigner is least capable of forming a judgment. If indeed the admiration of strangers be an object, Lope must be considered as unlucky. His light and burlesque poems, most of which he published under the feigned name of Thome de Burguillos, are those most generally

admired by his countrymen. Of these the *Gatomachia*, a mock heroic poem, is esteemed the best, and often cited as a model of versification. They are all sprightly, and written with ease; but their length makes one occasionally lament a facility which rendered the termination of any work of Lope an act of grace to his readers, and not a matter of necessity to him.

His epistles and didactic works are not much admired in Spain; but though not exempt from the same defect, they seem to me replete with observation, and good sense conveyed in very pleasant language and flowing versification.

In the time of Lope there were several poetical academies at Madrid, in imitation of similar institutions in Italy. The *Arte de hacer Comedias*, undertaken at the instance of that to which it is inscribed, exclusive of its intrinsic merit, derives an additional portion of interest

from being connected with the history of the Spanish stage, and written by a man whose productions decided its character, and to whose genius, therefore, are in some measure to be ascribed the peculiarities which distinguish the modern drama from the antient. Whatever may be their comparative merit, it is surely both absurd and pedantic to judge of the one by rules laid down for the other,—a practice which had begun in the time of Lope, and is not altogether abandoned to this day. There are many excellencies to which all dramatic authors of every age must aspire, and their success in these form the just points of comparison : but to censure a modern author for not following the plan of Sophocles, is as absurd as to object to a fresco that it is not painted in oil colours ; or, as Tiraboschi, in his parallel of Ariosto and Tasso, happily observes, to blame Livy for not writing a poem

instead of a history. The Greek tragedians are probably superior to all moderns, if we except Racine, in the correctness of their taste, and their equals at least in the sublimity of their poetry, and in the just and spirited delineation of those events and passions which they represent. These, however, are the merits of the execution rather than of the design; the talents of the disciple rather than the excellence of the school; and prove the skill of the workman, not the perfection of the system. Without dwelling on the expulsion of the chorus (a most unnatural and inconvenient machine), the moderns, by admitting a complication of plot, have introduced a greater variety of incidents and characters. The province of invention is enlarged; new passions, or at least new forms of the same passions, are brought within the scope of dramatic poetry. Fresh sources of interest are opened, and

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additional powers of imagination called into activity. Can we then deny what extends its jurisdiction and enhances its interest to be an improvement, in an art whose professed object is to stir the passions by the imitation of human actions? In saying this I do not mean to justify the breach of decorum, the neglect of probability, the anachronisms and other extravagancies of the founders of the modern theatre. Because the first disciples of the school were not models of perfection, it does not follow that the fundamental maxims were defective. The rudeness of their workmanship is no proof of the inferiority of the material; nor does the want of skill deprive them of the merit of having discovered the mine. The faults objected to them form no necessary part of the system they introduced. Their followers in every country have either completely corrected or gradually reformed such

abuses. Those who bow not implicitly to the authority of Aristotle, yet avoid such violent outrages as are common in our early plays. And those who pique themselves on the strict observance of his laws, betray in the conduct, the sentiments, the characters, and the dialogue of their pieces (especially of their comedies), more resemblance to the modern than the antient theatre : their code may be Grecian, but their manners in spite of themselves are Spanish, English, or French :—they may renounce their pedigree, and even change their dress, but they cannot divest their features of a certain family likeness to their poetical progenitors. The beginning of this race of poets, like the origin of nations, is somewhat obscure. It would be idle to examine where the first play upon such a model was written ; because many of the earliest dramas in every modern language are lost. But to whatever nation

X the invention is due, the prevalence of the modern system is in a great measure to be attributed to Spain ; and perhaps more to Lope de Vega than to any other individual of that country. The number and merit of his plays, at a period when the Castilian language was generally studied throughout Europe, directed the attention of foreigners to the Spanish theatre ; and probably induced them more than the works of any one writer to form their compositions upon the model which Corneille and others afterwards refined. Yet Lope in all probability confirmed rather than invented the style of drama then usual in Spain ; for it is clear that plays were not only common but numerous before his time : indeed his own assertions, the criticisms of Cervantes, and the testimonies of contemporary authors, all concur in establishing this fact ; and in the very poem that we are now exa-

mining, he assigns as an excuse for his departure from antient models the state in which he found the comedies of his native country.

Mandanme, ingenios nobles, flor de España,
 Que en esta junta y academia insigne
 En breve tiempo excedereis no solo
 A las de Italia, que, envidiando á Grecia,
 Ilustró Ciceron del mismo nombre
 Junto al averno lago, sino á Athenas
 A donde en su Platonico lyceo
 Se vió tan alta junta de philosophos,—
 Que un arte de comedias os escriba
 Que al estilo del vulgo se reciba.
 Facil parece este sujeto,—y facil
 Fuera para qualquiera de vosotros
 Que ha escrito ménos dellas, y mas sabe
 Del arte de escribirlas, y de todo,
 Que lo que á mi me daña en esta parte
 Es haberlas escrito sin el arte ;
 No por que yo ignorasse los preceptos,
 Gracias á Dios, que, ya tyrón gramático,
 Passé los libros que trataban desto
 Antes que huviesse visto al sol diez veces
 Discurrir des de el aries á los peces ;
 Mas porque en fin hallé que las comedias
 Estaban en España en aquel tiempo
 No como sus primeros inventores

Pensáron que en el mundo se escribieran,
 Mas como las tratáron muchos barbaros
 Que enseñaron el vulgo á sus rudezas,
 Y assi se introduxéron de tal modo
 Que quien con arte ahora las escriba
 Muere sin fama y galardón ; que puede
 Entre los que carecen de su lumbre
 Mas que razón y fuerza la costumbre
 Verdad es que yo he escrito algunas veces
 Siguiendo el arte que conocen pocos ;
 Mas luego que salir por otra parte
 Veo los monstruos de apariencias llenos ;
 A donde acude el vulgo y las mugeres,
 Que este triste exercicio canonizan,
 A aquel habito barbaro me vuelvo ;
 E quando he de escribir una comedia,
 Encierro los preceptos con seis llaves ;
 Saco á Terencio y Plauto de mi estudio
 Para que no me den voces, que suele
 Dar gritos la verdad en libros mudos ;
 Y escribo por el arte que inventaron,
 Los que el vulgar aplauso pretendieron,
 Porque como los paga el vulgo, es justo
 Hablarle en necio para darle gusto.

Bright flow'rs of Spain, whose young academy
 Ere long shall that by Tully nam'd outvie,
 And match th' Athenian porch where Plato taught,
 Whose sacred shades such throngs of sages sought,—
 You bid me tell the art of writing plays
 Such as the crowd would please, and you might praise.

The work seems easy—easy it might be
 To you who write not much, but not to me :
 For how can I the rules of art impart,
 Who for myself ne'er dreamt of rule or art ?
 Not but I studied all the antient rules :
 Yes, God be praised ! long since, in grammar-schools,
 Scarce ten years old, with all the patience due,
 The books that subject treat I waded through :
 My case was simple.—In these latter days,
 The truant authors of our Spanish plays
 So wide had wander'd from the narrow road
 Which the strict fathers of the drama trod,
 I found the stage with barbarous pieces stor'd :—
 The critics censur'd ; but the crowd ador'd.
 Nay more ; these sad corrupters of the stage
 So blinded taste, and so debauch'd the age,
 Who writes by rule must please himself alone,
 Be damn'd without remorse, and die unknown.
 Such force has habit—for the untaught fools,
 Trusting their own, despise the antient rules.
 Yet, true it is, I too have written plays,
 The wiser few, who judge with skill, might praise :
 But when I see how show, and nonsense, draws
 The crowd's, and, more than all, the fair's applause,
 Who still are forward with indulgent rage
 To sanction every monster of the stage,
 I, doom'd to write, the public taste to hit,
 Resume the barbarous dress 'twas vain to quit :
 I lock up every rule before I write,
 Plautus and Terence drive from out my sight,



Lest rage should teach these injur'd wits to join,
And their dumb books cry shame on works like mine.
To vulgar standards then I square my play,
Writing at ease ; for, since the public pay,
'Tis just, methinks, we by their compass steer,
And write the nonsense that they love to hear.

Some critics have disputed the truth of the apology contained in this poem, and alleged, that previous to Lope, the Spaniards had many regular dramas, and that he in fact created the taste for those extravagancies which he pretends to have adopted from his predecessors and contemporaries. It is indeed well ascertained, that upon the first revival of the stage, several translations and imitations of the Greek and Roman dramatic writers appeared in Spain as well as in Italy. A greater attention also to the unities than is common in Lope or his contemporaries, may perhaps be discernible in some few productions of that period, which are not absolutely wrought according to the Gre-

cian pattern. But that such was not the general character of their representations is evident from plays still extant, and might be inferred even from those of Cervantes himself; who, though the champion of the antient rules in theory, is in practice one of the least successful followers of the modern. Any minute proof of this would be tedious; and a reference to the third book of Luzan's *Poetica*, as well as to an excellent poem of Juan de la Cueva, published in 1582, and reprinted in the *Parnaso Español*, renders it unnecessary. From that poem it is clear that the unities had been abandoned before the time of Virues; and it is but reasonable to suppose, that the moment their representations ceased to be lifeless copies of the antients, they would be animated by the spirit of the times. Accordingly La Cueva, who had himself contributed to these innovations, vindicates them upon that

ground, and appeals with confidence to the interests they excite.

Mas la invencion, la gracia, y traza es propia
A la ingeniosa fabula de España.
No qual dicen sus emulos impropia
Scenas y actos suple la maraña
Tan intrincada y la soltura de ella,
Inimitable de ninguna estraña.

Parnaso Español, vol. viii. p. 62.

Invention, interest, sprightly turns in plays,
Say what they will, are Spain's peculiar praise;
Hers are the plots which strict attention seize,
Full of intrigue, and yet disclos'd with ease:
Hence scenes and acts her fertile stage affords,
Unknown, unrivall'd, on the foreign boards.

This eulogium, though written by the predecessor of Lope, is applicable to him and his followers; and amounts to a proof that the plays of Virues and La Cueva, as well as the greater part of those represented at that period, were formed upon a similar model. There had been rude exhibitions of farces and autos before the time of Ferdi-

nand and Isabella; but most authors agree that the first mention of a regular representation is that of a play at the celebration of their memorable marriage. Thus the Inquisition* and the Stage were nearly coeval. But the gloomy reign of Philip, in which the former thrived so vigorously, proved nearly fatal to the latter. It had to struggle against the prejudices of the clergy†. The maxims of the church of Rome in Spain have been at various periods as austere as that of the Scotch reformers themselves. It is remarkable enough that the Jesuit Mariana, one of the most in-

* According to Pulgar, the Inquisition was established in 1489. An institution, however, of a similar nature had certainly been introduced in the South of France, and perhaps in Arragon, against the Albigeois, by the famous St. Dominic, more than two centuries before.

† Vide Informe sobre Juegos, Espectaculos, y Diversiones publicas, por Don Gaspar Melchor de Jovellanos. Appendix, No. II.

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tolerant, as well as successful, supporters of the church of Rome, was a republican in his principles of government, and a very puritan in his zeal for the suppression of innocent amusements. His work *De Rege et Regis Institutione*, in which the origin of government is unequivocally traced to *the will of the people*; and in which their political rights, deducible from that principle, are boldly asserted and eloquently maintained, is nevertheless disfigured by a fanatical apology for assassination, and an acrimonious invective against public diversions and national gaiety. The political maxims of his book, long since abandoned and condemned by the Church, seem to have been forgotten by his countrymen: but the fanatical zeal against public exhibitions has never entirely subsided, and it has frequently threatened the total extinction of the

only rational amusement which the perverse and meddling spirit* of their laws has left the inhabitants of Spain. Even the patronage of Philip the Fourth was not sufficient to deter some austere monks from condemning amusements which their ascetic habits prevented them from partaking; nor could the orthodoxy of Lope's works, or the sanctity of his profession, screen him from that personal virulence which such controversies invariably inspire. In arraigning his writings and railing at his character, they lost sight of truth as well as candour; they styled him the disgrace of the age and of the nation; the shame of his profession; and the author, as a reverend writer expresses it, of more mischiefs to the world than thousands of devils. By such invectives they endeavoured to ruin his fortunes

* Vide Appendix, No. II.

and harass his conscience. The temporary prohibition of his plays, which these censures extorted from the court, shows that they made considerable impression on the public, and the severity of the discipline which Lope afterwards inflicted upon himself, might gratify his uncharitable enemies with the reflection, that though they had failed in suppressing his works, they had embittered his satisfaction at their success with strong feelings of remorse. Since this war between the pulpit and the stage first commenced, no permanent reconciliation has ever taken place; and though dramatic representations have generally kept their ground, their adversaries have obtained many temporary and local advantages over them, which have often impeded their progress, and sometimes have seemed to threaten their existence. Even during the reign of Charles the Third all the theatres were

suppressed for several years. Some bishops during the present reign have forbidden plays in their diocese ; and the inhabitants of Seville, in the late epidemical disorder, solemnly renounced, in a fit of devotion, the amusement of the theatre, as the surest method of appeasing divine vengeance. Since that act of self-denial they have confined the gratification of their taste for public exhibitions, to the butchery of bulls, horses, and men, in the arena. These feasts are encouraged by the munificence, and often honoured by the presence, of the king. But no monarch since Philip the Fourth has ventured to sanction a public play by his presence. Some indeed have indulged their taste for operas within the walls of the palace, but the present king is said to be convinced of their evil tendency ; and, if he has not exerted himself to the utmost of his power to deter others, has

uniformly and scrupulously preserved himself from the contamination of a theatre. If such scruples can exist, even in our times, it may readily be supposed that Philip the Second was not proof against arguments so congenial to his gloomy habits and saturnine temper. He was accordingly staggered by the censures of Mariana and the clergy ; but luckily for the interests of poetry and the gaiety of Europe, he referred the question to the university of Salamanca, where, after much discussion, it was decided in favour of the stage. It appears however that Philip, though induced by this decision to tolerate, and even for a time to attend the theatres, was soon disgusted with the practices introduced upon them.

..... El prudente
 Philipo* rey de España, y señor nuestro,
 En viendo un Rey en ellos, se enfadaba ;

* It is thus printed in Lope de Vega.

O fuesse el ver que al arte contradice;
 O que la autoridad Real no debe
 Andar fingida entre la humilde plebe.

Arte de hacer Comedias.

Once to behold a monarch on the stage,
 Enflam'd, 'tis said, our prudent Philip's rage;
 Or that he deem'd such characters unfit
 For lively sallies and for comic wit;
 Or crowns debas'd, if actors were allow'd
 To bring the state of kings before a low-born crowd.

Nevertheless this practice, and many others which were considered as innovations, are excused, if not justified, by Lope in this poem.

After acknowledging his deviations from the antient, he proceeds to give a code of laws for the modern drama, or rather an account of what is requisite in "the comic monsters of the stage." In doing this he contrives with great shrewdness, but apparent simplicity, to urge nearly all that can be said in their defence, at the same time that he ridicules the occasional extravagance of himself

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and his contemporaries. As an apology for the mixture of comic with tragic scenes, he says :

Lo tragico con lo comico mezclado,
Y Terencio con Seneca, aunque sea
Como otro minotauro de Pasíphaë,
Harán grave una parte otra ridicula ;
Que aquesta variedad deleyta mucho ;
Buen exemplo nos dá naturaleza,
Que por tal variedad tiene belleza.

The tragic with the comic music combin'd,
Grave Seneca with sprightly Terence join'd,
May seem, I grant, Pasiphaë's monstrous birth,
Where one half moves our sorrow, one our mirth.
But sweet variety must still delight ;
And, spite of rules, dame Nature says we're right,
Who throughout all her works th' example gives,
And from variety her charms derives.

With regard to the unities of time, he asserts that an observance of them would disgust a Spanish audience :

Que la colera
De un Español sentado no se templá,
Sino le representan en dos horas
Hasta el final juicio desde el Genesis.

Who seated once, disdain to go away,
 Unless in two short hours they see the play
 Brought from creation down to judgment day.

But though he justifies, or at least palliates, these irregularities, he considers the unity of action, and the preservation of character, as two essential requisites in a good play. In practice he had frequently neglected them, but he offers no apology for such a license in this poem. On the contrary, he enforces the observance of them by injunctions as positive as those of Boileau, or of Aristotle himself.

After some common-place maxims on the choice of the subject and the conduct of the fable, he recommends adapting the metre to the nature of the sentiments and situations, and makes some observations on the different species of Castilian verse, which are not reckoned very distinct by Spaniards, and are utterly incomprehensible to foreigners.

X He laments the little pains taken to appropriate the scenery and dresses to the country and character of the personages represented ; and is very particular in his rules for the length of a comedy and its component parts.

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X On the whole, he is ready to avow his conviction that the great object of a play is to divert and interest the audience ; and he seems to have despaired of accomplishing it without a quick succession of incidents, and a large mixture of the marvellous. I have read somewhere, that before the establishment of a regular system of jurisprudence in Europe, every individual was at liberty to choose the code by which he was to be tried ; and it surely would be unreasonable to refuse a similar privilege to poets who lived before the standard of taste was fixed, or any uniform principles of criticism acknowledged. According to his own canons, therefore,

the greater part of his plays must be judged. In this poem, however, he submits six to the cognizance of a severer tribunal, by declaring that they were written according to the rules of art—

Porque fuera de seis las demas todos
Pecaron contra el arte gravemente—

And all save six against the rules of wit.

The Spanish critics have sought for these faultless models in vain. La Huerta would fain console his countrymen for their loss, by inferring their dulness from their regularity, and accounting from the same circumstance for the oblivion into which they are fallen. It is probable, however, that the difficulty of the discovery does not proceed from their insipid regularity, but from the inaccuracy of the description. The pieces alluded to by Lope may be extant to this day, though no

modern critic would recognise in them the regularity he describes. Don Augustin Montiano y Luyano cites indeed six plays of Lope, which he seems to consider as distinguished from the rest of his productions by the name of tragedies. The merits and defects of these he examines at some length; but even from his criticisms, as well as from a perusal of three, it is clear to me that they differ from the rest in nothing but in name. The Duque de Viseo, which is the first in the list, is among the most wild and irregular of his productions; not only all the unities of time, place, and action are neglected, but the incidents themselves are often as undignified, and even ridiculous, as they are unnatural. Of this the following instance will be sufficient proof: One of the heroes of the piece dissuades doña Inés from marrying the man she loves, by informing her that his grandmother

was a Moor ; and his brother the duke
of Guimarans afterwards boxes her ears
for following his advice, but disclosing
the author and motive of it to her lover.

DUQUE DE GUIMARANS, DONA INES.

Gui. Mirad que soy yo el primero
Y mi hermano el agraviado.

Inés. Dexadme, que soys cansado
Y enfadoso caballero.

Gui. Palabra me habeis de dar
De cansaros aunque esteis
Tan brava.

Inés. Vos no sabeis
Que no se dexan forzar
Las mugeres como yo ;
No me asgais que sois un necio—

Gui. Ya para tanto despreccio
La paciencia me faltó ;

(dale un bofeton.)

Aprended con esto hablar
Ya guardar secreto.—

Inés. A Dios !

A mi bofeton !

Sale el REY, &c. &c.

Rey. ? Que es esto ?

Gui. Perdido soy.

Inés. ? Ya no lo veis en mi cara
 Que de la mano del duque
 Está pidiendo venganza ?—
(los tres hermanos del duque se ariman a el.
 A esto llegan los sobervios
 Los tiranos de tu casa,
 Los que murmuran de te,
 Los que en corillos te infaman,
 Los que tu muerte desean,
 Los que dan en tus espaldas
 Por no poder en el pecho
 Mil heridas de palabra ;
 Tu tienes señor la culpa
 Que yo soy muger, y basta
 Decirte que soy muger.

Don Egas. Tente.

(Vase Inés.

Rey. Ay maldad tan estraña
 Dexadla yo Don Egas, &c. &c.

DUKE OF GUIMARANS and DONNA INIS.

Gui. My brother felt ; you, lady, gave th' offence.

Inis. Unhand me, graceless knight.

Gui. You stir not hence,

Proud dame, to Egas till you pledge your hand.

Inis. My noble spirit ill you understand,

Who hope to force my will ; but highly born,

I treat thy threats, poor angry man, with scorn.

Gui. Patience I lose.

(Gives her a box on the ear.

Let this thy spirit teach
To keep thy secrets and to curb thy speech.

Inis. Great heaven, a blow! a blow to me!

Enter the KING and Courtiers.

King. What's here?

What is this broil?

Gui. (aside.) My ruin then is clear.

Inis. You in my face may see this bold man's deed;
My face, where blushes for my vengeance plead.
To such a height the insolence is grown
Of these proud lords, the tyrants of thy throne,
Who 'gainst thy fame to factious bands resort;
Who plot thy death, embroil thy peaceful
court;
Who with mean malice urge each base report;
Who dare not face to face their king attack,
But aim their sland'rous shafts behind his back.
Thine then the fault; a king the weak protects:
A woman I, and of the weaker sex.
Need I say more? Farewell!

Don Egas. Awhile remain.

King. Outrage most strange! but why her steps detain?
&c. &c.

The play indeed is as tragic in its conclusion as atrocious and almost unprovoked murders can make it. The king's favourite, who had instigated him

X to some crimes, and been instrumental
to the commission of others, is himself
stabbed in the street by a squire of the
duke of Viseo, who in his turn is killed
on the spot by the guards : on this cata-
strophe the king with great composure
observes :

X
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Valiente escudero y noble !
Haganle un honroso entierro :
Valame Dios si don Egas
En estas cosas me ha puesto,
Pues Dios le castiga ansi.

A valiant squire—let fame his deeds attend ;
An honourable tomb shall mark his end.
Don Egas set me on these bloody deeds,
And thus, no doubt, through heavenly justice bleeds.

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The above moral seems to be very ge-
nerally received among Lope's kings,
who think the death or banishment of a
favourite an ample atonement for their
own crimes. Indeed they may plead
strong poetical precedents for shifting
their guilt from their own shoulders ;


and don Egas, or don Arias, are to the dramatic monarchs of Castile, what Jupiter, Fate, and Erinnys, were to Agamemnon in Homer. In poetry as in politics the king can do no wrong. In this play, however, he kills or banishes all his best subjects, and ends by stabbing with his own hand his nearest relation, after all his courtiers had refused to be accessory to the murder. Yet with all these defects some good lines, and some spirited sentiments, may be found even in the duke de Viseo, though more thinly scattered than in most of Lope's compositions. The following verses, extravagant in any other language, in Spanish are magnificent :

Ten secreto á las cosas que me cuentas
 Que yo sin alterarme estos hermanos
 Castigaré de suerte que no sientan
 Por donde a la venganza van las manos.
 Alterése la mar con sus tormentas,
 Levanté a las estrellas monte canos,
 Que ha de ser rio un principe discreto
 Que va donde mas hondo, muy mas quieto.

Be silent then, while I the mode devise,
 Secret, but sure, these brothers to chastise ;
 Untroubled in my looks, they shall not know
 What breeds the vengeance, or whence came the blow.
 When the storm howls, the sea may troubled rise,
 And lift its foamy mountains to the skies ;
 But the wise prince is like the river stream,
 And where most deep should there most tranquil seem.

Roma Abrasada is the history of Rome, in dialogue, from the accession of Claudius to the death of Nero. There is certainly nothing comic in it, and there are some brilliant passages ; but it is by no means exempt from the extravagancies and irregularities so common on the Spanish stage. El Marido mas firme is founded on the story of Orpheus and Eurydice, and is yet more unlike a tragedy than the other two. The truth is, that the plays of that period do not admit of the distinction of tragedies and comedies, according to the common, or at least the French acceptance of those terms. They are not comedies ; for not only distressing situ-

ations and personages of high rank, but assassinations and murders are admitted into their plots: on the other hand, the sprightliness of the dialogue, the lowness of some of the characters, the familiarity of the language, and the conclusion of the piece, which is generally fortunate, deprive them of all claims to the title of tragedies. Yet even in Lope's works there is an evident difference in his conception as well as execution of two distinct species of dramatic compositions. In one, the characters and incidents are intended to excite surprise and admiration; in the other, merriment mixed occasionally with interest. Love indeed is the subject of both: but in one it is the love which distinguished the ages of chivalry; in the other, the gallantry which succeeded to it, and which the poets had only to copy from the times in which they lived. The plays of the latter description, when the



distinction became more marked, acquired the name of *Comedias de Capa y Espada*, Comedies of the Cloak and Sword, from the dresses in which they were represented; and the former that of Heroic Comedies, from the character of the personages and incidents which compose them. It is true, that in several of Lope de Vega, which would come under the description of heroic comedies, there is an underplot, of which the characters are purely comic; an invention which, if it is not his own, seems to have been of Spanish origin, and, as is well known, was adopted almost universally on our stage from the time of Fletcher to that of Addison and Rowe. Lope was contemporary with both Shakspeare and Fletcher. In the choice of their subjects, and in the conduct of their fables, a resemblance may often be found, which is no doubt to be attributed to the taste and opinions of the

times, rather than to any knowledge of each other's writings. It is indeed in this point of view that the Spanish poet can be compared with the greatest advantage to himself, to the great founder of our theatre. It is true that his imagery may occasionally remind the English reader of Shakspeare ; but his sentiments, especially in tragedy, are more like Dryden and his contemporaries than their predecessors. The feelings of Shakspeare's characters are the result of passions common to all men ; the extravagant sentiments of Lope's, as of Dryden's heroes, are derived from an artificial state of society, from notions suggested by chivalry and exaggerated by romance. In his delineation of character he is yet more unlike, and it is scarce necessary to add, greatly inferior ; but in the choice and conduct of his subjects, if he equals him in extravagance and improbability, he does not

fall short of him in interest and variety. A rapid succession of events, and sudden changes in the situation of the personages, are the charms by which he interests us so forcibly in his plots. These are the only features of the Spanish stage which Corneille left unimproved ; and to these some slight resemblance may be traced in the operas of Metastasio, whom the Spaniards represent as the admirer and imitator of their theatre. In his heroic plays there is a greater variety of plot than in his comedies ; though it is not to be expected that in the many hundreds he composed he should not often repeat the same situation and events. On the whole, however, the fertility of his genius, in the contrivance of interesting plots, is as surprising as in the composition of verse. Among the many I have read, I have not fallen on one which does not strongly fix the attention ; and

though many of his plots have been transferred to the French and English stage, and rendered more correct and more probable, they have seldom or never been improved in the great article of exciting curiosity and interest. This was the spell by which he enchanted the populace, to whose taste for wonders he is accused of having sacrificed so much solid reputation. True it is that his extraordinary and embarrassing situations are often as unprepared by previous events as they are unforeseen by the audience; they come upon one by surprise, and when we know them, we are as much at a loss to account for such strange occurrences as before; they are produced, not for the purpose of exhibiting the peculiarities of character, or the workings of nature, but with a view of astonishing the audience with strange, unexpected, unnatural, and often inconsistent conduct in some of the prin-

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cipal characters. Nor is this the only defect in his plots. The personages, like the author, are full of intrigue and invention; and while they lay schemes and devise plots, with as much ingenuity as Lope himself, they seem to be actuated by the same motives also; for it is difficult to discover any other than that of diverting and surprising the audience. Their efforts were generally attended with success. All contemporary authors bear testimony to the popularity of Lope's pieces; and for many years he continued the favourite of the public. Stories are related of the audience taking so lively an interest in his plays, as totally to give way to the illusion, and to interrupt the representation. A spectator on one occasion is said to have interfered with great anxiety for the protection of an unfortunate princess—"dando voces," says my author, "contra el cruel homicida

que degollaba al parecer una dama inocente"—crying out against the cruel murderer, who to all appearance was slaying an innocent lady.

A mere relation of the stories on which his plays are founded, would give a very insufficient idea of the attraction which they possess. Nor can they be collected from a perusal of detached passages only. The chief merit of his plays is a certain spirit and animation which pervades the whole, but which is not to be preserved in disjointed limbs of the composition. From these considerations I determined to give the following sketch of one of his most interesting plays. It is called the *Estrella de Sevilla*, but has lately been altered and revived at Madrid, under the name of *Sancho Ortiz de las Roelas*; and, as the original is become extremely scarce, such an abstract may be an object of

curiosity to those who are acquainted with the late revival of it.

LA ESTRELLA DE SEVILLA.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

SANCHO, king of Castile.
 DON ARIAS, his favourite.
 DON PEDRO DE GUZMAN, *alcalde mayor*.
 FARFAN DE RIBERA, the same.
 DON GONZALO DE ULLOA.
 FERNAN PEREZ DE MEDINA, an old captain.
 DON SANCHO ORTIZ DE LAS ROELAS, surnamed the
 Cid of Andalusia, and in love with ESTRELLA.
 BUSTOS TABERA, brother to ESTRELLA.
 CLARINDO, GRACIOSO, and servant to SANCHO ORTIZ.
 ESTRELLA, sister to BUSTOS, and in love with ORTIZ.
 THEODORA, her confidante.
 MATILDA, slave to BUSTOS.

SCENE, SEVILLE.

ACT I. SCENE I.

KING, ARIAS, *alcaldes*.

Compliments are exchanged between the King and the *alcaldes*. The King

is profuse in his praises of Seville, where he declares his intention of residing for some time. When the *alcaldes* withdraw, he and Don Arias pursue the same subject; and mentioning the beautiful women they had seen since their arrival, the King learns from Don Arias that the person with whom he was most struck is called Estrella, and is sister to Bustos Tabera. On this Arias is dispatched for Bustos.

Enter to the KING, GONZALO in mourning.

He informs the King that his father is dead, and solicits his staff.

Enter FERNAN PEREZ DE MEDINA.

He comes to solicit the same vacant staff; but both are dismissed by the King with equivocal answers; when Arias arrives with Bustos Tabera. He throws himself at the King's feet, and refuses to rise, by observing :

Que si el rey se ha de tratar
Como á Santo en el altar
Digno lugar escogí.

If sacred kings, like saints upon a shrine,
Ador'd should be, this place is surely mine.

The King, affecting to be struck with his loyalty, informs him of the two competitors for the vacant staff, but adds that he prefers him to both, and offers to promote him to it immediately. At this Bustos expresses some surprise, and then generously observes that the claims of the two candidates are better founded than any he can advance. The King leaving it entirely to his judgment, he displays his disinterested love of justice by conferring the staff on Fernan Perez, an old and distinguished commander, and promoting Gonzalo, the son of the deceased, to the post which Fernan Perez formerly held. The King, loud in his praises of him, artfully introduces questions concerning the state

of his family ; affects a singular interest in all his affairs, and voluntarily undertakes to procure a marriage for his sister. He at length dismisses him by granting him the privilege of access at all hours to the royal chamber.

The whole of this dialogue is natural, spirited, and well contrived. The dignified and stern character of Bustos is throughout preserved. He acknowledges his obligations for the honours conferred, but in a manner that evinces that he is neither duped by the King's artifices, nor overset by this sudden gust of court favour. As he retires from the presence, he observes aside ;

Sospechoso voy—Quererme
Y sin conocerme honrarme
Mas parece sobornarme
Honor, que favorecerme.

These sudden favours with mistrust I view—
Why should he love a man he never knew ?
Such honours savour more of bribes than meeds ;
To gain my virtue, not reward my deeds.

[*Exit Bustos.*]



Manent KING and ARIAS.

Arias, perceiving that the King is touched with the generosity and startled at the high spirit of Tabera, takes great pains to depreciate these qualities. He betrays a very courtier-like detestation of independence, and inculcates with great earnestness the maxim so agreeable to princes, that all men are corrupt, and all unable to withstand the temptations which a king has it in his power to offer.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

DON SANCHE ORTIZ and DONNA ESTRELLA.

The first part of this scene is taken up with protestations of love. Bustos then arrives, and, having desired his sister to withdraw, informs his friend of his late honours, and of the King's offer to procure a husband for Estrella; but he adds, that he will urge Sancho's suit, and does not doubt of his success. Ortiz

after some complaints of the King's injustice, not very suitable to his character or to his subsequent conduct, retires.

SCENE III.

Tabera meets the King at the door of his house, and, by many artful pretences and overstrained professions of humility and loyalty, prevents him from entering it. The King, having given private instructions to Arias, carries off Tabera in his coach.

SCENE IV.

ESTRELLA, MATILDA, *and* ARIAS.

Arias delivers a message from the King, to which Estrella gives no answer, but leaves the room in disdain. Arias, left with Matilda, gains her to his master's interests, and she engages to introduce the King at night into Estrella's chamber.

SCENE V.

The KING's cabinet.

The chamberlains, and Tabera as one

of them, are dismissed, and the King with great joy hears of the success of Arias's negotiation.

ACT II. SCENE I.

The street. KING, MATILDA, and ARIAS.

The King is admitted into Tabera's house by Matilda. Exit Arias; and enter Tabera and his friends, of whom he takes leave at the door of his house.

SCENE II.

TABERA'S house.

Tabera enters, surprised at the absence of Matilda and the darkness of the apartments. He overhears Matilda and the King; and, alarmed at a man's voice, jealous of his sister's honour, and perplexed by the equivocal answers of the stranger, he draws upon him. The King, to extricate himself from the danger, is compelled to declare his name; which Tabera, galled and alarmed at the discovery, affects to disbelieve. In

urging the impossibility of the King engaging in such an attempt, he contrives to upbraid him most bitterly for his base and dishonourable conduct*. He allows him however to escape, but puts to death the female slave who procured him admittance.

* A story somewhat similar to this is related of Philip the Fourth.—He and the count duke of Olivarez, after having engaged the duke Albuquerque at play, suddenly left the room; but Albuquerque, suspecting the king's design upon his wife, feigned violent sickness, and, rising hastily from his seat, made the best of his way to his own palace. There he perceived two men muffled in cloaks lurking near the gate. He instantly fell upon the one whose height showed him to be the king, and, employing his stick in a most unmerciful manner, obliged the count duke Olivarez to interfere; who, to rescue his sovereign from so severe a drubbing, stepped forward and informed the duke that the man whom he was striking was the king. Albuquerque affected great indignation on such an imputation on his majesty; and repeating that such designs were as incongenial with the character as incompatible with the honour of the monarch, under the pretence of vindicating royalty from such an aspersion, made the minister, who had shared his master's guilt, partake also of his chastisement.

SCENE III.

The palace.

The King relates his adventure with great indignation to Arias, who stimulates him to revenge. While talking on the subject they recognise the corpse of Matilda, which Tabera has contrived to convey to the palace. This exasperates the King ; but the original cause of his animosity is so dishonourable, and the character of Tabera so popular, that he is at a loss for a pretext for his execution ; and at last adopts an expedient suggested by Arias of instigating Sancho Ortiz de las Roelas, a loyal and intrepid soldier, surnamed the Cid of Andalusia, to murder him.

[Exeunt.]

SCENE IV.

Tabera relates the story to his sister, and to her great joy expresses his earnestness to complete her marriage with Sancho.

[Exeunt.]

SCENE V.

The palace.

Arias having announced Sancho is ordered to withdraw.

SANCHO ORTIZ *enters*.

San. Vuestra alteza á mis dos labios

Les conceda los dos pies.

Rey. Alçad que os hiziera agravios

Alçad—

San. ¿Señor?

Rey. Galan es.

San. No' es mucho que yo señor

Me turbe, no siendo aqui

Retorico, ni orador.

Rey. Pues—¿decid que veis en mi?

San. La magestad, y el valor,

Y al fin una imagen veo

De dios, pues le imita el rey;

Y despues del, en vos creo.

A vuestra Cesarea ley

Gran señor aqui mi empleo.

Rey. ¿Como estais?

San. Nunca me he visto

Tan honrado como estoy.

Rey. Pues aficionado os soy

Por prudente, y por bien quisto

Porque estareis con cuydado

Codicioso de saber

Pera que os he llamado
 Deciros lo quiero, y ver
 Que en vos tengo un gran soldado.—
 A mi me importa matar
 En secreto a un hombre, y quiero
 Este caso confiar
 Solo de vos, que os prefiero
 A todos los del lugar.

San. ¿ Está culpado ?

Rey. Si, está.

San. Pues como muerte en secreto,
 A un culpado se la da—
 Poner su muerte en efecto
 Publicamente podrá
 Vuestra justicia, sin dalle,
 Muerte en secreto, que assi
 Vos os culpais en culpalle ;
 Pues dais a entender que aqui
 Sin culpa mandais matalle.
 Si esse humilde os ha ofendido
 En leve culpa, señor,
 Que le perdoneis os pido.

Rey. Para su procurador,
 Sancho Ortiz, no habeis venido ;
 Sino para dalle muerte,
 Y pues se la mando dar
 Escondiendo el brazo fuerte,
 Debe á mi honor importar
 Matalle de aquesta suerte ;

¿ Merece el que ha cometido
Crimen lese muerte ?

San. En fuego.

Rey. ¿ Y si crimen lese ha sido
El deste ?

San. Que muera luego
A voces, señor os pido ;
Y si es asi, la daré
Señor á mi mismo hermano
Y en nada repararé.

Rey. Dadme esa palabra y mano.

San. Y en ella el alma y la fé.

Rey. Hallandole descuidado
Puedes matarle.

San. Señor,
¿ Siendo Roelas y soldado,
Me quiereshacer traidor ?
¿ Yo muerte en caso pensado ?—
Cuerpo á cuerpo he de matalle,
Donde Sevilla lo vea
En la plaza, ó en la calle,
Que, el que mata y no pelea
Nadie puede disculpalle ;
Y gana mas el que muere
A traicion, que el que le mata ;
Y el vivo con quantos trata
Su alevosia refiere—

Rey. Matalde, como querais ;
Que este papel para abono

De mi firmado llevais
Qualquier delito que hagais

Referirlo. *[Dale un papel.]*

San. Dice asi

“ Al que esse papel advierte
“ Sancho Ortiz luego por mi,
“ Y en mi nombre dadle muerte,
“ Que yo por vos salgo aqui
“ Y si os hallais en aprieto
“ Por este papel firmado
“ Sacaros de prometo
“ Yo el Rey.”

Esto y admirado
De que tan poco concepto
Tenga de mi Vuestra Alteza.
¿ Yo cedula ?—Yo papel !—

Que mas en vos que no en el
Confia aqui mi nobleza ;
Si vuestras palabras cobran
Valor, que los montes labra
Y ellas quanto dizen obran
Dandome aqui la palabra
Señor los papeles sobran.

Rompedlo, porque sin el
La muerte le solicita

Mejor señor que con el ;
Que en parte desacredita

Vuestra palabra el papel. *[Rompe.]*
Sin papel, señor, aqui

Nos obligamos los dos,
 Y prometemos assi,
 Yo de vengaros á vos,
 Y vos de librarme á mi.
 Si es assi no hay que hacer
 Cédulas, que estorbos han sido;
 Yo os voy luego á obedecer;
 Y solo por premio os pido
 Para esposa la muger
 Que yo eligiera.

Rey. Aunque sea
 Rica fembra de Castilla,
 Os la concedo.

San. Possea
 Vuestra pié la alarbe silla
 * El mar de Castilla vea.
 Gloriosos y dilatados
 Y por sus climas elados.

Rey. Vuestros hechos excelentes,
 Sancho, quedarán premiados:
 En este papel va el nombre
 Del hombre que ha de morir

(dale un papel.)

Quando lo abrais, no os asombre;
 Mirad, que he oído decir
 En Sevilla que es muy hombre.

San. Presto, señor, lo sabremos.

* This passage is evidently corrupt; a line has probably been omitted.

Rey. Los dos, Sancho, solamente
 Este secreto sabemos ;
 No ay advertiros, prudente
 Sois vos—obrad y callemos.

The KING and SANCHE ORTIZ.

San. I kiss thy feet.

King. Rise, Sancho ! rise, and know
 I wrong thee much to let thee stoop so low.

San. My liege, confounded with thy grace I stand ;
 Unskill'd in speech, no words can I command
 To tell the thanks I feel.

King. Why, what in me
 To daunt thy noble spirit can'st thou see ?

San. Courage and majesty that strikes with awe ;
 My sovereign lord ; the fountain of the law ;
 In fine, God's image, which I come t'obey,
 Never so honour'd as I feel today.

King. Much I applaud thy wisdom, much thy zeal,
 And now, to try thy courage, will reveal
 That which you covet so to learn, the cause
 That thus my soldier to the presence draws.
 Much it imports the safety of my reign
 A man should die—in secret should be slain ;—
 This must some friend perform ; search Seville
 through,
 None can I find to trust so fit as you.

San. Guilty he needs must be—

King. He is.

San. Then why,
 My sovereign liege, in secret should he die ?

If public law demands the culprit's head,
 In public let the culprit's blood be shed.
 Shall Justice' sword, which strikes in face of
 day,
 Stoop to dark deeds?—a man in secret slay?
 The world will think, who kills by means un-
 known,

No guilt avenges, but implies his own.
 If slight his fault, I dare for mercy pray.

King. Sancho, attend;—you came not here today
 The advocate to plead a traitor's cause,
 But to perform my will, to execute my laws,
 To slay a man;—and why the culprit bleed
 Matters not thee, it is thy monarch's deed.
 If base, thy monarch the dishonour bears;
 But say, to draw against my life who dares,
 Deserves he death?

San. O yes, a thousand times.

King. Then strike without remorse, these are the
 wretch's crimes.

San. So let him die, for sentence Ortiz pleads;
 Were he my brother, by this arm he bleeds.

King. Give me thy hand.

San. With that my heart I pledge.

King. So, while he heeds not, shall thy rapier's edge
 Reach his proud heart.

San. My liege, my sovereign
 lord,
 Sancho's my name, I wear a soldier's sword.

Would you with treacherous acts, and deeds
of shame,

Taint such a calling, tarnish such a name?

Shall I—Shall I, to shrink from open strife,

Like some base coward, point th' assassin's knife?

No—face to face his foe must Ortiz meet,

Or in the crowded mart, or public street,

Defy and combat him in open light.

Curse the mean wretch who slays but does not
fight!

Nought can excuse the vile assassin's blow;

Happy, compar'd with him, his murder'd foe!

With him who, living, lives but to proclaim,

To all he meets, his cowardice and shame.

King. E'en as thou wilt, but in this paper read,
Signed by the king, the warrant of the deed.

(Sancho reads the paper aloud, which promises the king's protection, if he is brought into any jeopardy in consequence of killing the person alluded to, and is signed, Yo el Rey, I the King.)

King. Act as you may, my name shall set you free.

San. Does then my liege so meanly deem of me?

I know his power, which can the earth control,

Know his unshaken faith, and stedfast soul.

Shall seals, shall parchments then to me afford

A surer warrant than my sovereign's word?

To guard my actions, as to guide my hand,

I ask no surety but my king's command.

Perish such deeds— *(Tears the paper.*
they serve but to record

Some doubt, some question, of a monarch's
word.

What need of bonds? By honour bound are
we,

I to avenge thy wrongs, and thou to rescue me.
One price I ask, the maid I name for bride.—

King. Were she the richest and the best allied
In Spain, I grant her.—

San. So throughout the world,
May oceans view thy conquering flag unfurl'd.

King. Nor shall thy actions pass without a meed.—
This note informs thee, Ortiz, who must bleed.
But reading, be not startled at a name;
Great is his prowess; Seville speaks his fame.

San. I'll put that prowess to the proof ere long.

King. None know but I that you avenge my wrong;
So force must guide your arm, but prudence
check your tongue. *(Exit.*

Manet SANCHE, to whom enter CLARINDO.


He brings the joyful tidings of his
approaching nuptials, and delivers a
letter from Estrella, in which she tells
him that Bustos Tabera is in search of
him, and conjures him with great ten-
derness to avail himself without delay

of her brother's earnestness to bring the agreement to a conclusion. Sancho Ortiz, delighted at the letter, gives instant orders for festivities and rejoicings in his house, and after rewarding Clarindo for his news with a gem, dispatches him to make the necessary preparations. Impatient to meet Tabera, he is upon the point of setting out to overtake him, when he recollects the commands of the king, and resolves to ascertain first, what man he is destined to dispatch. He opens the note and reads :

“The man, Sancho, whom you must kill, is Bustos Tabera.”

His excessive anguish at this discovery makes him half doubt the truth of it ; and he reads the fatal words repeatedly, in hopes of finding some mistake. In his soliloquy, which is very long, there is a great mixture of natural passion, misplaced wit, and trivial conceit.

I should have inserted it, but he begins by comparing, in a metaphor of considerable length, the vicissitudes of life, to a particular game of cards; with which I, and probably my readers are unacquainted. A part of the speech is in the style of Ovid. Sancho is alternately a good lover and a loyal subject; and with great impartiality devotes nearly an equal number of verses to each sentiment. He is at last, however, swayed by the consideration, that a king is responsible to God alone for his actions, and that the only duty of a subject is to obey him. He infers also from these premises that the merit of his obedience is enhanced, if, by executing the king's mandates, he sacrifices his own affections, and incurs the enmity of the person he loves best on earth. He has scarce made up his mind to the discharge of this dreadful and mistaken duty, when Bustos enters.



BUSTOS TABERA y SANCHE ORTIZ.

- Bus.* Cuñado, suerte dichosa
He tenido en encontraros.
- San.* Y yo desdicha en hallaros; (*aparte*)
Porque me buskais aquí
Para darme vida á mi,
Pero yo para mataros.
- Bus.* Ya, hermano, el plazo llegó
De vuestras dichosas bodas.
- San.* Mas de mis desdichas todas (*aparte*)
Decirte pudiera yo
O valgame Dios. quien se vió
Jamás en tanto pesar!
Que aquí tengo de matar
Al que mas bien he querido?
Que á su hermana aya perdido
Que con todo he de acabar!
- Bus.* Ya por escritura estais
Casado con doña Estrella.
- San.* Casarme quise con ella,
Mas ya no, aunque me la dais.
- Bus.* Conoceis me? assi me hablais?
- San.* Por conoceros aquí
Os hablo, Tabera, assi.
- Bus.* ¿Si me conocéis Tabera
Como hablais de essa manera?
- San.* Hablé porque os conocí.
- Bus.* Habrais en mi conocido
Sangre nobleza y valor
Y virtud, que es el honor

Que sin ella honor no ha habido.

Y estoy, Sancho Ortiz, corrido—

San. Mas lo estoy yo.

Bus. Vos, de que—

San. De hablaros.

Bus. Pues si en mi honor, y mi fé

Algun defecto advertis

Como villano mentis,

Y aquí lo sustentaré. (*metemano*)

San. Que has de sustentar villano?

Perdone amor este exceso,

Que el Rey me ha quitado el seso

Y es el resistirme en vano.

Bus. Muerto soy; deten la mano.

San. Ay, que estoy fuera de mi

Y sin sentido te herí,

Mas aquí hermano te pido

Que ya que cobré sentido,

Que tu me mates á mi.

Quede tu espada enbaynada

En mi pecho; dé con ella

Puerta al alma.

Bus. A dios, Estrella

Os dexo hermano, encargada—

A dios.

(*muere.*)

San. Rigurosa espada!

Sangrienta y fiera homicida!

Si me has quitado la vida

Acabarme de matar;

Porque le pueda pagar
El alma por otra herida.

Salen Los Alcaldes mayores.

P. Que es esto? Deten la mano.

San. Como? Si á mi vida he muerto.

Far. Ay tan grande desconcierto!

P. Que es esto?

San. He muerto á mi hermano;
Soy un Cain Sevillano
Que vengativo y cruel
Maté un inocente Abel.
Veisle aqui, matadme aqui,
Que pues el muere por mi
Yo quiero morir por el.

Sale ARIAS.

Arias. Que es esto?

San. Un fiero rigor
Que tanto en los hombres labra,
Una cumplida palabra,
Y un acrisolado honor.
Dezidle al Rey mi señor
Que tienen los Sevillanos
Las palabras en las manos
Como lo veis, pues por ellas
Atropellan las Estrellas,
Y no hazen caso de hermanos.

Ped. Dió muerte á Bustos Tabera.

Ar. Ay tan temerado exceso.

San. Prendedme, llevadme preso,
Que es bien que el que mata, muera.
Mirad que hazaña tan fiera
Me hizo el amor intentar,
Y pues me ha obligado á matar,
Y me ha obligado á morir;
Pues por el vengo á pedir
La muerte que el me ha de dar.

Ped. Llevadle á Triana preso,
Porque la ciudad se altera.

San. Amigo Busto Tabera.

Far. Este hombre ha perdido el seso.

San. Dexadme llevar en peso
Señores, el cuerpo elado
En noble sangre bañado,
Que assi su Atlante seré
Y entre tanto daré
La vida que le ha quitado.

Ar. Loco está—

San. Y si atropello
Mi gusto, guardo la ley.
Esto, señor, es ser Rey
Y esto, señor, es no sello—
Entendello y no entendello
Importa—pues yo lo callo
Yo lo maté, no hay negallo,
Mas el porque no diré;

Otro confiese el porque ;
 Pues yo confieso el matallo.

(llevanle y van.)

Salen ESTRELLA y TEODORA.

Est. No sé si me vestí bien

Como me vestí de prisa :

Dame Teodora esse espejo.

Teo. Veste señora en tu misma

Puedes, porque no ay cristal

Que tantas verdades diga,

Ni de hermosura tan grande

Haga verdadera cifra.

Est. Alterado tengo el rostro

Y la color encendida.

Teo. Es señora que la sangre

Se ha assomada á las mexillas

Entre temor y verguenza

Solo celebrar tus dichas.

Est. Ya me parece que llegar

Bañado el rostro de risa

Mi esposo á darme la mano

Entre mil tiernas caricias ;

Ya me parece que dice

Mil ternezas, y que oidas

Sale el alma por los ojos

Disimulando sus niñas.

Ay venturoso día

Esta ha sido, Teodora, Estrella mia.

Teo. Parece que gente suena ;
 Todo el espejo de embidia
 El cristal dentro la oja
 De una luna hizo infinitas.

Est. Quebróse?

Teo. Señora sí.

Est. Bien hizo porque imagina
 Que aguardo el cristal Teodora
 En que mis ojos se miran,
 Y pues tal espejo aguardo
 Quebrese el espejo, amiga,
 Que no quiero que con el
 Este de espejo me sirva.

Sale CLARINDA muy galan.

Clar. Ya aquesto sueña señora
 A gusto y volateria
 Que las plumas del sombrero
 Los casamientos publican
 A mi dueño dí el papel
 Y dió me aquesta sortija
 En albricias.

Est. Pues yo quiero
 Feriarte aquessas albricias
 Damela y toma por ella
 Este diamante.

Clar. Partida
 Está por medio la piedra,
 Será de melancolia
 Que los jacintos padecen

De esse mal, aunque le quitan,
Partida por medio está.

Est. No importa que está partida
Que es bien que las piedras sientan
Mis contentos y alegrías.
Ay venturoso día !
Esta, amigos, ha sido Estrella mia.

Teo. Gran tropel suena en los patios.

Clar. Y ya la escalera arriba
Parece que sube gente.

Est. Que valor ay que resista
Al placer, pero que es esto.

*(Salen los dos alcaldes mayores con el
muerto.)*

Ped. Los desastres y desdichas
Se hicieron para los hombres,
Que es mar de llanto esta vida
El señor Bustos Tabera
Es muerto.

Est. Suerte enemiga !

Ped. El consuela que aqui os queda
Es que está el fiero homicida
Sancho Ortiz de las Roelas
Preso ; y del se hará justicia
Mañana sin falta.

Est. Dexadme gente enemiga !
Que en vuestras lenguas traeis
De los infernos las iras ;
Mi hermano es muerto y le ha muerto
Sancho Ortiz ! ¿ Ay quien lo diga,

Ay quien lo escuche y no muera ?
 Piedra soy, pues estoy viva,
 Ay riguroso dia !
 Esta, amigos, ha sido Estrella mia ?
 Pero si hay piedad humana
 Matadme.

Ped. El dolor le priva ;
 Y con razon.

Est. Desdichada
 Ha sido la Estrella mia
 Mi hermano es muerto, y le ha muerto
 Sancho Ortiz, de quien divida
 Tres almas de un corazon.
 Dexadme. Que estoy perdida.

Ped. Ella esta desesperada

Far. Infeliz beldad. (*vase Estrella.*)

Ped. Sequidla.

Clar. Señora.

Est. Dexamme ingrato
 Sangre de aquel fraticida,
 Y pues acabo con todo
 Quiero acabar con la vida :
 Ay riguroso dia !
 Esta ha sido, Teodora, Estrella mia.

BUSTOS TABERA and SANCHO ORTIZ.

Bus. In meeting thus my fortune do I greet.

San. Alas! I curse the chance that makes us meet.
 (*aside.*)

You come to make a friend, a brother blest,
And I to plunge a dagger in thy breast.

(aside.

Bus. Brother, the hour of long sought bliss is come.

San. My hour of grief, of all my woes the doom!
O God! did man e'er bear such weight of ill?
Him whom I love next heaven my sword must
kill:

And with the very blow that stabs my friend,
My love is lost, and all my visions end. *(aside.*

Bus. The deeds are drawn; to tell the news I came;
They only wait for Sancho Ortiz' name.

San. Once it is true, by fickle fancy led, *(aloud.*
Tabera's sister Ortiz fain would wed;
But now, though drawn the strict agreements
stand,

I scorn the offer, and reject her hand.

Bus. Know'st thou to whom, or what thou speaks't?

San. I know

To whom I speak, and therefore speak I so.

Bus. How, knowing me, can words of insult dwell
On Ortiz' tongue?

San. Because he knows thee well.

Bus. And knows he aught but generous pride of blood,
And honour such as prompts the brave and good?
Virtue and genuine honour are the same;
Pride uninspired by her, usurps the name.
But yet, though slow of anger to a friend,
Thy words my virtue as my pride offend.

San. Not more offended can thy virtue be,
Than I so long to talk with one like thee.

Bus. Is't come to this? and dost thou taunt my fame
With aught that bears not honour's sacred name?
Prove then this sword which dares thy rage defy,
My foe a villain, and his charge a lie.

(Draw and fight.)

San. What can the swords of traitorous villains prove?
Pardon me, sacred friendship! pardon, love!
My king impels—I madden as I fight,
And phrensy lends my arm resistless might.

Bus. Enough, nor further press thy blow—I bleed—
My hour is come— *(Bustos falls.)*

San. Then am I mad indeed!

Yes, when I struck thy death, my sense was
gone;

Restor'd, I from thy arm implore my own.—
Sheath in this breast, for pity sheath thy sword,
And to my troubled soul an instant flight afford.

Bus. My motives fate denies the time to tell,
Wed thou my sister, Ortiz, and—farewell!

(dies.)

San. Come then, destructive unrelenting blade,
Dispatch the life thy work has wretched made:
Come, while Tabera's gore is reeking yet,
With a fresh wound to close the bloody debt.

Enter FARFAN and PEDRO, Alcaldes mayores.

Ped. Wretch! stay that weapon, rais'd thyself to kill.

San. 'T was rais'd against a life yet dearer still.

M

Enter ARIAS.

Ar. What's this disorder?

San. The disorder's plain;
I've kill'd a brother, like another Cain,
Ruthless and fierce, a guiltless Abel slain.
Here, here he lies, survey each mangled limb;
And as he died for me, so let me die for him.

Ar. Why, what is this?

San. What is it, do you ask?
'T is a kept promise, an accomplish'd task;
'T is honour in a fiery trial prov'd;
Honour that slew the man he dearly lov'd.
Yes, tell the King, that for our plighted words,
We sons of Seville bear them on our swords;
Tell him for them we do our stars* defy;
For them our laws expire, our brothers die.

Ped. He's kill'd Tabera.

Ar. Rash, flagitious deed!

San. Then seize me,—bind me,—let his murderer
bleed!

Where are we? Do not law and reason say,
Ruffians shall die, and blood shall blood repay?
But mark'd you how the mighty crime was done?
No hate was here; 'twas love, and love alone;
And love that did the crime shall for the crime
atone.

Bustos I slew, I now for Bustos plead,
And beg of justice—that his murderer bleed.

* This in the original is a quibble on the name *Estrella* which in Spanish signifies a star.

Thy friend that tribute to thy memory pays.

Ar. The man is mad, and knows not what he says.

Ped. Then to Triana's tower the culprit lead,
Lest at the noise of such a lawless deed
Sevilleshouldrise, and some new tumult breed. }

San. Yet I would raise my brother from the ground,
Clasp his cold limbs, and kiss the sacred wound, }
And wash the noble blood that streams his
corpse around. }

So I'll his Atlas be; nor would repine,
The life I've taken to redeem with mine.

Ped. 'Tis madness this—

San. When I from friendship swerv'd,
Against my pleasure I the laws observ'd ;
That's a king's part—in that I'm king alone ;
But in this act, alas ! I am not one—
The riddle's easy when the clue is found,
But 't is not mine the riddle to expound.
'Tis true I slew him—I not that deny ;
I own I slew him—but I say not why :
That why—let others, if they like it, plead,
Enough for me that I confess the deed.

[*Exit guarded.*

Scene changes to ESTRELLA's chamber.

ESTRELLA and THEODORA.

Est. So quick my toilet was, I scarce can guess
How set my garments and how looks my dress.
Give me the glass.

Theo. The glass is needless here ;
Look on thyself—no mirror is so clear ;

Nor can in mimic forms reflected shine
Such matchless charms, and beauty bright as
thine. *(holds the looking-glass.*

Est. Whence can such crimson colours fire my cheek?

Theo. Thy joy, and yet thy modesty, they speak.

Yes, to thy face contending passions rush,

Thy bliss betraying with a maiden blush.

Est. 'Tis true he comes; the youth my heart ap-
proves

Comes fraught with joy, and led by smiling
loves.

He claims my hand; I hear his soft caress,

See his soul's bliss come beaming from his eye.

O partial stars! unlook'd for happiness!

Can it be true?—Is this my destiny*?

Theo. Hark! some one rings—but, lo! with envy smit,

One mirror into thousand mirrors split.

Est. Is't broken?—

Theo. Yes.

Est. And sure with reason too,

Since soon, without its aid, I hope to view

Another self; with him before my eyes,

I need no glass, and can its use despise.

* Here again the word *Estrella* is used for the sake of a pun. I have been obliged to render it by the word *destiny*; and it is probably the only advantage which my translation has over the original, that the English language does not admit of a quibble, which in the Spanish runs through and disfigures the whole scene.

Enter CLARINDO.

Clar. All, lady, all is merriment and cheer,
And the plum'd hats announce the wedding
near.

I gave the letter, and received a ring.

Est. Take too this diamond for the news you bring.

Clar. Alas! the precious gem is split in two;
Is it for grief?

Est. Oh no, Clarindo, no;

It burst for joy—the very gems have caught
My heart's content, my gaiety of thought.
Thrice happy day, and kind indulgent sky!
Can it be true?—Is this my destiny*?

Theo. Hark! steps below?

Clar. And now the noise draws near.

Est. My joy o'ercomes me!—

Enter Alcaldes with the dead body of BUSTOS.

Gracious God! what's here?

Ped. Grief, nought but grief was made for man below,
Life is itself one troubled sea of woe:—
Lady, Tabera's slain.—

Est. O sad, O cruel blow!

Ped. One comfort still—in chains his murderer lies;
Tomorrow judged by law, the guilty Ortiz
dies.

Est. Hence, fiends! I'll hear no more—your tidings
bear

The blasts of hell, the warrant of despair.

* Vide note, p. 164.

My brother's slain!—by Sancho's arm he fell!
 What! are there tongues the dismal tale to tell?
 Can I too know it, and the blow survive?
 Oh! I am stone, to hear that sound and live.
 If ever pity dwelt in human breast—
 Kill—murder—stab me—

Ped. With such grief oppress,
 Well may she rave.

Est. O sentence fraught with pain!
 My brother dead—by Sancho Ortiz slain!

(going.)
 That cruel stroke has rent three hearts in one;—
 Then leave a wretch, who's hopeless and undone.
Ped. Ah! who can wonder at her wild despair?—
 Follow her steps.

Far. Alas! ill-fated fair!
Clar. Lady, one instant—

Est. Would you have me stay
 For him, the wretch, that did my brother slay?
 My love, my hopes, my all for ever gone,
 Perish life too, for life is hateful grown!
 Inhuman stars! unheard-of misery!
 Can it be so?—Is this my destiny*?

ACT III. SCENE I.

The third act opens with the King receiving an account of Sancho Ortiz' behaviour; his avowal of the murder, but

* Vide note, page 164.

refusal to allege the motives of it. The King is struck with his magnanimity, but at the same time embarrassed by it. "Tell him," at length he says, "to declare who instigated him to this crime, though it be the King himself: tell him I am his friend; but that, unless he immediately explains his conduct, he must tomorrow perish on a public scaffold." Arias is intrusted with this message; Estrella enters; she throws herself at the King's feet; and after a contrast of her late prospects in life, and attachment to her brother, with her present forlorn and dismal condition, which, though poetically conceived, is neither well placed nor happily executed, she ends her petition by claiming a privilege, sanctioned, I believe, by the antient usages of Spain, of deciding, as nearest relation of the deceased, the fate of her brother's murderer. The King, moved by her beauty and tears, has not force enough to resist her entreaties; and, in

a speech full of hyperbolical compliments on her charms, presents her with a royal key, which will admit her to the prison of Triana, and secure the prisoner's being delivered over to her mercy. She leaves the royal presence with some ambiguous expressions, which the King construes into vows of revenge. From the moment that he ceases to contemplate her features he condemns his own weakness, and feels the deepest remorse at the perfidy and cruelty of his conduct. In the dialogue between Estrella and him, there are some very pretty verses; but both the sentiments and expressions seem better suited to a sonnet than to a tragedy.

SCENE II. *A prison.*

Clarindo gives Sancho Ortiz his reasons for not composing a poem on his misfortunes; and a short dialogue between Sancho and the Alcaldes takes place; in which the former inculcates a

very favourite thought of Lope, that a life of misery is a protracted death, and that to the unhappy, death is life :

No hay vida como la muerte
Para el que muriendo vive.

Arias enters, and delivers the King's message, which Sancho answers in ambiguous terms : " Let those," he says, " whose duty it is to speak, speak ; my duty was to act, and I have acted." On Arias retiring, Clarindo and his master discuss the subject of honour ; and Sancho's passion, mixed with his romantic notions, very naturally persuades his servant that he is mad. On such occasions the poet very often criticises himself, and puts into the mouth of the Gracioso the censures which he is conscious that the improbability of his hero's sentiments deserves to incur. At length enters a lady veiled, to whom, in virtue of the King's order, the prisoner is delivered over. She offers him his liberty, which he refuses to accept, unless she

unveils herself. She, after some importunity, consents, and discovers herself to be Estrella. Sancho, struck with her love, thinks some flight of generosity equally extravagant is required of him, and obstinately refuses to leave his prison. After several witticisms on his conduct, they separate; both resolving to die—one literally on a scaffold, the other figuratively of love. This scene, where the situation seems to suggest some fine sentiments, is, in my judgment, the coldest and worst in the play.

SCENE III.

The KING and ARIAS.

The King, stung with remorse for his conduct, is nevertheless overruled by the sophistry of Arias, and consents to avail himself of Sancho's generosity, by not acknowledging himself the criminal; but at the same time to exert his influence with the judges to procure an acquittal of Sancho Ortiz, or at least a mitigation of the sentence, which would

enable him, under pretence of banishment, to reward Sancho Ortiz for his fidelity.

The Alcalde of Triana enters, and reports what had passed between the prisoner and Estrella; which excites the King's admiration, and he directs Sancho Ortiz to be secretly conveyed to him. In the mean while he speaks with the judges, who profess great attachment and obedience to their sovereign; which he misinterprets into a compliance with his wishes. In this scene there is an observation,

Montes la lisonja allana—

Flattery can level mountains—

which, in the modern play, has, with great propriety, been transferred to the King's soliloquy, when he thinks he has won over the judges, and is there enlarged upon with great success. The judges, to the King's great dismay, return with the sentence of death, and ex-

culpate themselves from the charge of breaking their promise to the King, by appealing to the nature of their office, or rather to that of their wands, which are the insignia of it. If there is much quaintness in this appeal, it is at least in the character of the times which they represent. Many of these sayings and maxims, conveyed in quaint language, which are so common in the plays on early Spanish history, and which are hastily condemned by foreigners as instances of bad taste, form part of the traditions on which the stories are founded; and the omission of them would destroy that air of truth and originality, from which they derive much of their merit in the eyes of a Spanish audience. Shakspeare has preserved some colloquial phrases of Henry the VIIIth and Richard the IIIrd, which had been handed down to him by traditional report; and I believe most English critics will acknowledge, that though they would be grotesque were

they of his invention, yet, as historical traits, they give an appearance of reality to the speeches, which enhances the interest of the representation.

To return to Lope: The King, unable to shake the integrity of the judges, promises to marry Estrella to a grandee of Castile, on condition that she shall withdraw the prosecution against her brother's murderer. To this she consents. The King pronounces the pardon of Ortiz; but the judges loudly remonstrate against such a proceeding, and at length extort from the King the confession of the murder having been committed at his instigation. Estrella, pressed by the King to marry Sancho Ortiz, while she acknowledges her love for him, is unable to overcome her repugnance at seeing the man who murdered her brother at her bed and board, *en mesa y en cama*, and obstinately persists in her refusal. This conduct produces

an exclamation of wonder at the heroic qualities of the Sevilians from all present, except the Gracioso, who observes, that to him they all appear mad.

Whether we agree with him in this judgment, or with the King, who, after promising to procure a great match for Estrella, compliments the author on the poem, and thinks the subject worthy to be written on tablets of brass, we cannot but acknowledge that there are many situations in the play truly tragic, that it excites great interest in the perusal, and is calculated to produce yet greater effect upon the stage.

In the revived, as in the original play, the vigour of the composition is exhausted in the second act; and after the death of Bustos, and the disappointment of Estrella, the interest flags, for the events, though ingeniously conducted, seem comparatively insipid. This fault, however great, Lope has in common with

many of the most admired authors. It is, in this instance, a natural consequence of the great beauty of the second act. A more spirited or more interesting dialogue than that between the King and Sancho can scarce be found on any theatre; and Estrella's eager expectation of the bridegroom, as well as her sanguine prospects of happiness, which form so strong a contrast with her subsequent calamities, are admirably conceived; and though the sentiments, as well as the frequent recurrence of the same verse at the end of the period, may be somewhat too lyrical for representation, there is much natural expression, as well as poetical language and invention, in the course of that scene.

On the whole this play may be considered as a favourable specimen of Lope's art of conducting a plot, and the more so, as it derives no assistance from the operation of jealousy; a passion,

which he, and after him all Spanish dramatic writers, seem to think essential in a composition for the stage, as well as sufficient to explain any absurdity, and warrant any outrage. It is indeed a received maxim in their country, as well as on their theatre, that love cannot exist without jealousy. But Lope does not conclude, from such premises, that the passions are inseparable. Jealousy, in his plays, often exists where there is no affection, and, what seems yet more singular, often precedes and produces love. To excite love in one woman, the most efficacious philtre, according to these doctors, is to become enamoured of another. By a natural consequence, that passion has more particles of pride than of tenderness in its composition, and the lover's chief gratification consists in ascertaining the power they possess over each other. These preposterous principles pervade all his plays; but are more prevalent in

his mixed comedies than in those which may be supposed to aspire to the character of tragedies. In the latter there is generally plot enough to form at least four plays on any other theatre; of which the *Fuerza lastimosa* is a striking instance; as well as of the great veneration in which Lope's plays were held by his contemporaries. Many were represented with great success in Italy, but this had the singular honour of being exhibited within the walls of the seraglio at Constantinople*. Some scenes founded on a story similar to that of The Orphan, may be compared to the correspondent parts of that tragedy without disparagement to either poet. Pathetic tenderness is not, however, the general character of Lope's productions; and I may have a future opportunity of shewing, that in that respect, as well as

* Pellicer's Notes to Don Quixote.

others, Guillen de Castro bears a much stronger resemblance to Otway.

In Lope's comedies, the frequency of duels, and the constant recurrence of disguises, have drawn upon him the censure of the critics, who argue from thence a defect in his talents both of observation and invention. There not only appears a want of variety in such artifices, but the artifices themselves are alleged to be of a nature too extravagant to warrant such frequent repetitions. The answer to such objections is to be found in the memoirs and histories of the times. It is not my purpose to enter into a discussion which would more properly be reserved for an account of Calderon's writings; but it is certain, that if the Spanish poets admitted more violent incidents into their comedies than the writers of the present age, the common state of society was also more open to the intrusion of sur-

prising adventures. We have learnt from the stage to consider many contrivances as theatrical, which the theatre itself borrowed from the actual occurrences of life. At any rate, neither Lope nor Calderon himself will be found to have abused the advantages which the cloak and sword, the *basquiña* and *mantilla**, supplied, so much as our writers of Charles the Second's time exaggerated the facility afforded to the accomplishment of improbable designs by the prevalent fashion of masks. It is true, that from the frequent exhibition of such adventures, the theatre was accused of instructing the Spanish public in those arts of intrigue which it professed to copy from their practice. Calderon almost pleads guilty to the charge, since one of his characters, on being the dupe of a disguise, exclaims:

* The veil and walking-dress of a Spanish woman.

.....Mal hubiesen
 Las comedias que enseñaron
 Engaños tan aparentes*.

Plague on our comedies, which shewed the ease
 With which the world might practise tricks like these!

To prevent such evil consequences, or with some view equally absurd, the government is said for a time to have prohibited all Lope's plays, and to have confined the exercise of his talents by a royal injunction to the composition of sacred dramas†. This circumstance renders the government, as well as the taste of the times, accountable for the choice of subjects, so unsuitable to representation as the lives of saints, and performance of miracles. They are indeed truly ridiculous. In the *Animal profeta*, St. Julian, after having plotted the murder of his wife, and actually accomplishing that of his father and mother, enters into a controversy with the Devil, as to the

* Calderon. *Bien vengas mal, si vengas solo.*

† Pellicer.

possibility of being saved ; and when Jesus Christ descends from heaven to effect a miracle for that purpose in his favour, the Devil, with much logical precision, alleges such mercy to be a breach of the original contract between him and the Almighty. He insinuates, indeed, that if he cannot reckon upon a parricide, he may as well give over his business in souls, as there is no appearance of fair dealing in the trade. The mysteries of religion are sometimes discussed by his characters, and much polemical divinity is to be found in his dialogues. The birth, the passion, the crucifixion of Christ are

—oculis subjecta fidelibus.—

The Virgin, and even the Almighty, are among his dramatis personæ ; the resurrection of a dead man is no unusual incident, and the forgiveness of sins furnishes a fortunate conclusion for more than one of his tragedies.

In addition to these sacrifices of taste and judgment to public piety, he wrote several *Autos Sacramentales*, allegorical dramas on the mysteries of religion. This species of representation continued popular in Spain till the middle of the last century. There is scarce a poet of any note in their language, who has not employed his pen on these subjects; and for the disgusting absurdities which abound in them, Lope could plead as many precedents as he furnished. It was difficult for him to divest any of his writings of all poetical merit; and in his *Autos*, the patience which could wade through such nonsense would no doubt be occasionally rewarded with some striking passages. They are not, however, so celebrated as those of many other authors, and I believe that the greater number of them, for he composed some hundreds, are lost. There are still extant, in addition to the autos and plays ascribed to him, innu-

merable *Entremeses*, or interludes, and in the few I have read there is no deficiency of humour or merriment. Indeed, there is always some sprightliness, and often much invention, in his comedy. The French and English writers are indebted to him for some of their most successful productions; and the outline of an excellent comedy is often faintly delineated in an episode or a scene of Lope. To him Corneille ascribes the *Sospechosa verdad*, which he acknowledges to be the original of the *Menteur*. But Voltaire, who is more diligent in his literary researches than those, who, because they possess not his wit, think they have a right to mistrust his learning, are disposed to allow, implies a doubt of the fact*. Such authority is not lightly to be disputed, especially as it seems to be confirmed by no such name occurring in any list

* Notes on Corneille's *Menteur*.

of Lope's productions. The *Melindrosa*, the *Azero de Madrid*, the *Esclava de su galan*, la *Bella mal maridada*, as well as many others, have in part been imitated, and are among the best of his comedies. Those, however, of a more anomalous description, where there is more elevation in the main characters, and nearly as much distress as merriment in the action, excite a more lively interest in the perusal. Humour is, at best, formed of very perishable materials. Some author remarks, that mankind laugh in various ways, but always cry in the same. The truth of that observation is strongly illustrated in the history of the theatre. Scarce a season passes without producing several successful pieces of humour; yet, after some years are gone by, how few bear a revival! There is less variety, but there is more permanence, in works of which an interesting plot forms the basis. Accordingly, many of this descrip-

tion (for Lope abounds in them) have been lately revived with considerable success at Madrid. Such are the *Hermosa fea, lo Cierito por lo dudoso*, &c. &c. It is almost unnecessary to repeat, that in none of these are the unities of time preserved. This violation of rules incurred the censure of the French critics at a very early period; and has been condemned with yet greater rigour by the Spanish writers during the last century. Boileau no doubt alludes to the Phoenix of Spain when he says :

Un rimeur sans péril au-delà des Pyrénées
 Sur la scène en un jour renferme des années.
 Là souvent le héros d'un spectacle grossier,
 Enfant au premier acte, est barbon au dernier.

Art Poétique.

The Spanish bard, who no nice censure fears,
 In one short day includes a lapse of years.
 In those rude acts the hero lives so fast,
 Child in the first, he's greybeard in the last.

That such should be the judgment of Boileau is not extraordinary; but a

Spaniard of considerable eloquence*, editor of Cervantes' plays, lays all these extravagancies to the charge of Lope, terms him the corrupter of the theatre, and endeavours to prove that the yet more extravagant tragedies, to which the dissertation is prefixed, were designed as burlesque satires upon his compositions. In this whimsical theory he is indeed as unsupported by authority as by reason; but though no critics follow his opinion in this respect, they all concur with him in anathematizing the irregularity of Lope's theatre. "We must not look in his comedies," says Velasquez, "for the unities of action, time, or place; his heroes come into the world, walk about it, thrive in it, grow old, and die. They wander like vagabonds from East to West, and North to South; he flies with them through the air to fight battles in one place, and make love in another; sometimes they turn monks, some-

* Nasarre.

times they die, and even after death they occasionally perform miracles on the stage. One scene is in Flanders, another in Italy, Spain, Mexico, or Africa. His lacqueys talk like courtiers, and his kings like pimps; his principal ladies are women without education, breeding, or decorum. His actors enter like levies, in battalions, or in squadrons. It is not unusual to see twenty-four or thirty dramatis personæ, or even seventy, as in the *Bautismo del principe de Fez*, where, because these did not seem enough for him, he throws in a procession by way of *bonne bouche*." Luzan, the most temperate and judicious of their critics, dwells on the same topics; but, like Andres, asserts that the total disregard of decorum, the little difference preserved in the character and language of the prince and the peasant, the noble and the plebeian, is a yet heavier charge, and one which no harmony of verse nor eloquence of lan-

guage can possibly counterbalance. The futility of such censures every reader of Shakspeare has felt, and Johnson in his preface most admirably exposed. Were the characters of Lope's dramas as strongly conceived, and as well preserved, he might set the shafts of such critics at defiance; but though he is not utterly ignorant of that great object of his art, the delineation of human character, nor by any means destitute of the faculties necessary to attain it, he neither possessed the genius of our inimitable poet, nor was he so attentive to the cultivation of that particular talent. Nevertheless, traits of nature are often to be found in his plays, and he seems to have aimed at great variety of characters; but they are faintly traced, and never uniformly preserved throughout the piece. His plan admitted of greater perfection in this respect, than that of most of his immediate followers. His lovers are not always a class apart,

nor his women constantly and exclusively actuated by the same passions operating in the same forms. He is, however, answerable for the introduction of a character, which in all Spanish plays is the same person under different names, viz. the Gracioso. This innovation, if it is indeed to be ascribed to him, must be acknowledged to be an abuse, and not an improvement. The *Francesilla** is said to be the first play in which he is introduced. Lope not only wrote but performed the part of such a buffoon at Valencia in 1599, on the celebration of Philip the Third's nuptials†. This circumstance may have contributed to mislead Voltaire, who has met with most unmerciful and disproportionate ridicule from the Spanish editors, for having alleged Lope to have been an actor. They ought to have known that such an assertion was

* Pellicer's Notes to Cervantes.

† Continuation of Mariana's History.

not entirely void of foundation. He who writes of foreign literature is liable to trivial mistakes; and whether the above quoted fact, or a confusion of Lope de Rueda the founder of the Spanish theatre, who was really an actor, with Lope de Vega, misled the French critic, the fact is in either case to his purpose, as far as it proves that authors who are accustomed to act are likely to encourage by their example irregularity and extravagance in theatrical compositions. Till Voltaire appeared, there was no nation more ignorant of its neighbours' literature than the French. He first exposed, and then corrected, this neglect in his countrymen. There is no writer to whom the authors of other nations, especially of England, are so indebted for the extension of their fame in France, and, through France, in Europe. There is no critic who has employed more time, wit, ingenuity, and diligence in promoting the literary intercourse be-

tween country and country, and in celebrating in one language the triumphs of another. Yet, by a strange fatality, he is constantly represented as the enemy of all literature but his own; and Spaniards, Englishmen, and Italians, vie with each other in inveighing against his occasional exaggeration of faulty passages; the authors of which, till he pointed out their beauties, were scarce known beyond the country in which their language was spoken. Those who feel such indignation at his misrepresentations and mistakes, would find it difficult to produce a critic in any modern language, who in speaking of foreign literature is better informed or more candid than Voltaire; and they certainly never would be able to discover one, who to those qualities unites so much sagacity and liveliness. His enemies would fain persuade us that such exuberance of wit implies a want of information; but they only succeed in shewing



that a want of wit by no means implies an exuberance of information. If he indulges his propensity to ridicule in exposing the absurdities of the Spanish stage, he makes ample amends by acknowledging that it is full of sublime passages, and not deficient in interesting scenes. He allows the Spanish poets full credit for their originality, and acknowledges them to have been Corneille's masters, though much excelled by their disciple. He objects, indeed, to the buffoonery of many of their scenes; and the Gracioso might surely offend a critic who had less right to be fastidious than the author of Mahomet and of Zara. That preposterous personage not only interlards the most interesting scenes with the grossest buffooneries, but, assuming the amphibious character of spectator and actor, at one time interrupts with his remarks the performance, of which he forms an essential but very defective part in an-

other. He seems, indeed, invented to save the conscience of the author, who after any extravagant hyperbole puts a censure or ridicule of it in the mouth of his buffoon, and thereby hopes to disarm the critic, or at least to record his own consciousness and disapprobation of the passage. This critical acumen is the only estimable quality of the Gracioso. His strictures on the conduct of the characters, the sentiments, expressions, and even the metre, are generally just, though they would better become the pit than the stage. In other respects he is uniformly a designing, cowardly, interested knave: but Lope found his account in the preservation of this character, and was happy to reconcile the public to an invention so convenient to the poet. As any topic could be introduced in this part, he was thus enabled to fill up whole scenes with any verses he might have by him ready composed: nor was this all; at the conclusion of a

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complicated plot, when the author is unable to extricate himself from the embarrassments he has created, in any probable manner, the buffoon steps forward, cuts the Gordian knot, explains away the difficulty, discloses the secret, and decides upon the fate and marriages of all who are present. His oracles, like those of fools in some courts, are looked upon as inspired; and rivals who had been contending during the whole play, acquiesce without a murmur in his decisions. In addition to this merit he gives Lope a frequent opportunity of displaying his talents for sprightly and burlesque poetry; in which, as I have remarked before, he was most uniformly successful. As a specimen of the general style of his part in the dialogue, I subjoin Julio's defence of his master, who, in the *Hermosa fea*, had affected to be insensible to the charms of the duchess of Lorrain:

JULIO y CELIA.

Jul. Un mal gusto es fundamento
De que le parézca así
Fuera de ser cosa llana,
Que no hay disputa en los gustos.

Cel. Si, pero gustos injustos
Hacen la razon villana.

Jul. Hombres hay, que un día oscuro
Para salir apetecen,
Y el sol hermoso aborrecen
Quando sale claro y puro.
Hombres, que no pueden ver
Cosa dulce, y comerán
Una cebolla sin pan,
Que no hay mas que encarecer ;
Hombres en Indias casados
Con blanquissimas mugeres
De estremados paraceres
Y á sus negras inclinados.
Unos que mueren por dar
Quanto en su vida tuvieron ;
Y otros que en su vida dieron
Sino es enojo, y pesar ;
Muchos duermen todo el día
Y toda la noche velan ;
Y muchos que se desvelan
En una eterna porfia
De amar sola una muger ;
Y otro que como aya tocas
Dos mil les parecen pocas
Para empezar á querer

Segun esto la duquesa
 No dexa de ser hermosa
 Por un mal gusto,—&c. &c.

JULIO and CELIA.

Jul. Bad taste—but 't was allowed long since,
 That tastes of no dispute admit.

Cel. But, when so bad as in your prince,
 The want of taste shews want of wit.

Jul. Why men there are in cloudy days,
 Who, spite of rain, abroad will roam;
 Who hate the sun's all-cheering rays,
 And when 'tis fine will mope at home;

Men too there are who loath what's sweet,
 What we like most they relish least,
 They without bread their onions eat,
 And deem the sorry meal a feast;

Spaniards in India there have been,
 Who to their wives extremely slack;
 Have loath'd a fair and snowy skin,
 And sigh'd in secret for a black;

Some without cause their substance give,
 Squander away their time and pence;
 Others give nothing while they live,
 But trouble, umbrage, and offence;

Some sleep by day, and watch by night;
 Some to one nymph their life devote;

Others their faith and duty plight
To all who wear the petticoat.

Then, that one man her charms decries,
Should give the beauteous dame no care;
Because my master wants his eyes,
Your mistress sure is not less fair.

Such thoughts and language are no doubt more suited to an epigrammatic song than to a dialogue in a play. It has often appeared to me, that the frequent recurrence of antithesis on the Spanish stage was a natural consequence of the short verses, in which most of their old scenes are composed. As the public are extremely partial to that metre, which is nearly the same as that of the old ballads or romances, and as they think it peculiarly adapted to recitation, a stranger should speak with great diffidence in his own judgment, when it is at variance with the Spaniards on such a subject; but it is certain that such dialogues as contain most points, are

those which are best received on their stage; and few couplets in that metre are quoted with approbation by their critics, but such as abound in antithesis, or such as are confessedly of a nature too lyrical for representation. The love of epigram may have rendered a metre peculiarly favourable to it, popular; but, from the history of their poetry, I am inclined to believe that the epigram rather owes its popularity to the cultivation of a metre, which, when the language is somewhat refined, becomes insipid without it. Such short pauses are evidently more calculated for the expression of wit than of passion. Hence it is not unusual for the characters of Lope, when placed in embarrassing situations, and wavering between the most violent and opposite affections, to express their wishes, describe their feelings, and justify their conduct in a long string of reasoning epigrams; of which

the logic is not very convincing, and the wit evidently misplaced. The most preposterous metaphors are, in such cases, taken in their literal sense; and the poetical jargon, more offensively hyperbolical in Spanish than in any other European language, employed in scholastic forms of dispute, as if it were composed of terms logically precise. Lope indeed seems not to have been ignorant of the dangers, to which these short numbers exposed him. He accordingly assumed the privilege of varying them as he pleased; but he wanted either leisure or judgment to bring his plan to perfection. He has laid down some rules on this subject in the *Arte de hacer Comedias*; but as he has neither abided by them himself, nor alleged any reason for his opinions; and since they are as much at variance with common criticism, as with his own practice;

one may be admitted to call in question the soundness of his precepts. He says:

Las decimas son buenas para quejas ;
 El soneto está bien en los que aguardan ;
 Las relaciones piden los romances ;
 Aunque en octavas lucen por extremo ;
 Son los tercetos para cosas graves ;
 Y para las de amor las redondillas.

In ten-line staves should wailing grief be shewn ;
 The sonnet suits a man who speaks alone ;
 Let plain narration flow in ballad lines ;
 Though much a tale in copious octaves shines ;
 Grand weighty thoughts the triplet should contain ;
 But shortest stanzas suit the lover's strain.

In these, the heroic verse (which in Spanish, as in Italian, is of five feet, and generally composed of eleven syllables) is not mentioned : yet he often employed it for declamation as well as for description in the first scenes of his plays ; and being a rhythm, better adapted to tragedy, it seldom fails to in-

spire sentiments more natural, and diction at once more majestic and more simple. The dialogue in *Carlos el Perseguido*, which is chiefly conducted in long metre, preserves all the dignity of tragedy, and, as it has the advantage of a very interesting plot, is among the most valuable of his plays. He does not, however, confine himself to one or two variations of verse; but though he is allowed to be a great master of harmony in all, he generally prefers those numbers which seem invented for lyric rather than dramatic composition. In these his style is always flowery and poetical, and his thoughts too often forced, unnatural, and extravagant. The most singular circumstance attending his verse is the frequency and difficulty of the tasks which he imposes on himself. At every step we meet with *acrostics*, *echoes*, and compositions of that perverted but laborious kind, from

attempting which another author would be deterred by the trouble of the undertaking, if not by the little real merit attending the achievement. They require no genius, but they exact much time; which one should think that such a voluminous poet could little afford to waste. But Lope made a parade of his power over the vocabulary; he was not contented with displaying the various order in which he could dispose the syllables and marshal the rhymes of his language, but he also prided himself upon the celerity with which he brought them to go through the most whimsical but the most difficult evolutions. He seems to have been partial to difficulties, for the gratification of surmounting them.

The sonnet, which, of a short composition, is that which requires the greatest command of rhyme, harmony, and language, seems to have been his

favourite employment. There are few of his plays which do not contain three or four of these little poems; many of them have great merit as sonnets, though they are surely misplaced in the mouth of an actor. In the *Niña de Plata*, the celebrated sonnet to *Violante* is very happily introduced; but it is there recited by the *Gracioso* as a poetical effusion.

Un soneto me manda hacer *Violante* ;
 Que en mi vida me ha visto en tanto aprieto ;
 Catorce versos dicen que es soneto ;
 Burla burlando, van los tres delante ;
 Yo pensé que no hallara consonante,
 Y estoy á la mitad de otro quarteto ;
 Mas si mi veo en el primer terceto ;
 Que hay cosa en los quartetos que me espante
 En el primer terceto voy entrando
 Y me parece que entré con pié derecho,
 Pues fin con esto verso le voy dando ;
 Ya estoy en el secundo, y aun sospecho
 Que voy los trece versos acabando ;
 Contad si son catorce—Ya está hecho.

This has been imitated or translated in all languages. In Italian, I believe, by *Marino* ; in French, by *Voiture* and

Desmarais; and in English by Edwards,
author of *Canons of Criticism* *:

Capricious Wray a sonnet needs must have;
I ne'er was so put to't before—a sonnet?
Why, fourteen verses must be spent upon it.
'Tis good, however, I've conquer'd the first stave.
Yet I shall ne'er find rhymes enough by half,
Said I, and found myself in the midst of the second:
If twice four verses were but fairly reckon'd
I should turn back on the hardest part, and laugh.
Thus far with good success I think I've scribbled,
And of twice seven lines have clear got o'er ten.
Courage! Another'll finish the first triplet;
Thanks to the muse, my work begins to shorten,
There's thirteen lines got through, driblet by driblet,
'Tis done! count how you will, I warrant there's
fourteen.

To many of his plays he also prefixed
Loas, a species of prologue, in short
verse; on which some maxim connect-
ed with the play is generally enforced,
or some apposite story related. The
merit of the most laboured parts of his
tragedies consists chiefly in exuberance
of images; and, as most Spanish critics

* Vide Appendix.

allege, in the purity of language; but they are often too lyrical for the expression of natural passion, and more calculated to raise our admiration for the poet, than to excite compassion for the character. This remark admits of exceptions; and from the passages already quoted in the course of this work, the reader might infer the criticism to be too general: there is, however, seldom much originality in those tragic sentiments which he expresses simply. Whatever was noble he thought should be gorgeously arrayed; and it was only from carelessness, or from ignorance of its merit, that he left any pathetic thought to strike by its genuine beauty. The following lines, taken from one of his most interesting plays, contain just thoughts; but such as would occur to most authors, in painting the feelings of a tyrant:

Maur. ¿Que rigor, que castigo de los cielos
 Me causa tal pesar, tales desvelos?
 ¿Quien mi vida condena
 A tan rabiosa y dilatada pena?
 No hallo parte segura,
 Sosiego en vano el alma ya procura
 En el gusto, en la mesa, hasta an el sueño,
 De un desconsuelo un otro me despeño,
 La desdicha mayor carga en mis hombros
 Donde quiera que voy encuentro asombros.
 Esto es reynar? Para esto, Mauregato,
 El reyno adquieres con aleve trato?
 Pero que importa el cetro la grandesa,
 Donde ya predomina esta tristeza.
 O que descanso el alma le apercibe
 Si la conciencia mal segura vive!

What wrath of Heaven, what unrelenting powers
 Conjure fresh griefs, invade my peaceful hours
 With cares and fears, and doom my life to flow
 In one long current of increasing woe?
 In vain from thought my troubled soul would fly;
 No rest, no refuge in this world have I;
 In vain the sport I ply, the feast prepare,
 Grief treads on grief, and care succeeds to care;
 Nor joy my sports, nor mirth attends my board;
 Nor sleep itself a respite can afford.
 Still at each turn, at some new fiend I start,
 And grief, fixt grief, sits heavy at my heart.

Is this to be a king, is this to reign?
 Did I for this, by fraud, by treason, gain
 The sceptred pomp? Alas! the prize how small,
 If tyrant sadness lords it over all!
 Care chases sleep, and thought all rest dispels,
 From souls where ever-wakeful conscience dwells.

It is, however, in the more animated part of the dialogue, which is conducted in short speeches, that the natural sentiments most frequently occur; though they are often preceded or followed by some quibble so puerile, or some metaphor so extravagant, as entirely to destroy their effect. A simple expression of grief, tenderness, or indignation drops unnoticed from the mouth of an actor who has been turning points on carnations and roses, proving, in punning syllogisms the blessings of death, or refining with scholastic learning on the duties of revenge. Sophocles modestly asserted that his most finished pieces were composed of the crumbs that had fallen from the table of Ho-

mer ; but those (and they are not a few) who have fed on the leavings of Spanish writers, have run away with the most valuable part of the feast, and profited as much from the bad taste as from the profusion of their masters. In Lope's dialogue there is a circumstance worthy of observation ; because, though either unknown or exploded on the French and English stages, it seems to have been as general on the Spanish as the Greek theatre, and has been sanctioned in modern times by the example of Metastasio. This is a combat of sentiments or opinions, carried on by two characters, in which an equal number of verses is allotted to each disputant ; the speeches are short, and each is a species of parody on the preceding, re-echoing noun for noun, and verb for verb, with the most minute precision. The origin of this invention may probably be learnt from the commentaries

on the antient eclogues, where it is so frequently employed, and called, if I mistake not, Amæbean. Among the Spaniards, the general prevalence of scholastic education rendered its adoption easy to the poets, and agreeable to the audience ; and it accordingly is frequently carried on in the forms of logic, and consists in the conversion and inversion of a proposition, with the aid of some play upon a word taken in various senses. Metastasio found it convenient for preserving a structure of verse, which might easily be set to music, and throughout his works such dialogues are more lyrical than epigrammatic. Their effect on the Spanish plays is not so fortunate ; they abound, indeed, in point, but are often deficient in poetry. They may produce strong, but seldom just sentiments. In the same spirit, but with better success, Lope, in some of his plays, introduces, towards the conclu-

P

sion, two long speeches; in which, his principal characters urge their pretensions, justify their motives, and combat each other's arguments before their mistress, their monarch, or some one entitled to decide their contest.

Such scenes are not well adapted to representation, though they are often replete with wit, and full of animation. Corneille, who surpassed Lope in all the talents necessary to give effect to such passages, whose bursts of eloquence are perhaps unequalled in modern poetry, is often unable to excite our interest in these contentions, more suited to the forum than the stage, and abounding rather in philosophical reflections and exalted sentiments, than in the traits of character and natural expression of passion. But Corneille, in these speeches, which he too modestly terms pleadings, has only exchanged the character of a great tragic poet for that of an argu-

mentative and philosophical orator. He reasons, indeed, in verse ; but the confinement of metre seems only to concentrate the force of his arguments, and to heighten the beauty of his illustrations. It is not so with Lope de Vega. He was neither formed by nature nor prepared by study for such discussions. The speeches of his disputants preserve very scrupulously the forms of logic, often sparkle with wit, and may sometimes produce remarks applicable to the common events of life ; but we look in vain through these scenes, and indeed through all his works, for those deep reflections on morals and government, which evince a philosophical view of the nature of mankind and of the construction of society.

In the wilder plays, which, in compliance with popular taste, he composed on the romantic tales of early Spanish history, there are rants so extravagant,

as well as images so hyperbolical, that they tempt one to suspect him, like Ariosto, of playing with his readers and laughing at his subject. Such a license is, for obvious reasons, inadmissible in dramatic composition. A poet may smile at his own inventions, but a fictitious personage cannot laugh at what is necessarily connected with his own existence. Dryden's *Almanzor*, from which character that writer's acquaintance with Castilian poetry is very manifest, is meek and humble in comparison of the *Bernardos* and *Mudarras* of the Spanish author; and if, as Johnson says, the English poet hovers on the confines of nonsense, Lope must be acknowledged to have frequently invaded the territory. *Bernardo*, for instance, is not contented with being a noble savage, as free as nature first made man, and with having neither lord nor parent, but he goes so far as to declare himself his own:

De gran sangre muestras doy,
 Y pues que padre ni madre
 No puedo conocer hoy,
 Yo he de ser my propio padre.

Since my high birth is by my valour shown,
 And yet my parents are till now unknown,
 Methinks Bernardo needs must be his own.

In comedy his thoughts are generally sprightly, and his language always easy. The sentiments, however, are frequently neither called for by the situation, necessary to the plot, nor consistent with the character. His continual antithesis and play upon words cannot escape the censure of rigorous criticism. His apologists plead in his behalf the taste of his age and country, and his admirers generally alledge his uncommon felicity in these inferior efforts of wit. True it is, that a very slight knowledge of a language enables a foreigner to detect this practice in an author, though

none but a native can be a competent judge of his success.

As to the general style of his dialogue in comedy, it is difficult to select any short passages which will convey an idea of it to the reader, and yet more difficult to translate them so as to preserve the character of the original. Of the two which I subjoin, the first is taken at random from a play of little celebrity; the second affords a specimen of easy satire, more uncommon in his dramas, but not less adapted to his genius:

No digan que es menester
Mucho tiempo para amar;
Que el amor que ha de matar
De un golpe ha de ser.
Amor que comienza ingrato
Y el trato le da valor,
No se ha de llamar amor
Sino costumbre de trato.
El que vió quiso y mató
Esse es amor verdadero,

Y mas quando es el primero
 Como el que te tengo yo.
 Mirar, escribir, y hablar
 Años un galan y dama,
 Es hacer amor con ama
 Que se lo han dado á criar.
 Hombre ha de nacer Amor,
 Luego andar, y ser galan ;
 Que el Amor que no es Adan
 No ha de tener valor.

Marques de las Navas.

Let no one say that there is need
 Of time for love to grow ;
 Ah no! the love that kills indeed
 Dispatches at a blow.

The spark which but by slow degrees
 Is nursed into a flame,
 Is habit, friendship, what you please ;
 But Love is not its name.

For love to be completely true,
 It death at sight should deal,
 Should be the first one ever knew,
 In short, be that I feel.

To write, to sigh, and to converse,
 For years to play the fool ;
 'Tis to put passion out to nurse,
 And send one's heart to school.

Love, all at once, should from the earth
 Start up full grown and tall;
 If not an Adam at his birth,
 He is no Love at all.

POLIBIO y CLARINDO.

Pol. En su patria ninguno fué profeta,
 Palabras son de Dios, y como el ciertas;
 Fuera de que es antiguo entre señores
 Y aun entre los demas del mismo vulgo
 No hacer estimacion de cosas propias
 Y venerar las estrangeras mucho—
 Si un hombre viene hablando en otra lengua,
 Aquel ha de ser medico famoso,
 Aquel pintor, aquel divino artifice;
 El libro en lengua propia no se estima;
 Ni lo que cria aquesta misma tierra;
 Porque el no conocer los dueños dellas
 Estriba de las cosas todo el credito.

Cl. Bien dizes, y assi vemos que la fama
 No se despega de la propia embidia,
 Si no es que muera el dueño que la tiene.
 Dixo un discreto que era matrimonio,
 Polibio, el de la embidia y de la fama,
 Que se apartava solo con la muerte;
 De suerte que al que nace en alguna arte
 Insigne, le esta bien de morirse presto:
 Y si la vida ha de costar la fama
 Famoso en todo á mi enemigo llama.

La Necedad del Discreto.

POLIBIO and CLARINDO.

Pol. No man's a prophet in his native land ;
 God said it once, and what he said shall stand.
 The great long since all home-made wares despise ;
 They loath what's near them, what's abroad they
 prize.

The vulgar too, for they must ape the great,
 Applaud what's strange, but what's at hand they
 hate.

Comes there a man who speaks a foreign tongue,
 His drugs shall cure, his learning charm the
 throng—

He shall their artist, he their leech become ;
 Such skill, such genius, is not bred at home.
 Our native language is but vulgar style ;
 Raised from the dirt we tread, the fruit is vile ;
 Know we the book who pen, the field who reap,
 We hold the learning and the produce cheap.

Cl. 'Tis true—thus envy living worth attends ;
 The hero dies, and then all envy ends.
 Envy was Honour's wife, a wise man said,
 Ne'er to be parted till the man was dead.
 Yes ; who excels may gain the glorious prize
 Of endless fame, provided first he dies.
 If such indeed must be the price of fame,
 Let others seek it, I resign my claim.
 On these conditions I will gladly grant,
 E'en to my foes, what portion they may want.

I have, perhaps, been led into a

more minute examination of Lope de Vega's merits, as a dramatic author, than the subject required, or than my imperfect knowledge of his works can justify. Of more than five hundred of his plays yet extant, I have read about fifty. This was sufficient to satisfy my curiosity; and the ardour of discovery once abated, disgust at the difficulties, and weariness at the length of the way, succeeded to it. The Spanish editors have taken little or no pains to smooth the paths of their literature to foreigners. The slovenly negligence of their press not only discourages the reader, but has often disfigured the beauty and even obliterated the meaning of their poets. Of late years their types have not only been improved, but the beauty of their letter-press equals, and perhaps exceeds, that of any other nation. The labours of the editor, however, have by no means kept pace with the skill of

the printer. Cervantes has, indeed, been elaborately commented upon, and in some few instances the text has been elucidated by modern compilers. The old poems of authors previous to Juan de Mena, as well as a selection of the early ballads or romances, have been neatly and carefully edited: but the late publication of Lope de Vega's poems, though costly and voluminous, is not correct; and his plays can only be read in the old and imperfect editions* of Valladolid and Antwerp, or in the miserable sheets which are sold at the door of the theatre. It seems as if the Spaniards, in estimating the merits of this extraordinary man, had been scrupulously exact in striking the balance, and deducted every item of preposterous praise advanced to him while living, from his claims on the admiration of posterity. So remarkable a fluctua-

* Vide Appendix.

tion in public taste is not to be attributed entirely to the languor which succeeds any extravagant transports of admiration, nor even to that envy, which is gratified in sinking the reputation of an author as much below, as favour or accident may have carried it above, its just level. External circumstances conspired with these natural causes. The age of Calderon, the brilliancy of whose comedies, aided by the novelty and magnificence of expensive scenery, had somewhat outshone the lustre of Lope's exhibitions, was succeeded by a period of darkness and disgrace, as fatal to the literary as to the political influence of Spain. By the time that the public had sufficiently recovered from the amazement which Calderon's works had produced, to compare him calmly with his predecessors, they had become too indifferent about all that concerned the stage, to be at the pains of estimating the beauties of

any dramatic author. The splendour of Philip the Fourth's court survived the defeat of his arms, and the loss of his provinces; but it died with that improvident and ostentatious monarch. Under the feeble sovereign who succeeded him, not only were the theatres shut, and the plays prohibited, but all ardour in literary pursuits, all genius for poetry, all taste for the arts and ornaments of life, seemed to waste away as rapidly as the resources and glory of the kingdom he misgoverned. In the mean while France rose upon the ruins of her rival. The successors of Corneille refined and improved a language, which the increasing power of the state had made it convenient to surrounding nations to study, and to which the extensive intrigues and wars of Louis the XIVth had given, as it were, an unusual currency in Europe. Fashion, which is often as peremptory in literature as in dress, en-

joined the adoption of French rules of criticism ; and an arbitrary standard of excellence was erected, without any regard to the different genius of languages, and the various usages and modes of thinking which distinguish one people from another. Hence, when towards the middle of last century the love of letters seemed to revive in Spain, there arose a sect of critics, men of considerable information and eloquence, who, in their anxiety to inculcate correct principles of composition into their countrymen, endeavoured to wean their affections from those national poets by whom the public taste had, according to them, been originally vitiated. The names of Vega, Calderon, Moreto, and others, which, in the general decline of literature, had in a great measure fallen into neglect and oblivion, were now only quoted to expose their faults, and to point out their inferiority to foreign

models of excellence. The disapprobation of all dramatic performances, the occasional preference of Italian operas, and, above all, French modes of thinking on matters of taste, naturally prevalent at a Bourbon court, threw the old Spanish stage into disrepute; and an admiration of such authors passed with the wits for a perversion of judgment, and with the fashionable for a remnant of national prejudice and vulgarity. Many enlightened individuals also, who were anxious to reform more important abuses than the mere extravagancies of a theatre, encouraged this growing predilection for French literature. They might feel a very natural partiality for a language from which they had themselves derived so much instruction and delight, or they might studiously direct the attention of their countrymen to French poetry, from a conviction that a familiarity with

the works of Racine and Boileau would ultimately lead them to an acquaintance with those of Pascal and Montesquieu, and perhaps of Bayle and Voltaire.

All Spaniards, however, did not conform to this ignominious sacrifice of national genius at the shrine of foreign criticism. Unfortunately the two champions of the old theatre adopted two opposite modes of warfare, each more calculated to confirm than to check the triumph of their enemies. Nasarre, in fact, betrayed the cause he professed, and no doubt intended, to support. While he abandoned Lope and Calderon to all the fury of the critics, and even brought fresh charges of his own to swell the catalogue of their poetical delinquencies, he absurdly pronounced authors whose names were forgotten, whose works he avowedly had never seen, and whose existence even may be

questioned, to be the masters and rivals of Corneille and Moliere.

Such assertions hardly merited the pains taken to refute them. Some plays of Lope de Rueda, as well as of others of his time, are still extant in MS. They are not destitute of invention, and the style is often more simple, but far less poetical and forcible than that of their successors. But, whatever may be their merits, they by no means warrant so strange an imputation on the Spaniards as that of having possessed writers of the first genius and judgment, without having the taste to relish their beauties, the discernment to recognise their excellence, or the sense to preserve their writings.

La Huerta was a man of more knowledge, and greater talents for literary controversy; he spoke too with some authority on matters relating to the Spanish theatre, as he had supplied it

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with *La Raquel*, a tragedy which, to many stronger recommendations, adds that of being exempt from the anachronisms and irregularities so often objected to its productions.

Whatever advantages as a disputant he might possess, he had occasion for them all to maintain the paradoxes he chose to publish. His answer to French critics and their admirers is contained in prefaces prefixed to several volumes of the *Teatro Hespagnol*, a selection of plays executed under his superintendence for the express purpose of vindicating the honour of Spanish literature from the strictures of its adversaries. In these he exposes with some humour a few oversights of Voltaire and others, in their remarks on Lope de Vega and Calderon ; and he proves very satisfactorily the imperfection of several translations from them. But, like many injudicious defenders of

Shakspeare, he was not contented with exhibiting the beauties of his author, and with correcting the mistakes and exposing the ignorance of his opponents. Instead of combating the injustice of that criticism which would submit all dramatic works to one standard of excellence, he most unwarrantably arraigned the models themselves as destitute of all poetical merit whatever. Thus was the cause of his countrymen more injured by his intemperance as a critic, than benefited by his labours as an editor. Few were disposed to judge favourably of performances whose panegyrist thought it necessary to maintain that the *Athalie* should have been confined to the walls of a convent, and that the *Tartuffe* was a miserable farce, without humour, character, or invention.

His foreign readers may also reasonably regret the omission of a commen-

tary, and, without much presumption, might dispute the judgment of the selection. Lope de Vega at least might have been permitted to speak for himself; for, among the hundreds of his comedies yet extant, La Huerta could have found a better answer to his detractors than a pompous exposition of their numbers, a vague and indiscriminate encomium on his talents, and a lamentation over the sarcastic temper of Cervantes. Nothing concerning the most voluminous Spanish poet is to be learned from the *Teatro Hespagnol*, but the editor's opinion of him. On the whole, La Huerta, far from retrieving the lost honours of the Spanish theatre, only exposed it to the insults and ridicule of its antagonists.

Inspid imitations of French dramas, and bald translations of modern pieces, in which the theatres of Madrid for some years abounded, have at length

done more to restore the writers of Philip the Fourth's age to their due estimation with the public, than the hazardous assertions of Nasarre, or the intemperate retorts of La Huerta.

The plays of Calderon, Moreto, and Roxas, are now frequently acted. Several of Lope de Vega have been successfully revived, with very slight, though not always judicious alterations. Authors of reputation are no longer ashamed of studying his style; and it is evident that those most celebrated for the severity of their judgment, have not disdained to profit by the perusal of his comedies. The most temperate critics, while they acknowledge his defects, pay a just tribute of admiration to the fertility of his invention, the happiness of his expressions, and the purity of his diction. All agree that his genius reflects honour on his country, though some may be disposed to question the

beneficial influence of his works on the taste and literature of their nation. Indeed, his careless and easy mode of writing made as many poets as poems. He so familiarised his countrymen with the mechanism of verse, he supplied them with such a store of commonplace images and epithets, he coined such a variety of convenient expressions, that the very facility of versification seems to have prevented the effusions of genius, and the redundancy of poetical phrases to have superseded all originality of language.

The number of poets, or rather versifiers, of his time is almost as wonderful as that of his compositions. Some hundreds of his imitators are to be found in the list of Castilian poets. A contemporary author, Don Estevan Emmanuel Villegas, in ridiculing the bad comedies of his time, bears testimony to the facility with which such compositions

were produced, and humorously advises his mule-driver to set up for a poet:

Que si bien consideras en Toledo
 Hubo sastre que pudo hacer comedias,
 Y parar de las musas el denuedo.
 Mozo de mulas eres,—haz comedias.

A tailor once could comedies produce,
 And break the restive muses to his goose :
 Then be your flights, as is your office, higher ;
 And, as you drive a mule, to tragedy aspire.


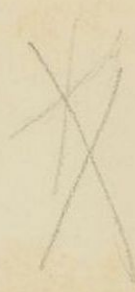
It is a common remark in Italy, that in the same proportion as the effusions of *Improvvisatori* have acquired correctness and harmony, the excellence of written poems has declined ; and that the writings of these voluminous Spaniards which partook so much of the nature of extemporaneous productions, should resemble them also in enervating the language, seems a very probable conjecture. Perhaps it was in the efforts which genius made to deviate from

so beaten a track, that it wandered into obscurity, and the easy but feeble volubility of Lope's school might induce Gongora and his disciples to hope that inspiration might be obtained by contortion.

But the effect of Lope's labours must not be considered by a reference to language alone. For the general interest of dramatic productions, for the variety and spirit of the dialogue, as well as for some particular plays, all modern theatres are indebted to him. Perfection in any art is only to be attained by successive improvement; and though the last polish often effaces the marks of the preceding workmen, his skill was not less necessary to the accomplishment of the work, than the hand of his more celebrated successor. This consideration will, I hope, excuse the length of this treatise. Had Lope never written, the master-pieces of Corneille

and Moliere might never have been produced; and were not those celebrated compositions known, he might still be regarded as one of the best dramatic authors in Europe.

It seems but an act of justice to pay some honour to the memory of men whose labours have promoted literature, and enabled others to eclipse their reputation. Such was Lope de Vega; once the pride and glory of Spaniards, who in their literary, as in their political achievements, have, by a singular fatality, discovered regions, and opened mines, to benefit their neighbours and their rivals, and to enrich every nation of Europe, but their own.



APPENDIX.

No. 1.

DON Nicolas Antonio, in his excellent Dictionary, under the article of Lope de Vega, p. 70, 71, of Bayer's edition, gives the contents of twenty-five volumes of our author's plays; which, he says, were printed originally at Madrid, between the years 1611 and 1630. He adds, that several of these volumes were separately reprinted in the provincial towns of Spain. It is, however, very difficult at present to complete the twenty-five volumes, even with the assistance of such provincial copies; and Don Nicolas Antonio, who wrote in 1684, seems to acknowledge that he never had seen the genuine Madrid edition complete. I have in my possession two small volumes, containing the same

plays as the two first of the abovementioned edition, and printed at Antwerp in 1609. In the license to the printer, these volumes are stated to be exact copies of two printed at Valladolid, in 1607; which proves that part at least of the Madrid edition was merely a republication of plays already collected. To these twenty volumes in small quarto, others perhaps were added after the death of Lope*: but the Antwerp volumes are the only instances of any other attempt to collect his dramatic works in an uniform publication. Many of his plays were printed and sold at the door of the theatre soon after their representation, and in the same slovenly manner the most popular have frequently been reprinted. An edition on coarse paper is coming out in numbers,

* I have four volumes of his plays apparently intended as a sequel to this Madrid edition, as they each contain the same number of plays, and the type does not materially differ from the edition of 1615; but the title-page of every one is either torn out or defaced.

at Madrid ; but no pains are taken to correct the text, to ascertain the authenticity or date of the plays, or to procure copies and manuscripts of those that are become rare.

The other works of Lope were printed separately during his lifetime, and many have been frequently reprinted. A reference to Don Nicolas Antonio will satisfy the reader of the number and frequency of these editions. At length his poetical works were collected and published by Sancha, at Madrid, 1776. Had that work met with success, the same editor had engaged to publish his dramatic works.

The reader will find annexed to this note the contents of the twenty-five volumes of plays mentioned by Don Nicolas Antonio, the table of contents of Sancha's edition of his poetical works, and a list of those of his plays which are still extant.

COMEDIAS

DE

LOPE FELIX DE VEGA CARPIO:

VIGENTI QUINQUE TOMIS,

QUORUM SINGULI DUODECIM CONTINENT.

Matriti omnes prodierunt, indeque aliis in locis.

-
- I. Los Donayres de Matico. Carlos el perseguido. El Cerco de Santa Fée. Vida y Muerte de Wamba. La Traicion bien acertada. El Hijo de Reduan. Nacimiento de Urson y Valentin. El Casamiento en la Muerte y Hechos de Bernardo del Carpio. La Escolastica zelosa. La Amistad pagada. La Comedia del Molino. El Testimonio vengado: con doce Entremeses.— Valentia prius, deinde Pincia apud Joannem de Bustillos 1609, in 4to.
- II. La Fuerza lastimosa. La Occasion perdida. El Gallardo Catalan. El Mayorazgo dudoso. La Condesa Matilde. Los Benavides. Los Comendadores de Cordova. La Bella malmaridada.

- Los tres Diamantes. La Quinta de Florencia. El Padrino desposado. Las Ferias de Madrid. —Matriti 1609, apud Alphonsum Martinum, et 1618, Barcinone 1611.
- III. Los Hijos de la Barbuda. La adversa Fortuna del Cavallero del Espiritu Santo. El Espejo del Mundo. La Noche Toledana. La Tragedia de Doña Ines de Castro. Las Mudanzas de Fortuna y Sucesos de D. Beltran de Aragon. La Privanza y Caida de D. Alvaro de Luna. La prospera Fortuna del Cavallero del Espiritu Santo. El Esclavo del Demonio. La prospera Fortuna de Ruy Lopez Davalos. La adversa Fortuna de Ruy Lopez Davalos. Vida y Muerte del Santo Negro llamado Fr. Benedicto de Palermo: con tres Entremeses. —Matriti, apud Michaellem Serrano, 1613. 4to. Barcinone 1614.
- IV. Laura Perseguida. Nuevo Mundo de Colon. El Asalto de Matrique por el Principe de Parma. Peribañez y el Comendador de Ocaña. El Ginoves liberal. Los Torneos de Aragon. La Boda entre dos Maridos. El Amigo por Fuerza. El Galan Castrucho. Los Embustes de Celauro. La Fée rompida. El Tirano castigado. —Matriti, apud Michaellem Serrano, 1614. Pampe-loneque eodem anno.
- V. Exemplo de Casadas, y Prueba de la Paciencia. Las Desgracias del Rey D. Alonso. Los siete Infantes de Lara. El Bastardo de Ceuta. La

Venganza honrosa. Hermosura de Rachel: primera y segunda Parte. El Premio de las Letras por el Rey D. Felipe. La Guarda cuidadosa. El Loco Cuerdo. La Rueda de la Fortuna. La Enemiga favorable.—Matriti, 1615, 4to.

VI. La Batalla del Honor. La Obediencia laureada, y primer Carlos de Ungria. El Hombre de bien. El servir con mala Estrella. El Cuerdo en su Casa. La Reyna Juana de Napoles. El Duque de Viseo. El Secretario de si mismo. El llegar en Ocasion. El Testigo contra si. El Marmol de Felisardo. El mejor Maestro el Tiempo.—Ibidem, 1615, apud Alphonsum Martinum.

VII. El Villano en su Rincon. El Castigo del discreto. Las Pobrezas de Reinaldos. El gran Duque de Moscovia. Las Paces de los Reyes, y Judia de Toledo. Los Porceles de Murcia. La Hermosura aborrecida. El primer Fajardo. La Viuda Casada y Donçella. El Principe despeñado. La Serrana de la Vera. S. Isidro de Madrid.—Ibidem, 1617, apud eundem.

VIII. Despertar á quien duerme. El Anzuelo de Fenisa. Los Locos por el Cielo. El mas galan Portugues, Duque de Berganza. El Argel fingido, y Renegado de Amor. El postrer Godo de España. La Prision sin culpa. El Esclavo de Roma. La Imperial de Othon. El Niño inocente de la Guardia.—Ibidem, apud eundem, eodem anno.

- IX. La Prueba de los ingenios. La Donzella Theodora. El Hamete de Toledo. El Ausente en el Lugar. La Niña de Plata. El Animal de Ungria. Del mal lo menos. La hermosa Alfreda. Los Ponces de Barcelona. La Dama boba. Los Melindres de Belisa.—Ibidem, apud eundem, eodem anno 1617.
- X. El Galan de la Membrilla. La Venganza venturosa. D. Lope de Cardona. La Humildad y la Sobervia. El Amante agradecido. Los Guanches de Tenerife, y Conquista de Canaria. La otava Maravilla. El sembrar en buena Tierra. Los Chaves de Villalva. Juan de Dios y Anton Martin. La Burgalesa de Lerma. El Podervencido, y Amor premiado.—1618, apud eundem.
- XI. El Perro del Hortelano. El Azero de Madrid. Las dos Estrellas, Trocadas y Ramilletes, de Madrid. Obras son Amores. Servir á Señor discreto. El Principe perfeto. El Amigo hasta la Muerte. La Locura por la Honra. El Mayordomo de la Duquesa de Amalfi. El Arenal de Sevilla. La Fortuna merecida. La Tragedia del Rey D. Sebastian, y Bautismo del Principe de Marruecos.—Ibidem, apud eundem, anno 1618.
- XII. Ello dira. La Sortija del Olvido. Los Enemigos en casa. La Cortesia de España. Al pasar del Arroyo. Los Hidalgos de la Aldea.

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El Marques de Mantua. Las Flores de D. Juan, y rico y pobre trocados. Lo que hay que fiar del Mundo. La Firmeza en la Desdicha. La Desdichada Estéfania. Fuenteovejuna.—Ibidem, in eadem officina, 1619.

XIII. La Arcadia. El Halcon de Federico. El Remedio en la Desdicha. Los Esclavos libres. El Desconfiado. El Cardenal de Belen. El Alcalde mayor. Los Locos de Valencia. Santiago el Verde. La Francesilla. El Desposorio encubierto. Los Españoles en Flandes.—Ibidem, iisdem typis, 1620.

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seo. El Laberinto de Creta. La Serrana de Tormes. Las Grandezas de Alexandro. La Felisarda. La inocente Laura. Lo Fingido Verdadero.—Apud Alphonsum Martinum, anno 1622.

XVII. Con su Pan se lo coma. Quien mas no puede. El Soldado amante. Muertos vivos. El primer Rey de Castilla. El Domine Lucas. Lucinda perseguida. El Ruiseñor de Sevilla. El Sol parado. La Madre de la Mejor. Jorge Toledano. El Hidalgo Abencerrage.—Iisdem typis, 1621.

XVIII. Segunda Parte del Principe perfeto. La Pobreza estimada. El divino Africano. La Pastoral de Jacinto. El honrado Hermano. El Capellan de la Virgen. La Pietad executada. Las famosas Asturianas. La Campana de Aragon. El Rustico del Cielo. El Valor de las Mugeres.—Ibidem, apud Joannem Gonzalez, anno 1623.

XIX. De Cosario á Cosario. Amor secreto hasta Zelos. La inocente Sangre. El Serafin humano. El Hijo de los Leones. El Conde Fernan Gonzalez. D. Juan de Castro, primera y segunda parte. La Limpieza no manchada. El Vellochino de Oro. La Mocedad de Roldan. Carlos V. en Francia.—Ibidem, in eadem officina, 1623.

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La Ventura sin Buscalla. El valiente Cespedes. El Hombre por su Palabra. Roma abrasada. Virtud, Pobreza y Muger. El Rey sin Reyno. El mejor Mozo de España. El Marido mas firme.—Ibidem, apud viduam Alphonsi Martini, 1625.

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XXII. Quien todo lo quiere. No son todos ruiseñores. Amar, Servir, y Esperar. Vida de S. Pedro Nolasco. La primera Informacion. Nadie se conoce. La mayor Vitoria. Amar sin saber á quien. Amor, Pleyto, y Desafio. El Labrador Venturoso. Los Trabajos de Jacob. La Carbonera.—Matriti, ut superiores, apud viduam Joannis Gonzalez, anno 1635, in 4to.

XXIII. Contra Valor no hay Desdicha. Las Batuecas del Duque de Alva. Las Quentas del Gran Capitan. El piadoso Veneciano. Porfiar hasta Morir. El Robo de Dina. El saber puede dañar. La Embidia de la Nobleza. Los Pleytos de Ingalaterra. Los Palacios de Galiana. Dios hace Reyes. El saber por no saber y Vida

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XXIV. El Palacio confuso. El Ingrato. La Tragedia por los Zelos. El Labrador venturoso. La primer Culpa del Hombre. La despreciada querida. La Industria contra el Poder y el Honor contra la Fuerza. La Porfia hasta el Temor. El Juez de su misma Causa. La Cruz en la Sepultura. El Honrado con su Sangre. El Hijo sin Padre.—Hæc Matriti edita fuit; sed et alia, hoc sub ipso titulo, XXIV. partis, Cæsar-augustæ lucem vidit apud Didacum Dormer, 1632, has Comædias continens:—La Ley executada. Selvas y Bosques de Amor. Examen de Maridos. El que Diran. La Honra por la Muger. El Amor bandolero. La mayor Desgracia del Emperador Carlos V. y Hechizera de Argel. Veer y no creer. Dineros son Calidad. De quando acá nos Vino. Amor, Pleyto, y Desafio. La mayor Vitoria.

XXV. La Esclava de su Galan. El Desprecio agradecido. Aventuras de D. Juan de Alarcos. El mayor Imposible. La Vitoria del Marques de Santa Cruz. Los Cautivos de Argel. Castelvies y Montesés. De lo que ha de ser. El ultimo Godo. La Necedad del Discreto. El Juez en su Causa. Los Embustes de Fabia.—Cæsar-augustæ, apud viduam Petri Verjes, 1647, in 4to.

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La Lista Alphabetica de los Elogiadores va puesta al Fin de dicho Tomo, y tambien van insertos en el Indice Alphabetico general de los Elogiadores á Lope.

LIST OF PLAYS
OF
LOPE DE VEGA

STILL EXTANT.

THE following list is extracted from La Huerta's catalogue of Spanish plays; and though some are ascribed to Lope on very slight authority, and two or three reckoned twice over, under different names, it is on the whole tolerably correct. I have marked those which I have read, with asterisks. The greater part of them are very rare; and it was not without considerable difficulty that I collected at Madrid about a third of the number here enumerated:

Acertar errando.

Adonis y Venus.

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Adversa Fortuna del Caballero del Espiritu Santo.	
Adversa Fortuna de Ruy Lopez Davalos.	
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Amar como se ha de amar.	
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* Amistad y Obligacion.	
* Amistad (la) pagada.	20
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Amigo (el) hasta la Muerte.	
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* Amor (el) enamorado.	25
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Amor secreto hasta Zelos.	
Amor (el) con Vista.	
Angelica en el Catay.	
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* Animal (el) Propheta, San Juan.	
Ante Christo (el).	
Arauco domado.	

Arenal (el) de Sevilla.	
Argelan Rey de Alcala.	35
Argel fingido, y Renegado de Amor.	
Asalto (el) de Mastrique.	
Avanillo (el).	
Ausente (el) en el Lugar.	
* Ay Verdades que en Amor.	40
* Azero (el) de Madrid †.	
Bandos (los) de Sena.	
Bargas (los) de Castilla.	
Balahan y Josaphat.	
* Bastardo (el) Mudarra.	45
Batalla (la) de Dos.	
Batalla (la) del Honor.	
Batalla (la) Naval.	
Batuecas (las) del Duque de Alba.	
* Bautismo (el) del Rey de Marruecos.	50
* Bella (la) malmaridada.	
Bella (la) Aurora.	
Benavides (los).	
* Bernardo del Carpio en Francia.	
* Bizarrias (las) de Belisa ‡.	55
Blason (el) de los Chaves.	
Boba (la) para los otros, y discreta para si.	

† From this play the idea of the *Médecin malgré lui* was probably taken.

‡ A very popular play, and frequently acted at Madrid.

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Boda (la) entre dos Maridos.	
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Buen (el) Vecino.	
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Caballero (el) del Sacramento.	
Caballero (el) del Milagro.	
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Capuchino (el) Escocés, y Condesa Matilde perse- guida.	
Carbonera (la).	
Cardenal (el) de Belen.	
* Carlos (el) perseguido.	
Carlos Quinto en Francia.	75
Casamiento (el) por Christo.	
Castelvies y Monsalves.	
* Castigo (el) sin Venganza.	
Castigo (el) en el Discreto.	
Cautivo (el) Coronado.	80
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* Cierta (lo) por lo Dudoso †.	85
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† Lately revived and acted at Madrid.

‡ Lately revived and altered.

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* Esclava (la) de su Gálan.	
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† Sometimes acted.

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† The original of this play, in Lope's own hand, with his alterations, is in my possession. I have compared it with the printed copy, and find many of the passages disfigured by the carelessness of the editor.

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† Frequently acted.

‡ Lately revived, and frequently acted.

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† Lately revived, and frequently acted.

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† Frequently acted.

‡ Frequently acted, though a very extravagant composition.

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† There does not appear any proof of this play being the composition of Lope, nor of its being extant.

AUTOS SACRAMENTALES ALEGORICOS,

Y

AL NACIMIENTO DE NUESTRO SEÑOR.

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APPENDIX.

No. 2.

INFORME

DADO A' LA

REAL ACADEMIA DE HISTORIA,

SOBRE

Juegos, Espectaculos, y Diversiones Publicas.

THIS treatise is the work of Don Gaspar Melchor de Jovellanos, late minister of grace and justice in Spain: a man, who, after having devoted the labours, and even the amusements, of his useful life to the improvement and happiness of his fellow countrymen, is now languishing in the dungeons of Palma; imprisoned without an accusation, and condemned without the form of a trial.

The paper on the games, exhibitions, and public diversions of Spain, was undertaken at the request of the Royal Academy at Madrid, and completed in 1790, during his retirement at Gijon; at a time when the displeasure of a minister did not necessarily imply the ruin, persecution, and imprisonment of its object. It has never been printed, probably owing to the fastidious severity with which this excellent author has generally viewed his own productions. As he is, however, the only person who is dissatisfied with them, copies of the treatise in MS. are not difficult to be obtained in Madrid.

After a rapid historical sketch of the Roman exhibitions in Spain, and a short account of the diversions introduced by the northern barbarians and their descendants, he describes the state of the Spanish theatre, from its first regular appearance in Ferdinand and Isa-

bella's time, to the commencement of the present reign. He takes a view of the controversies to which it has given rise; and though he condemns such scandalous abuses of theatrical representations as have occasionally prevailed in Spain, he vindicates the use of that rational diversion, from the imputations of the clergy, with his usual eloquence and success. The latter part of the work is devoted to the exposition of plans for the revival of antient exercises and diversions, and to the suggestion of expedients for refining the character of the drama, exalting the profession of players, and animating the exertions of poets. Here it must be acknowledged that he allows his zeal for letters, and an anxiety to direct them to beneficial purposes, to divert him from conclusions to which his own principles would more naturally conduct him; and he somewhat inconsistently expects from

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such regulations, more than any interference of governments or academies was ever yet able to produce. His aversion to the bull feasts induces him also to underrate their popularity, and to exaggerate the evil consequences produced by that barbarous but not unmanly amusement. But even where his reasoning is least conclusive, one is fascinated by the beauties of his style, which always seem to arise from the discussion, and to be as much the result of the sincerity of his conviction, and the benevolence of his views, as of an enlightened education, and a correct taste in composition and language. Such, indeed, is the character of all his writings, though it may possibly excite surprise that a dissertation on games and exhibitions should afford any room for displaying it. Jovellanos has, however, contrived even on such a topic to throw into the compass of a few pages

much curious information and sound philosophical reflection, without wandering from the subject, or betraying any disposition to pedantry or affectation.

To justify the above commendations of his work, I subjoin a passage, which may serve also to illustrate a remark in the text, and to show that the gloomy appearance, so often objected to Spaniards, is to be ascribed to the perverse spirit of their municipal laws, and not to the natural disposition of that high-spirited and warm-hearted people.

“ El pueblo que trabaja necesita diversiones, pero no espectaculos; no ha menester que el Gobierno le divierta, pero sí que le dexe divertirse. En los pocos dias, en las breves horas, que puede destinar á su solaz y recreo, él buscará él inventará sus entretenimientos. Basta que se le dé la libertad y proteccion para disfrutarlos. Un dia de fiesta, claro y sereno, en que pueda libremente pasear, correr, tirar á la barra, jugar á la pelota, al tejuelo, á los bolos, merendar, beber, baylar y triscar por el campo; llenará todos sus deseos, y le ofrecerá la diversion y el placer mas

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cumplidos. A tan poca costa se puede divertir á un pueblo, por grande y numeroso que sea.

“ Sin embargo, ¿ como es que la mayor parte del pueblo de España no se divierte en manera alguna? Qualquiera, que haya corrido nuestras provincias, habrá hecho muchas veces, esta dolorosa observacion. En los dias mas solemnes, en vez de la alegría, y bullicio que debieran anunciar el contento de sus moradores, reyna en las plazas y casas una perezosa inaccion, un triste silencio, que no se pueden advertir sin admiracion ni lástima. Si algunas personas salen de sus casas, no parece sino que la ociosidad las ha echado de ellas, y las arrastra al exido, á la plaza ó al porticó de la yglesia; donde embozados en sus capas al arrimo de alguna esquina, ó sentados, ó vagando acá y allá sin objeto ni proposito determinado, pasan tristemente las horas, y las tardes enteras, sin esparcirse ni divertirse, y si á estos se añade la aridez é inmundicia de los lugares; la pobreza y el desaliño de los vestidos, el ayre triste y silencioso, la pereza y falta de union que se nota en todas partes, ¿ quien será que no se sorprenda y entristezca á vista de tanto fenómeno? No es de este lugar descubrir las faltas todas que concurrén á producirle; sean las que fuesen, se puede asegurar que emanarán de las leyes, todas. Pero, sin salir de nuestro proposito, no podemos callar que la primera de ellas es la mala policia de nuestros pueblos. El zelo indiscreto de un gran numero de Jueces se ha persuadido que la mayor perfeccion del gobierno municipal se cifra en la sujecion del pueblo y á que lo sumo del buen orden consiste en que sus moradores se estremez-

can á la voz de la justicia y nadie se atreve á moverse ni á respirar al oír su nombre. En consecuencia, qualquiera bulla, qualquiera gresca ó alcazara, recibe el nombre de asonada, ó alboroto; qualquiera disencion, qualquiera pendencia, es objeto de un procedimiento criminal, y trae en pos de sí, perquisas y procesos, prisiones y multas, y todo el seguío de molestias y vexaciones forenses. Baxo tan dura policia, el pueblo se acobarda, y entristece, y sacrificando su gusto á su seguridad, renuncia la diversion publica é inocente, aunque peligré, y prefiere la soledad y la inaccion, tristes á la verdad, y dolorosas; pero al mismo tiempo seguras.

“ De semejante systema han nacido infinitos reglamentos de policia, no solo contrarios á la libertad de los pueblos, sino tambien á su prosperidad, y no por eso observados con amenos rigor y dureza. En unas partes se prohiben las músicas y cencerradas; y en otras las veladas y bayles; en unas se obliga á los vecinos á encerrarse á sus casas, á la queda; y en otras á no salir en la calle sin luz, á no pararse en las esquinas, á no juntarse en corrillos; y á otras semejantes privaciones. El furor de mandar, y alguna vez la codicia de los Jueces, ha extendida á las mas ruines aldeas, reglamentos, que apenas pudiera exígir la confusion de una Corte; y el infeliz Gañan que ha sudado sobre los terrones del campo y dormido en la tierra toda la semana, no puede en la noche de Sabado gritar libremente en la plaza de su lugar, ni entonar un romance á la puerta de su novia.

“ Aun el pais en que vivo *, aunque señalado entre

* Las Asturias.

todos por su laboriosidad, por su natural alegría, y por la inocencia de sus costumbres, no ha podido librarse de la opresion de semejantes reglamentos; y el disgusto con que son recibidos, y de que he sido testigo, alguna vez, me sugiere ahora estas reflexiones. La dispersion de su poblacion no permite por fortuna, la policia municipal inventada para los pueblos arreglados; pero los nuestros se juntan á divertirse en las *Romerías*, y allí es donde los reglamentos de la policia los siguen é importunan. Se ha prohibido en ellos, el uso de los palos que hace aquí, mas necesario que la defensa, la fragosidad del pais; se han vedado las danzas de hombres; se han hecho cesar á media tarde las de mugeres; y finalmente se obliga á disolver ántes de la oracion, las romerías que son la unica diversion de estos laboriosos é inocentes pueblos. ¿Como es posible que esten bien hallados y contentos con tan molesta policia? Se dirá que todo se sufre.—Y es verdad; todo se sufre—pero se sufre de mala gana ¿y quien no pondera las consecuencias de tan largo y forzado sufrimiento? El estado de libertad es una situacion de paz y de alegría; el de sujecion lo es de inquietud y disgusto; por consiguiente, el primero es durable, el segundo expuesto á mudanzas.

“No basta que los pueblos esten quietos, es preciso que esten contentos; y solo en corazones insensibles, y en cabezas vacias de todo principio de politica puede abrigarse la idea de aspirar á lo primero sin lo segundo. Los que miran con indiferencia este punto: ó no penetran la relacion que hay entre la libertad y la prosperidad de los pueblos; ó por lo menos la desprecian: y tan malo es uno como otro. Sin embargo esta rela-

ción es bien digna de la atención de una administración justa y suave. Un pueblo libre y alegre, será precisamente activo y laborioso; y siendolo será bien morigerado y obediente á la justicia. Quanto mas goze, tanto mas amará el gobierno en que vive; tanto mejor la obedecerá; tanto mas de buen grado concurrirá á sustentarle y defenderle. Quanto mas goze, tanto mas tendrá que perder; tanto mas temerá el desorden, y tanto mas respetará la autoridad destinada á reprimirle. Este pueblo tendrá mas ansia de enriquecerse, porque sabrá que aumentará su placer al paso que su fortuna. En una palabra, aspirará con mas ardor á su felicidad, porque estará mas seguro de gozarla. Siendo pues este el primer objeto de todo buen gobierno, ¿como es que se ha descuidado tanto, entre nosotros? Hasta lo que se llama prosperidad pública, si acaso es otra que el resultado de la felicidad de los particulares, pende tambien de este objeto; porque, el poder y la fuerza de un estado no consiste solo en la muchedumbre, ni en la riqueza, sino tambien en el caracter moral de sus habitantes. En efeto ¿que fuerza podrá tener una nacion compuesta de hombres debiles y corrompidos, duros, insensibles, y agenos de todo interes y amor publico? Por el contrario, los individuos de un pueblo frequentemente congregados á solazarse y divertirse libremente, formarán siempre un pueblo unido y afectuoso, conocerán un interes comun, y estarán mas distantes de sacrificarle á su interes particular; serán de animo mas elevado porque serán mas libres, y por lo mismo, serán tambien de corazon mas recto y enforzado. Cada uno estimará su clase, porque se estimará á sí mismo; y estimará

las demas, porque querrá que la suya sea estimada. De este modo, respetando la Gerarquía, y el orden establecido por la constitucion, vivirán segun ella; la amarán; y la defenderán vigorosamente, creyendo que se defienden á sí mismo. Tan cierto es, que la libertad y la alegría de los pueblos están mas distantes del desorden, que la tristeza y la sujecion.

“ No se crea por esto, que yo mire como inútil ú opresiva la magistratura encargada de velar sobre el sosiego publico; creo por el contrario, que sin ella, sin su continua vigilancia, será imposible conservar la tranquilidad y el buen orden; sé muy bien que la licencia suele andar muy cerca de la libertad, y que es necesario un freno que detenga á los que quierán traspasar sus límites. Pero, he aquí el punto mas difícil de la jurisprudencia civil, he aquí donde pecan tantos Jueces indiscretos que confunden la vigilancia con la opresion. No hay fiestas, no hay concurrencias, no hay diversion en que no presenten al pueblo los instrumentos del poder y de la Justicia. A juzgar por las apariencias, pudiera decirse que tratan solo de establecer su autoridad sobre el terror de los subditos; ó de asegurar el propio descanso á expensas de su libertad y su gusto. Es en vano. El pueblo no se divertirá mientras no este en plena libertad de divertirse; porque entre rondas y patrullas, entre corchetes y soldados, entre varas y bayonetas, la libertad se amedrenta, y la tímida é inocente alegría, huye y desaparece. No es este el camino de alcanzar el fin para que fué instituido el magistrado publico. Si es lícito, comparar lo humilde con lo excelso, su vigilancia debia parecerse á la del ser supremo, ser cierta y continua, pero invi-

sible; ser conocida de todos, sin ser presente á ninguno; andar cercar del desorden para reprimirle, y de la libertad para protegerla. En una palabra ser freno de los malos; amparo y escudo de los buenos. De otro modo, el respetable aparato de la Justicia se convertirá en instrumento de opresion y tiranía, y obrando contra su mismo instituto, afligirá y turbará á los mismos que debiera consolar y proteger.

“ Tales son nuestras ideas, acerca de las diversiones populares. No hay provincia, no hay distrito, no hay villa, ni lugar que no tenga ciertos entretenimientos, ya habituales, ya periodicos, establecidos por costumbre, ejercicios de fuerza, de agilidad ó de ligereza, bayles ó meriendas, pascos, fiestas, disfraces ó mogigangas. Sean los que fueran estos regocijos ó diversiones, todos serán buenos é inocentes con tal que sean publicos. Al buen Juez toca proteger al pueblo en estos sencillos pasatiempos, disponer y arreglar los lugares destinados para ellos, alejar de ello quanto pueda turbarle, y dexarle libremente entregarse al esparcimiento y alegría. Si alguna vez se presenta á verle, sea mas bien para animarle que para amedrentarle ó darle sujecion. Sea como un padre que se complace en la alegría de sus hijos no como un tirano embidioso del contento de sus esclavos.

“ En conclusion, el pueblo como diximos al principio, el pueblo que trabaja no necesita que el gobierno le divierta pero sí que le dexe divertirse.”

“ The labouring class of society require diversions, but not exhibitions; the government is not called

upon to divert them, but to permit them to divert themselves. For the few days, the short moments which they can devote to recreation and entertainment, they will naturally seek, and easily find amusements for themselves. Let them merely be unmolested, and protected in the enjoyment of them. A bright sky and fine weather, on a holiday, which will leave them at liberty to walk, run, throw the bar, to play at ball, coits, or skittles, or to junket, drink, dance and caper on the grass, will fill all their desires, and yield them complete gratification and contentment. At so cheap a rate may a whole people, however numerous, be delighted and amused.

“How happens it then, that the majority of the people of Spain have no diversion at all? For every one who has travelled through our provinces must have made this melancholy remark. Even on the greatest festivals, instead of that boisterous merriment and noise which should bespeak the joy of the inhabitants, there reigns throughout the market-places and streets, a slothful inactivity, a gloomy stillness, which cannot be remarked without the mingled emotions of surprise and pity. The few persons who leave their houses, seem to be driven from them by listlessness, and dragged as far as the threshold, the market, or the church-door. There, muffled in their cloaks, leaning against some corner, seated on some bench, or lounging backwards and forwards, without object, aim, or purpose, they pass their hours, aye, I may say their whole evenings, without mirth, recreation, or amusement. When you add to this picture, the dreariness and filth of the villages, the poor

and slovenly dress of the inhabitants, the gloominess and silence of their air, the laziness, the want of concert and union so striking every where, who but would be astonished; who but would be afflicted by so mournful a phenomenon? This is not indeed the place to expose the errors which conspire to produce it; but whatever those errors may be, one point is clear—that they are all to be found in the laws. Without wandering from my subject, I may be permitted to observe, that the chief mistake lies in the faulty police of our villages. Many magistrates are misled, by an ill-judged zeal, to suppose that the perfection of municipal government consists in the subjection of the people; they imagine that the great object of subordination is accomplished, if the inhabitants tremble at the voice of Justice, and no one ventures to move, or even to breathe, at the very sound of her name. Hence any mob, any noise or disturbance, is termed a riot or a tumult; and every little dispute or scuffle becomes the subject of a criminal proceeding, involving in its consequences examinations and arrests, imprisonments and fines, with all the train of legal persecutions and vexations. Under such an oppressive police, the people grow dispirited and disheartened; and sacrificing their inclinations to their security, they abjure diversions, which, though public and innocent, are replete with embarrassments, and have recourse to solitude and inaction, dull and painful indeed to their feelings, but at least unmolested by law, and unattended with danger.

“The same system has occasioned numberless regulations of police, not only injurious to the liberties,

but prejudicial to the welfare and prosperity of the villages, yet not less harshly or less rigorously enforced on that account. There are some places where music and ringing of bells*, others where balls and marriage suppers are prohibited. In one village the inhabitants must retire to their houses at the *curfew*, in another they must not appear in the streets without a light; they must not loiter about the corners, or stop in the porches; and in all they are subject to similar restraints and privations.

“The rage for governing, in some cases perhaps the avarice of the magistrates, has extended to the most miserable hamlets, regulations which would hardly be necessary in all the confusion of a metropolis;—and the wretched husbandman who has watered the earth with the sweat of his brow, and slept on the ground throughout the week, cannot on Saturday night bawl at his will in the streets of his village, or chaunt his ballad at the door of his sweetheart.

“Even the province in which I live (Asturias), remarkable for the natural cheerfulness and innocent manners of its inhabitants, is not exempt from the hardship of similar regulations. Indeed the discontent which they produce, and which I have frequently witnessed, has suggested many of these reflections on the subject. The dispersion of its population fortunately prevents that municipal police, which has

* There is a custom in Spanish villages of parading the streets on holiday nights with the bells taken from the mules and wethers. The rude kind of music they produce is called *cencerrada*.

been contrived for regular villages and towns; but the cottagers assemble for their diversions at a sort of wake, called *Romerias*, or Pilgrimages. And there it is that the regulations of the police pursue and molest them. Sticks, which are used more on account of the inequality of the country, than as a precaution for self-defence, are prohibited in these wakes. Men dances are forbidden; those of women must close early in the evening; and the wakes themselves, the sole diversion of these innocent and laborious villagers, must break up at the hour of evening prayer. How can they reconcile themselves with any cheerfulness to such vexatious interference? It may indeed be said "*they bear it all.*" Yes, it is true, they do bear it all; but they bear it with an ill will; and who is blind to the consequences of long and reluctant submission? The state of freedom is a state of peace and cheerfulness; a state of subjection is a state of uneasiness and discontent. The former then is permanent and durable, the latter unstable and changeable.

"All, therefore, is not accomplished when the people are quiet; they should also be contented; and it is only a heart devoid of feeling, or a head unacquainted with the principles of government, that can harbour a notion of securing the first of these objects without obtaining the second. They who disregard it, either do not see the necessary connexion between liberty and prosperity; or, if they see it, they neglect it. The error in either case is equally mischievous. For surely this connexion deserves the attention of every just and mild government. A free and cheerful people are al-

ways active and laborious; and an active and laborious people are always attentive to morals, and observant of the laws. The greater their enjoyments, the more they love the government under which they live, the better they obey it, and the more cheerfully and willingly do they contribute to its maintenance and support. The greater their enjoyments, the more they have to lose; and the more therefore they fear any disturbance, and the more they respect the authorities intended to repress it. Such a people feel more anxiety to enrich themselves, because they must be conscious that the increase of their pleasures will keep pace with the improvement of their fortunes. In a word, they strive more ardently to better their condition, because they are certain of enjoying the fruits of their exertion. If such then be one of the chief objects of a good government, why is it so disregarded among us? Even public prosperity, as it is called, if it be any thing but the aggregate of individual happiness, depends upon the attainment of the object in question; for the power and strength of a state do not consist entirely in multitudes or riches, but in the moral character of its inhabitants. In point of fact, can any nation be strong whose subjects are weak, corrupt, harsh, unfeeling, and strangers to all sentiment of public spirit and patriotism? On the other hand, a people who meet often, and in security, in public, for the purposes of diversion, must necessarily become an united and affectionate people; they can feel what a common interest is, and are consequently less likely to sacrifice it to their own personal

views and individual advantage. They have a higher spirit, because they are freer; a consciousness of which improves their notions of rectitude, and exalts their sentiments of honour and courage. Every individual respects his own class in such a society, because he respects himself; and he respects that of others, as the best mode of ensuring respect for his own. If once the people respect the government, and the subordination established by law, they regulate their conduct by it, they grow attached to the institutions of their country, and defend them with spirit; because, in so doing, they are convinced that they are defending themselves. So clear is it that freedom and cheerfulness are greater enemies of disorder than subjection and melancholy.

“Let me not, however, be suspected of considering a magistracy or police, appointed to preserve the public peace, as in itself either useless or oppressive. On the contrary, it is my firm persuasion, that without such an institution, without its unremitting vigilance, neither tranquillity nor subordination can be preserved. I am well aware that license hovers on the very confines of liberty, and that some restraint must be devised to keep-in those who would pass the limits. This is indeed the most delicate point in civil jurisprudence; and it is this, that so many injudicious magistrates mistake, by confounding vigilance with oppression. Hence, at every festival, at every public diversion, or harmless amusement, they obtrude upon the people the insignia of magistracy and power. To judge by appearances, one should sup-

pose that their aim was to build their authority on the fears of the subject, and to purchase their own convenience at the expence of the freedom and pleasure of the public. In every other view, such precautions are idle. For the people never divert themselves without complete exemption from restraint in their diversions. Freedom is scared away by watchmen and patroles, constables and soldiers; and at the sight of staves and bayonets, harmless and timorous mirth takes the alarm, and disappears. This is surely not the method of accomplishing the purposes for which magistracy was established; whose vigilance, if I may be permitted so awful a comparison, should resemble that of the Supreme Being, should be perpetual and certain, but invisible; should be acknowledged by every body, but seen by nobody; should watch license, in order to repress it, and liberty, in order to protect it. In one word, it should operate as a restraint on the bad, as a shield and protection to the good. The awful insignia of justice are otherwise the mere symbols of oppression and tyranny; and the police, in direct opposition to the views of its institution, only vexes and molests the persons whom it is bound to shelter, comfort, and protect.

“Such are my ideas upon popular diversions. There is neither province nor district, town nor village, but has particular usages in its amusements, practised either habitually, or at particular periods of the year; various exercises of strength, for instance, or feats of agility; balls too, and junketings, walks, holidays, disguises, maskings, and mummeries. Whatever

their diversions may be, if they are public they must be innocent. It is the duty then of the good magistrate to protect the people in these simple pastimes, to lay out and keep in order the places destined for them, to remove all obstacles, and to leave the inhabitants at full liberty to abandon themselves to their boisterous merriment, their rude but harmless effusions of joy. If he appear sometimes among them, it should be to encourage, not to intimidate them; it should be like a father, gratified at the mirth of his children; not like a tyrant, envious of the gaiety of his slaves.

“In short, to return to our former remark, the people do not call upon the government to divert them, but merely to permit them to divert themselves.”

U

APPENDIX.

No. 3.

IN addition to a variety of metres borrowed from the Italians, the Spaniards have several others peculiar to themselves. Such are the *redondilla mayor* and *menor*, and the trochaic metre commonly used in their ballads. They occasionally employ blank verse, but most of their poetical compositions are in rhyme. Of rhymes they have two sorts; the *consonante* or full rhyme, which is nearly the same as the Italian; and the *asonante*, which the ear of a foreigner would not immediately distinguish from a blank termination. An *asonante* is a word which resembles an-

other in the vowel on which the last accent falls, as well as the vowel or vowels that follow it; but every consonant after the accented vowel must be different from that in the corresponding syllable. Thus: *tòs* and *amòr*, *pecho*, *fuègo*, *àlamo*, *pàxaro*, are all asonantes. In modern compositions where the asonante is used, every alternate verse is blank, but the poet is not at liberty to change the asonante till the poem is concluded. The old writers were, I believe, under no such restriction. The dramatic authors certainly assumed the privilege of varying their numbers at pleasure; for, when the asonante became buthensome, they interposed a couplet, a sonnet, or a full rhyme, and were thus relieved from their embarrassment. Whatever facility this lax mode of rhyming may afford, it accounts very insufficiently for the fertility of Lope de Vega; as there are few poets

of his time who use it so sparingly, and none who more frequently display their ingenuity in other more difficult forms of composition.

Since that period the asonantes are become more popular, but the public more severe in their judgment of them. All modern comedies written in verse are written in asonantes; but the same vowels are required to recur at every other termination throughout each act, and some severer critics object to its being altered even in the course of the play. Such, however, is the fertility of the Castilian language in rhymes of this nature, that the difficulty is said to consist in avoiding a resemblance of sound in the blank places, rather than in finding it for the others.

APPENDIX.

No. 4.

(See Page 203.)

THE reader may be curious to compare the following imitations of this little poem.

Ma foi, c'est fait de moi ; car Isabeau
M'a conjuré de lui faire un rondeau.
Cela me met dans une peine extrême :
Quoi ! treize vers, huit en *eau*, cinq en *eme* ?
Je lui ferois aussitôt un bateau.
En voilà cinq pourtant en un monceau.
Faisons en huit en invoquant Brodeau,
Et puis mettons par quelque stratagème—

Ma foi, c'est fait.

Si je pouvois encor de mon cerveau
Tirer cinq vers, l'ouvrage sera beau.
Mais cependant je suis dedans l'onzième ;
Et si je crois que je fais le douzième,
En voilà treize, ajustez au niveau—

Ma foi, c'est fait.

VOITURE.

Doris, qui sait qu'aux vers quelquefois je me plais,
 Me demande un sonnet ; et je m'en desespère.
 Quatorze vers ; Grand Dieu ! le moyen de les faire !
 En voilà cependant quatre déjà de faits.
 Je ne pouvois d'abord trouver de rime ; mais
 En faisant on apprend à se tirer d'affaire.
 Poursuivons : les quatrains ne m'étonneront guères,
 Si du premier tercet je pus faire les frais.
 Je commence au hasard ; et, si je ne m'abuse,
 Je n'ai pas commencé sans l'aveu de la muse.
 Puisqu'en si peu de tems je m'en tire du net,
 J'entame le second, et ma joie est extrême ;
 Car des vers commandés j'acheve le treizième ;
 Comptez s'ils sont quatorze, et voilà le sonnet.

REGNIER DESMARAIS.

FINIS.

ERRATA.

- P. 11. line 13. for *Sannazaro* read *Sannazarius*.
30. 14. for *Medivilla* read *Medinilla*.
33. 17. for *may* read *might*.
59. 4. for *avantaja* read *aventaja*.
66. 15. for *forgo* read *forego*.
72. 11. for *gray* read *grey*.
90. 1. for *this* read *the*.
101. 21. for *por que* read *porque*.
101. 25. for *des de* read *desde*.
144. 13. for *esto y* read *estoy*.
195. 21. for *gunato* read *quanto*.
213. 4. for *my* read *mi*.
214. 23. for *quiso* read *quisó*.
219. 13. for *Valladolid* read *Madrid*.

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