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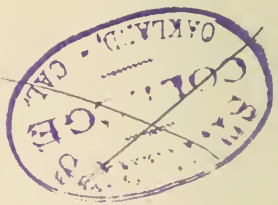

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LECTURES

ON

LITERATURE

ENGLISH,
FRENCH AND SPANISH

BY
RICHARD MALCOLM JOHNSTON

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TO

MY WIFE

FRANCES MANSFIELD

FROM

YOUNGEST MANHOOD TO FAR ADVANCED AGE

MY CONSTANT COMRADE

AND COUNSELOR

Obiit Februarii XXIV., MDCCCXCVII.

PREFACE

THESE Lectures, read at the Convent of Notre Dame and the Peabody Institute of Baltimore before classes of advanced students, were, and this collection is, intended mainly for those who have leisure for cursory, rather than prolonged and critical study of the matters herein discussed.

R. M. J.

CONTENTS

English Literature.

ENGLISH LITERATURE

I.

Ancient, Mediæval and Early English.

DRAMA:—NICHOLAS UDALL: "Ralph Royster Doyster;" JOHN STILL: "Gammer Gurton's Needle;" SACKVILLE: "Gorbodue."

THE drama was originally of religious institution. When the heroic ages had passed, and peace had afforded opportunities for improvement upon the lyrical and epic forms of poetry, then arose the dramatic in which, instead of mere narration, the principal characters were brought upon the stage, and made to represent in their own persons the great actions of their lives. The only proper subjects of tragedy, which is the oldest form of dramatic poetry, were incidents of an unhappy nature, which had occurred in the careers of great men who had been unfortunate;

and not so much for their own crimes as in obedience to the decrees of fate.

The heroes of ancient drama were men of many virtues and of great reverence for the gods. For instance, the "Œdipus" of Sophocles was exposed to death in his infancy in order to prevent the fulfillment of the prophecy that he must one day be the slayer of his father. The accomplishment of the prophecy was without guilt upon his part, but yet was followed by remorse and other misfortunes that were natural. His career was made by the poet to inculcate a great religious truth,— that the decrees of fate are inevitable.

The drama was enacted upon occasions of public worship. Its enactment was preluded by solemn sacrifices, and prayers were made for the blessing of the gods. The places where the scenes were enacted were usually in the open air and in places which either commanded the view of a temple, or some grand object of nature, which might assist in lifting the mind of the spectators in harmony with the solemn service of this religious ceremony. One

of the most imposing scenes that could be witnessed was this reënacting in these sacred places the events which taught the mutability of human fortunes and the value of constant piety.

The father of Greek tragedy, Æschylus, had for his only aim the inculcation of moral duties. He was a most earnest preacher. He taught "reverence for the gods, respect for the sanctity of an oath and of the conjugal tie, inflexible justice, moderation in prosperity, patience under suffering, devoted love to country, generous hospitality;" and he taught that no amount of suffering could dispense with the obligation to perform every duty to God and to men. Accompanying the action of the principal characters was a chorus, whose business it was to make the proper reflections upon that action. As this chorus was ever in the play, it must follow that there never could be any change of scene or of place.

Therefore, the ancient drama had what was called the three unities — of time, place, and action; that is, one set of actions that transpired at one place,

and during the lapse of two or three hours, was represented. There was no variety, and could be none, on account of the continued presence of the chorus. If the same person had performed other actions and suffered other pains on different occasions, and in different places, another play must be written to represent them. Thus we have the "Prometheus Bound" of Æschylus, and the "Prometheus Unbound." Then we have two plays of the Œdipus of Sophocles, the "Œdipus Tyrannus," and the "Œdipus Coloneus." Such was the origin of Greek tragedy.

In the hands of the great masters of Athens it had a powerful influence upon the thousands who attended its exhibitions, in stimulating them to all their obligations, especially the worship of the gods. The long continuance of peace, and the growth of follies and vices which increased civilization brings along with riches and luxury, afterwards introduced the comedy, which bore no higher relation to tragedy than the modern burlesque opera bears to the legitimate.

The pleasure that mankind derives from tragedy is very peculiar and very interesting. It is not from the suffering which we witness, although we shed tears at the sight, but it is because we then see manhood in its highest aspect, when it is struggling with misfortune, and in these struggles perfecting its being. Tragedy, therefore, teaches us what our holy religion teaches us also—that suffering is a great blessing. The man who never suffers never becomes a man in the highest sense.

Let us pass from this ancient drama to that of the Middle Ages, or, as we may term it, the Christian Drama. The influence which the establishment of Christianity on the ruins of Paganism exerted upon the general literature was felt especially by the drama which more than any other kind represented the old religious ideas. Yet theatrical representations were too abundant sources of entertainment for the people to be entirely deprived of them. For the lack of an equivalent they would attend the exhibitions of the old tragedies, and would weep like their forefathers wept

at the misfortunes of the great men in Grecian story.

Towards the middle of the fourth century, Gregory, surnamed Nazianzenus, came to the Archiepiscopal throne of Constantinople, a city which then held much of the last remains of Grecian letters and ideas. With Greek literature he was thoroughly acquainted. He had been educated severally in the schools of Cæsarea in Cappadocia, Cæsarea Philippi, Alexandria, and, lastly, Athens. Besides being a great preacher, he was a poet. Knowing full well the religious tendencies of the heathen drama, and desirous to substitute such entertainments as would harmonize with Christianity, he first banished from the stage the old tragedies and substituted those which tended to inculcate Christian principles. As the ancient tragedies had for their subjects the sufferings of the heathen heroes and demi-gods, so his took for theirs the sufferings of Christ and the ancient saints and martyrs. There is yet extant one of these tragedies called "The Passion of Christ." Following the requisition of

the old tragedies, which had their chorus, he substituted Christian hymns, likewise of his own composition.

These Christian plays obtained generally among the Christians of the East. It was many centuries before they found their way amongst the western nations of Europe. When the Latin language became that of the Church, they began to be produced in Latin, and though they were known in Italy, and much later in Germany and France, it was not until the beginning of the fifteenth century that the English became much acquainted with them. Their first knowledge appears to have been acquired at the Council of Constance which sat from 1414 to 1418.

The English bishops were highly entertained by these plays which, during the intervals of the sittings of the Council, were exhibited by the ecclesiastics of the East. They were called "Miracle Plays," and were not only composed by the ecclesiastics, but acted by them entirely. A layman would no more have dared to appear in them, than he would have undertaken to

preach the Gospel or administer the holy sacraments. Following the example of their Eastern brethren, the English ecclesiastics began to introduce them into England. As elsewhere, they were purely religious and performed nowhere except in the churches and monasteries.

But all peoples must have some sport, however firmly set in their religious opinions. On the occasions of great concourses of men, especially at the great fairs held in the Middle Ages, men would go in crowds to see the jugglers and other mountebanks. Then it was that, to counterbalance these shows, the ecclesiastics began to introduce into their plays the sportive element. The funny character in their plays was the Devil. He always wore a long tail, and the ancient saints used to worry that and his other members in many ways, when the Devil would roar with pain and the audience would roar with delight.

These Miracle Plays after some time took on the allegorical form which they had borrowed from the French. In-

stead of persons in Bible history they represented abstract qualities. In these the sportive character was called the Vice. Yet the Devil was so interesting, and there was such satisfaction in witnessing any discomfiture that could come to him, that even in these allegorical plays he was often brought in with the Vice, and the audience had two clowns instead of one. Their tricks played upon each other constituted the laughing part of these dramas. They took the name of "Mysteries," and were still enacted in the churches.

Afterwards, and because the universities were upon religious foundations, they began to be enacted in them. We have an allusion to this habit in Shakespeare's "Hamlet." In them events of Bible history were represented with exact circumstantiality, the monks not feeling at liberty to vary them. Many grossnesses must therefore occur in them. They at last became so objectionable that, in the reign of Henry VIII., Bishop Bonner prohibited them being represented in the churches. Still, the chorister boys in St. Paul's

continued to act them in that Cathedral, especially at the feast of the Boy Bishop on St. Nicholas' Day.

Such was the ancient English "Sacred Comedy." The habit of producing it on Sunday continued long, and as late even as the reign of Charles I. these Christian boys of St. Paul's acted upon Sundays.

What a blessing are tears! Tears, at once the witness and the reliever of the burden, both of sorrow and of pleasure. It is natural to a healthy man, healthy in body and mind, to shed tears, not only for his own griefs, not only in sympathy with those of others, but in the midst of the excesses of his own joys or in mirthful contemplation of those absurd conjunctures in his own and others' fortunes which he recognizes as incapable of producing harmful results. The subtle influences in the human heart which call forth these emanations for consoling the one and subduing the excesses of the other in these apparently so widely different conditions are yet closely blended together in the great depths of our being.

So it is that weeping is sometimes followed by smiling, and laughter by sighing.

He therefore who undertakes to represent this human life, if he be a true artist, will study both these elements in man's being with equal care and fidelity. Among the ancient dramatists, if such indeed were the gift, it certainly was not the habit to employ it. Greek tragedy must necessarily be wholly serious. Originating in religion, designed to inculcate fear of the gods, especially of fate, it had no place for scenes except the solemn, the awful, and the terrific. Its achievements were indescribably great, and they stimulated to the practice of highest virtues.

Greek comedy had also, in its first intentions, elements of the religious. It is curious indeed to consider how some of the ancient dramatic scenes in honor of Bacchus should have been induced by religious motives. Yet comedy in the main among the refined Greeks seemed to have had for its object to make a contrast — and a

pleasing contrast — with the painful solemnities of tragedy.

Socrates used to maintain that a good writer of tragedies ought also to be able to write comedies ; and in an argument with Aristophanes, the latter was convinced that the wise man was right in his opinions. For "all opposites," was the argument, "can be fully understood only by and through each other. Consequently, we can know what is serious only by knowing also what is laughable and ludicrous."

But it was reserved for time long after to fully eliminate this idea, and represent the serious and the sportive in their sequence in common life.

We should remember that the Greek drama dealt not with common life. Neither tragedy nor comedy. Tragedy dealt with the demi-gods and legendary heroes and heroines, with Œdipus and Orestes, with Alcestis and Medea. So Greek comedy, for want of real heroes, dealt with prominent names in political life who would fain be regarded as heroes, but who were not ; and these were exhibited in contrast with

the truly great of a better age. Greek comedy therefore was satire. It had the keenest wit ; but it was devoid of humor which is the chiefest element in the comic muse. Many a roaring laugh was raised over the merciless scourgings of petty politicians by Aristophanes, but it was a laugh of contempt and anger which was harm instead of benefit to the laugher. That healthy English mind in that healthy English body, so fond of English beef and English ale, must have some substantial human sport such as was to come from everyday life and character, leaving out the contemplation of the personage whom it required so great a stretch of the imagination to disassociate from the thoughts not only serious but terrific. It certainly was natural to expect that the first modifications of the sacred comedy would be made within the circle of existing dramatic writers — that is, the ecclesiastics.

So here we have the new departure inaugurated by Nicholas Udall, head master successively of Eton and Westminster Schools, and Canon of Windsor.

They were good times when the boys and ushers went nutting in Windsor forest, and as good almost when in those long winter nights that left, over and above sleeping and study hours, abundance of time for other things, they used to enact the Latin comedies which the head master had composed. Here we find the beginnings of modern comedy writing in England; for these Latin plays designed for the entertainment of school boys, in recess from studies, were neither after the order of the Mysteries and Moralities nor were they merely imitations of the ancient classic comedies! It was but a step further, as Mr. Silas Wegg would say, to "drop into" English.

In "Ralph Royster Doyster" we begin to see the development of the idea of representing both the serious and the sportive, and the setting off each by the other as they are set off in actual life. In this play, of course, the sportive must and does largely prevail; but there are many passages of serious dialogue, and these dispose the mind to enjoy with greater zest the comic.

Matthew Merrigreke is all the more entertaining because of the seriousness in other characters. The play, so to call it, has been considered of much value in addition to its praise of being the first English comedy, for the acquaintance it imparts with London society three hundred years ago. A good move this on the part of the clergy, who were the monopolists in literary, especially dramatic humor, to allow a bit of fun outside of the churches, and at least for this purpose, supplant the Devil, and substitute honest English jokers. There is much spirit in the scene wherein the three working girls, Madge Mumblecrust, spinner, Tibet Talkative, seamstress, and Arnot Slyface, knitter, while at their tasks, are joined by Ralph Royster Doyster, and after some disputing, the dialogue continues thus :

Arnot—Let all those matters pass, and we three sing a song,
So shall we pleasantly both the time beguile now,
And eke dispatch all our work, ere we can tell how.

Tibet—I shrew them that say nay, and that shall not be I.

Madge—And I am well content.
Tibet—Sing on, then, by and by.
[*All.*] Pipe, merry Arnot;
Trilla, Trilla, Trillarie.
Work Tibet, work Arnot, work Margerie;
Let us see who will win the victory.

Pipe, merry Arnot;
Trilla, Trilla, Trillarie.
What Tibet, what Arnot, what Margerie;
Ye sleep, but we do not, that shall we try;
Your fingers be dumb, our work will not be.

Pipe, merry Arnot;
Trilla, Trilla, Trillarie.
Now Tibet, now Arnot, now Margerie,
Now whippet apace for the Mysterie;
But it will not be, our mouth is so dry.

Pipe, merry Arnot;
Trilla, Trilla, Trillarie.
When Tibet, when Arnot, when Margerie?
I will not — I cannot — no more can I;
Then give we all over, and there let it die.

Not long afterwards another churchman, yet higher in dignity and office, appeared. Twenty years ago we had a head master and a canon; now we are to have a Doctor of Divinity and a Bishop. John Still, Lady Margaret's Professor of Divinity, Prebend of Westminster, Master of St. John's and Trinity Colleges at Cambridge, Archdeacon of Sudbury and Bishop of Bath and Wells, once fell into a humorous vein, and for a preacher showed an enormous familiarity with the lowly in English

society; and as hearty an appreciation of their drolleries as any who ever aspired to wear a gown, much less the lawn sleeves and the mitre.

"Gammer Gurton's Needle" is indeed thoroughly English, its humor is of the English kind, broad, hearty, and unrestrained. The author understood well the fun to be gotten from the absurd exaggerations that persons in lower classes make of insignificant matters. It was a great time in the village when it was ascertained that Gammer Gurton's needle was not to be found. Gammer Gurton's needle gone! clean gone!! Perhaps it was lost. Lost! The idea! As well suppose the King had lost the crown jewels. No losing in the case; and the question is—who stole it? She will not suspect her servants Hodge, Tyb, and Cocke, nor Doctor Rat, nor Diccon. Now the gossip, Dame Chat, has been much about the house of late; and it was no difficult thing to observe that she envied in her heart the possession of that needle. The unsuspecting owner had often exhibited it with pardonable pride, and in blind confidence.

In her grief and anger for the loss, she was led through Diccon the Bedlam to suspect Dame Chat of the theft. These two things taken together, this sequence of startling events, the loss of the needle, that loss magnified into a theft, and the theft charged upon Dame Chat, upset that little village. Business was suspended, all took sides and joined in the hunt. What it all would have gotten to no human foresight could have determined, had not an unguarded movement of Hodge solved the mystery. Yes, it was not Dame Chat, it was Hodge, in whose breeches, while Gammer was mending them, the needle had been left. In an awkward motion of the lad, the missing needle stuck into his flesh, and he had to roar at its discovery.

If the boys at Eton enjoyed the enacting of "Ralph Royster Doyster," how must the bigger boys of Christ's College at Cambridge, where it was first presented, have applauded "Gammer Gurton's Needle"? How much better for such purpose this than the "Birds" of Aristophanes, the "Captive" of Plautus, or the "Andrea" of Teren-

tius; not to have to pick out the fun, what little there was, from beneath Latin and Greek roots and radicals, but hear it pouring forth, in homely vernacular form, in scenes of everyday home life; or than the Mysteries and Moralities, whose humor was partly fanciful, and drawn forth, strangely enough, from the most serious of all human concerns. Many scenes, indeed, are grossly indelicate; but delicacy was not a part of society then in any single one of its conditions. But there are others that are decidedly above buffoonery. The famous "Chanson à Boire" was greatly admired, and was regarded as very far the best that had yet appeared in English:

"I cannot eat but little meat," etc.

It is very interesting to study the development of the British drama from these rude originals, and how it was made to depend, not upon the talents and tastes of the dramatist, but upon the likings and dislikings of those who went to the theatres. Almost contemporary with our first comedy appeared our first tragedy, the "Gorboduc" of

Sackville. A noble effort this to reproduce the tragic muse of Greece. But the English playgoers were wont to sleep at this stately solemn narrative of the misfortunes of the great. Not that they had neither eyes nor tears for tragic events, or were without pity for those who had been in great estate:

> "Of hem that stode in grete prosperite,
> And be fallen out of her high degree,"

but they insisted upon seeing the blood and hearing the thunder; they preferred being present at the combat to hearing it described. The counsel of Horace to the Pisos would have been wasted upon that broad-hearted and not refined English public. He who had wondered how the Romans of the foretime had admired the rudeness of Plautus, and was shocked at the bare idea of Medea murdering, "*coram populis*," her own and the children of Jason, would never have been seen, had he lived at that time, in the pit of the Globe or Blackfriars; for that public demanded the representation before their eyes of the

scenes of blood; and then, when that was over, to turn from them to scenes of fun and frolic. If Progne were to be changed into a bird, and Cadmus into a snake, they insisted upon seeing how the thing was done, then they were ready to listen to Plautine jokes, and as these were broader their shouts were louder and heartier.

"An action," says Mr. Hallam, "passing visibly on the stage, instead of a frigid narrative, a copious intermixture of comic buffoonery with the gravest story, were requisites with which no English audience would dispense." The wits coming after, who sought fame or livelihood, must conform henceforth to these demands. Fond as it was to shed the tears of pity, it was needful to that audience to wipe them away in time, and give an outlet to those of hilarity. These two great wants of the human heart, so nearly connected, so necessary to each other, these English audiences were the first to assert in that alternate sequence in which they prevail in daily life.

II.

INTERLUDES:—JOHN HEYWOOD: "The Four P's; "The Fair Maid of the Exchange." JOHN LYLY: "Euphues;" "Mother Bombie;" "Endymion;" "Sappho and Phaon;" "Midas:" "Alexander and Campaspe."

BEFORE considering the English drama, such as it speedily became after the appearance of these rude essays, mention should be made of the "Interlude" which came into being about the time of the passing of the Moralities, designed to fill the interstices of elaborate festivities at court. The beginner of these was John Heywood, a native of London, for some time a student at Pembroke College, who was afterwards employed as a manager in court ceremonials. Despite a service which now seems rather trivial, even if entirely respectable, he was a man of considerable ability and courageous integrity. A

staunch Catholic, he without hesitation put aside the temptation to give up his faith at the death of Mary Tudor, and went into exile, dying at Mechlin in 1565. Some of his productions are "The Merrie Plays between John, the husband, Tyb, his wife, and Sir John, the priest;" the "Play of the Weather;" and the "Four P's." Of these the best known is the last, which, although not a drama in its just sense, is an exceedingly interesting dialogue.

The four P's are the Pedlar, the Pardoner, the Palmer, and the Poticary. An animated controversy goes on for some time between the Pardoner and the Palmer in the midst of which the Poticary appears upon the scene and thinks it worth while to vaunt his own vocation as a curer of bodies along with the claims of the disputants as curers of souls. Presently the Pedlar joins the company, and, after showing his wares, listens to the dispute of the other three, and at last undertakes to settle things by a proposal which to him seems reasonable. This was that every one of the three should tell a lie, a feat to which he

from much experience, was fully adequate, and he would decide as to which was the biggest. Said he:

"Now have I found one mastery
That ye can do indifferently,
And is neither selling nor buying
But even on very lying.
And all ye three can lie as well
As can the falsest devil in hell,
And though afore, ye heard me grudge
In greater matters, to be your judge,
Yet in lying I can some skill
And if I shall be judge, I will;
And which of you telleth most marvel,
And most unlikest to be true,
Shall most prevail, whatever ensue."

The proposal is accepted and the Pardoner and the Poticary each tells what must have been admitted to be lies of good size; but the Palmer after some commenting upon the rescue of a woman from the lower pit in the Pardoner's effort, spoke as follows:

"And this I would ye should understand,
I have seen women five hundred thousand,
And oft with them have long time tarried;
Yet in all places where I have been,
Of all the women that I have seen,
I never saw or knew in my conscience,
Any woman out of patience."

A lie so palpable, so vast, even the other conspiritors admitted to be far beyond their several conceptions and

they did not appeal from the judgment of the umpire.

From the lyrical poems of Heywood I quote the following:

THE FAIR MAID OF THE EXCHANGE.

Go, pretty birds;

Ye little birds that sit and sing
Amidst the shady valleys,
And see how Phillis sweetly walks
Within her garden alleys:
Go, pretty birds, about her bower,
Sing pretty birds, she may not lower;
Ah me! methinks I see her frown.
Ye pretty wantons, warble.

Go, tell her through your chirping bills,
As you by me are bidden,
To her is only known my love,
Which from the world is hidden.
Go, pretty birds, and tell her so:
For still methinks I see her frown.
Ye pretty wantons, warble.

Go, tune your voices' harmony,
And sing I am her lover;
Strain loud and sweet that every note
With sweet content may move her.
And she that hath the sweetest voice,
Tell her I will not change my choice,
Yet still, methinks I see her frown.
Ye pretty wantons, warble.

Oh fly! make haste! see, see, she falls
Into a pretty slumber,
Sing round about her rosy bed,
That waking she may wonder;
Say to her, 'tis your lover true;
That sendeth love to you, to you;
And when you hear her kind reply,
Return with pleasant warblings.

Shortly after Heywood appeared John Lyly, who, an Oxford Master of Arts, for some years was the leader among English wits. His first work was "Euphues, the Anatomy of Wit," and its quick successor, "Euphues in England," a collection of essays, tales, etc., upon character, social conduct, religion, philosophy, and other subjects. These are connected with a slender story of Euphues, a youth of Athens, who, coming to the city of Naples, formed an acquaintance with a youth, Philantus, and Eubulus, an old man. It is curious to recall how immensely popular these books were, and how extensive was their influence upon English speech. Euphuism ran through several years, giving tone to very much of English prose writings. Its turgid language and affected conceits are frequently to be noted even in the writings of Shakespeare.

The author is mentioned in this connection because of his dramas. His most earnest ambition was to be made Master of the Revels at the court of Elizabeth, and though he never suc-

ceeded he long continued writing dramas and masques, ever hoping for promotion. Most of his plays were on classical fables and traditions, nearly all being intended to personify in one form or another the glorious queen. Below these is "Mother Bombie," an attempt to bring together for the purposes of contrast the different manners of common speech among the higher and lower classes. As we would suspect from the author of "Euphues," the former was too high and the latter too low. The others are far superior. In "Endymion," is told the story of that youth's desertion of Tellus, the maid to whom he was contracted, for the goddess Cynthia, who, although not insensible to his passion, yet is too far exalted above him to respond fully to it. This was a compliment to the queen, who, although occasionally indulging tender emotions for one of her numberless lovers, never entertains the idea of lifting them to her level. In "Sappho and Phaon" is another love between high and low, with a like ending. Phaon, the young fisherman, had such

marvelous beauty as to attract Sappho, the Virgin Queen of Sicily. In this there is much of the delicacy afterwards appearing in several of Shakespeare's comedies. This is observed in the following colloquy occurring on the occasion of the lover carrying some herbs to soothe the queen into sleep:

Sappho—What herbs have you brought, Phaon?

Phaon—Such as will make you sleep, madam, though they cannot make me slumber.

Sappho—Why, how can you cure me when you cannot remedy yourself?

Phaon—Yes, madam, the causes are contrary. For it is only a dryness in your brains that keepeth you from rest. But—

Sappho—But what?

Phaon—Nothing—but mine is not so.

Sappho—Nay, then I despair of help, if our disease be not all one.

Phaon—I would our diseases were all one.

Sappho—It goes hard with the patient when the physician is desperate.

Phaon—Yet, Medea made the ever waking dragon to snort, when she, poor soul, could not wink.

Sappho—Medea was in love and nothing could cause her rest but Jason.

Phaon—Indeed I know of no herb to make lovers sleep, but heartsease; which, because it groweth high, I cannot reach for.

Sappho—For whom?

Phaon—For such as love.

Sappho—It stoopeth very low, and I can never stoop to it, that—

Phaon—That what?

Sappho—That I may gather it; but why do you sigh so, Phaon?

Phaon—It is mine use, madam.

Sappho—It will do you harm, and me, too, for I never hear one sigh, but I must sigh also.

Phaon—It were best then that your ladyship give me leave to be gone; for I can but sigh.

Sappho—Nay, stay, for now I begin to sigh, I shall not leave though you be gone. But what do you think best for your sighing, to take it away?

Phaon—Yew, madam.

Sappho—Me?

Phaon—No, madam; yew of the tree.

Sappho—Then will I love yew the better. And indeed, it would make me sleep, too; therefore all other simples set aside. I will simply use only yew.

Phaon—Do, madam, for I think nothing in the world so good as yew.

Sappho—Farewell, for this time.

The assumption of the name *Sappho* was wholly arbitrary, and also of *Phaon* the lover of the unhappy Sappho of Lesbos.

"Midas" is founded upon the misfortunes of a prince of that name in Phrygia. It ought to have seemed that he had had enough already of caution against too great familiarity with the gods. Having once entertained Bacchus when brought to him in a time of misfortune, and asked as a reward that whatever he touched might become gold, he was horrified to find that even his food became thus transformed. Being about to famish, and imploring the god to take back

the gift, he was ordered to wash in the waters of the Pactolus, and hence the sands of that famous river were turned into gold. But Midas after this had the temerity to say that Pan was a better musician than Apollo. For this insult, Apollo gave him the ears of an ass as the most suitable punishment for his ignorance and impudence. Midas used every possible precaution in order to conceal the disgrace from his subjects. But one of his servants happened one day to see his ears. Finding it impossible to refrain from speaking of the case, and yet dreading the resentment of his king if it should be published, he made a hole in the ground and whispered the secret within it, and then he covered the hole with dirt again. But scandal will not stay even in the ground. Whoever is acquainted with any scandalous thing which he does not wish to be generally known, cannot, it seems, safely tell it even to a hole in the ground. It came to pass afterwards, that some reeds grew upon the place where the servant had buried his secret; and

when they were agitated by the wind they whispered, "Midas has the ears of an ass."

"Alexander and Campaspe" is another very entertaining drama upon classical subjects. The subject of this is the passion of Apelles for Campaspe, one of the many loves of Alexander the Great. Apelles, of Cos, the most celebrated of all the portrait painters of Greece, who was alone allowed by Alexander to paint him, was required by the king to paint a portrait of Campaspe. Such was the marvelous beauty of this woman that the painter fell in love with her while he was making her portrait. Campaspe, it seems, preferred to reign supreme and alone in the heart of Apelles than occupy a subordinate and not very respectable place in that of Alexander. The king is made acquainted with the fact of their mutual love, and allows them to marry. Campaspe must have been exceedingly beautiful, for she is said to have been the original of the celebrated picture of the Venus Anadyomene.

The beginning of the courtship between the artist and his subject is told in words showing much art. Before commencing with his work he conducts her around his studio showing her the leading pieces upon the walls. Before one Campaspe, pausing, asks:

Campaspe—Whose counterfeit is this, Apelles?

Apelles—This is Venus, the goddess of love.

Campaspe—What? Be there also loving goddesses?

Apelles—This is she that hath power to command the very affections of the heart.

Campaspe—How is she hired — by prayers, by sacrifice or bribes?

Apelles—By prayer, sacrifice and bribes.

Campaspe—What prayer?

Apelles—Vows irrevocable.

Campaspe—What sacrifice?

Apelles — Hearts ever sighing, never dissembling.

Campaspe—What bribes?

Apelles—Roses and kisses; but were you never in love?

Campaspe—No, nor love in me.

Apelles—Then have you injured many.

Campaspe—How so?

Apelles—Because you have been loved of many.

Campaspe—Flattered perchance of some.

Apelles—It is not possible that a face so fair and a wit so sharp, both without comparison, should not be apt to love.

Campaspe—If you begin to tie up your tongue with cunning, I pray you dip your pencil in colors and fall to that you must do, not to that you would do.

I give the songs of the two gods; decision upon which wrought such unexpected punishment on the umpire:

APOLLO.

A SONG OF DAPHNE TO THE LUTE.

My Daphne's hair is twisted gold,
Bright stars apiece her eyes doe hold.
My Daphne's brow enthrones the graces,
My Daphne's beauty staines all faces.
On Daphne's cheeks grow rose and cherry,
On Daphne's lip a sweeter berry,
Daphne's snowy hand but touched does melt
And then no heavenlier warmth is felt.
My Daphne's voice tunes all the spheres,
My Daphne's musick charmes all ears,
Fond am I thus to sing her prayse
These glories now are turned to bays.

SYRINX.

THE SONG OF PAN.

Pan's Syrinx was a girl indeed,
Though now shee's turned into a reed,
From that deare reed Pan's pipe does come,
A pipe that strikes Apollo dumbe;
Nor flute, nor lute, nor gitterne can
So chant it as the pipe of Pan;
Cross-gathered swains, and dearie girles,
With faces smug and round as pearles,
When Pan's shrill pipe begins to play,
With dancing weare out night and day.
The bag-pipes drone his humlays by,
When Pan sounds up his minstrelsie.

Lyly was one of the many who depend on princes' favors, of all support the most miserable and followed by most

sickening disappointments. The last of numerous appeals to the court of Elizabeth has, among others, these words:

"Thirteen years your Majesty's servant, but yet nothing! Seventy friends that though they say they will be sure, I find them sure to be slow! A thousand hopes, but all nothing! A hundred pounds, but yet nothing! Thus casting up the inventory of my friends, hopes, promises and times, the *summa totalis* amounteth to just nothing. . . . The last and the least, that, if I be born to have nothing, I may have a probation to pay nothing; which suit is like his, that, having followed the court ten years, for recompense of his services, committed a robbery, and took it out in a pardon."

The misery in the case of such a man could hardly have been put more strikingly.

III.

GEORGE PEELE: "Œnone's Complaint." ROBERT GREENE: List of His Works, "Samela." THOMAS NASH: "Pierce Penniless;" "Isle of Dogs;" "The Tragedy of Dido;" "Summer's Last Will and Testament." JOHN FORD: "The Lover's Melancholy;" "The Broken Heart;" Love's Sacrifice;" "Perkin Warbeck."

THE men who succeeded Lyly, although well born and scholarly, made careers not to be envied by the most lowly in that generation. It was a generation wherein coarseness ruled even in highest places. Of the early English, Taine speaks as of a "den of lions." Not so very many centuries back of Elizabeth English parents sold their sons and daughters into slavery. The appearance of some of these *Angli* in the mart of Rome suggested to the great Gregory the sending of a missionary to the island whence came captives of such beauty that the Pope called them *Angeli.*

To Queen Elizabeth the wits of the time paid compliments of absurd

exaltation which she accepted and then let them starve. Even yet it seems strange that such a woman could have been so glorified by such as knelt in abject servility at her feet.

Some of these wits I must mention before the greater names that succeeded them:

First stands George Peele, a native of Devonshire, a student of (then Broadgates Hall, now) Pembroke College, Oxford, where he took the Master's degree in 1579. Of his many plays only five were preserved. He and his set did not seek places at court, but chose the haunts of theatres, taverns and the society of such as frequented them, whose manners and habits it would not be very easy to exaggerate. Of that set he ranks, in the opinion of critics, next to Marlowe. A specimen of his lyrical pieces is given from the "Arraignment of Paris," entitled:

ŒNONE'S COMPLAINT.

Melpomene, the muse of tragic songs,
With mournful tunes, in stole of dismal hue
Assist a silly nymph to wail her woe,
And leave thy lusty company behind.

Thou luckless wreath! becomes not me to wear
The poplar tree, for triumph of my love;
Then is my joy, my pride of love is left,
Be thou unclothed of thy lovely greene.

And in thy leaves my fortunes written be,
And then some gentle wind let blow abroad,
That all the world may see how false of love
False Paris hath to his Œnone been.

All readers will recognize Œnone as the nymph who was deserted by Paris after his summons to decide the contest among the goddesses regarding Discord's golden apple.

Following Peele is Robert Greene, who was born at Norwich, and took his Master's degree at St. John's College, Cambridge, in 1583. After traveling for some time on the Continent, he settled in London, became a wit, married, became father of a child and then left his wife, assigning as the reason that she had undertaken the vain task of winning him from his profligate habits. Later in life he wrote at some length a paper confessing many of his bad actions to this lady and to others who had befriended or endeavored to befriend him. He had many alterations of fortune during the irregular

life led in the company of low associates. In a paper called "The Repentance of Robert Greene," he recites with circumstantiality some of the enormities committed by him and undertook to give, for what it was worth, to his companions, Peele, Lodge, Nash, and others, some monitory counsel. There is something touching in the appeal made, when upon his dying bed, to his wife, whom for years he had not met, not for pardon of himself, but for indemnification of the poor shoemaker's wife, who had tended him in her house in his last sickness, for the expenses to which she had been subjected on his behalf. It was said, with perhaps little foundation, that he was a relative of Shakespeare, and that it was through his influence that the latter came from Stratford to seek his fortune in London.

A great number of Greene's works, like those of Peele, perished in the great fire of London. Here is a list of a portion: "Orlando Furioso;" "A Looking Glass for London and England;" "Friar Bacon and Friar Bun-

gay ;" "Alphonsus, king of Arragon;" "James the Fourth ;" "George a Greene, the Pinner of Wakefield;" "Ballad of the Jolly Pinner of Wakefield, with Robin Hood, Scarlet and John, etc." His novels, such as Dorastus and Fawnia," are poor specimens, after the style of Euphues.

At his death the poor woman who had rendered his last service, placed upon his head a wreath of bays, and had him buried with decency according to her means.

The beautiful short poem which herein follows indicates what might have been done by this gifted and cultured man had he not been led into the tortuous ways of dissipation, and earnestly cultivated the genius with which he had been born :

SAMELA.

Like to Diana in her summer weed,
Girt with a crimson robe of brightest dye,
Goes fair Samela.
Whiter than be the flocks that straggling feed,
When, washed by Arethusa, faint they lie,
Is fair Samela.
As fair Aurora in her morning grey,
Decked with the ruddy glisten of her love,
Is fair Samela.
Like lovely Thetis on a calmed day,

Whence her brightness Neptune's fancy move,
Shines fair Samela.
Her tresses gold, her eyes like glassy streams,
Her teeth are pearl, the breasts are ivory,
Of fair Samela.
Her cheeks, like rose and lily, yield forth gleams,
Her brows, bright arches framed of ebony;
Thus fair Samela.
Passeth fair Venus in her bravest hue;
And Juno in the shew of majesty,
For she's Samela.
Pallas in wit, all three, if you will view,
For beauty, wit, and matchless dignity,
Yield to Samela.

Of this set was Thomas Nash, native of Suffolk and graduate of St. John's College. Like the foregoing, he led a life of debauchery which occasionally, like Greene's, had reliefs of penitence and honest short-lived endeavors to amend. A born satirist, with a temper irascible and combative, he was not one to feel the sweet influences which humor, that is always generous and compassionate, delights to exert. He was an almost perfect master of invective, which, at the instigation of the bishops, Whitgift and Bancroft, he employed in the once famous Martin Mar-Prelate Controversy. His papers on this line got for him the titles of

"Gallant Juvenal," and "English Aretino. It was a friendly act to defend the memory of his friend Greene from the attacks of Gabriel Harvey, the Cambridge scholar. The papers of these combatants became at last so coarsely abusive that the Archbishop of Canterbury interposed with an order for the ending of the controversy and the destruction of all the pamphlets that had been put forth by them.

Like his companions, he was often driven into extremities from the want of necessary things. In a period of special need he wrote "Pierce Penniless; his Supplications to the Devil," in which in most pathetic terms are exposed some of the sufferings to which authors were subjected.

His reputation as a dramatist is founded upon three plays. The first, "The Isle of Dogs," is a satire so biting that, regarded as purely political, it caused his arrest and several months' imprisonment. Another is "The Tragedy of Dido, Queene of Carthage," the best part of which, however, has been supposed to be the work of Marlowe.

The other is "A Pleasant Comedye," called "Summer's Last Will and Testament," a comedy with little or no plot for entertainment of the court. The name was taken from Will Summer, the Fool of Henry VIII. It opens with a fling at Euphuism, which had fallen into decay as rapidly as it had arisen. The principal events of the past year are reviewed; and all ends with ascriptions of praise for every good thing to the most powerful, most august, most beautiful, most gracious Queen Elizabeth. The following lyric is from "Summer's Last Will and Testament:"

SPRING.

Spring, the sweet Spring, is the year's pleasant king,
Then blooms each thing, then maids dance in a ring.
Cold doth not sting, the pretty birds do sing:
Cuckoo, jug, jug, pu we, to witta woo.

The palm and May make country houses gay,
Lambs frisk and play, the shepherds pipe all day,
And we hear aye birds tune this merry lay:
Cuckoo, jug, jug, pu, we, to witta woo.

The fields breathe sweet, the daisies kiss our feet,
Young lovers meet, old wives a sunning sit,
In every street these tunes our ears do greet:
Cuckoo, jug, jug, pu, we, to witta woo.
Spring, the sweet spring.

A brief space must be given to John Ford, who, while keeping mainly to his vocation of lawyer of the Middle Temple, gave to the muses somewhat of his time when out of the engrossments of business. Some of his plays are "The Lover's Melancholy;" "The Sun's Darling;" "The Broken Heart;" "Love's Sacrifice;" and "Perkin Warbeck." Critics have differed widely in their judgment of Ford. But all admit that he lacked humor, that essential of comic drama. Hallam, in his "Introduction to the Literature of Europe," says of him: "Love, and love in quiet or sorrow, is almost exclusively the emotion he portrays. No heroic passion, no sober dignity, will be found in his tragedies. But he connects his story well and without confusion; his scenes are often highly wrought and effective; his characters, with no striking novelty, are well supported; he is seldom extravagant or regardless of probability." The following lyric is from "The Broken Heart."

BEAUTY BEYOND THE REACH OF ART.

Can you paint a thought? or number
Every fancy in a slumber?
Can you count soft minutes roving

From a dial's point by moving?
Can you grasp a sigh? or lastly,
Rob a virgin's honor chastely?
No, oh no! yet you may
Sooner do both that and this,
This and that and never miss,
Than by any praise display
Beauty's beauty; such a glory
As beyond all fate, all story.
All arms, all arts,
All loves, all hearts,
Greater than those, or they,
Do, shall, and must obey.

IV.

CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE: "The Passionate Shepherd;" "Tambourlaine:" "Dr. Faustus;" "The Jew of Malta;" "Edward II."

AMONG the pals of the poor profligates just mentioned was one who was born for far greater things, whose actions done during an extremely brief and unhappy career indicate what were expected at the time of his premature end. Far above Lyly, and indeed above all the other dramatists before Shakespeare, and contemporary with him, was Christopher Marlowe. Of humble birth in the town of Canterbury, he was helped to a good education at Cambridge, where he took his second degree in 1587. Before this he had written the Tragedy of "Tambourlaine the Great," and it had been acted upon the stage.

The boldness with which Marlowe left the old rules of the drama and broke forth into new, introducing blank verse,

and treating classical themes after romantic turns, was at once and abundantly successful. He has been styled the father of the British drama. Had he lived it is not easy to say to what splendid heights he would not have attained. The paraphrase on the old legend of Hero and Leander, and others on Ovid and Lucan, showed genius near to the highest; so did that Shepherd's song, which together with the reply of the Shepherdess by Sir Walter Raleigh, are two of the best known and most admired among poems of their class.

THE PASSIONATE SHEPHERD TO HIS LOVE.

Come with me and be my love,
And we will all the pleasures prove
That valleys, groves, and hills and fields,
Woods or steepy mountain yields.

And we will sit upon the rocks,
Seeing the shepherds feed their flocks
By shallow rivers, to whose falls
Melodious birds sing madrigals.

And I will make thee beds of roses,
And a thousand fragrant posies;
A cap of flowers and a kirtle
Embroidered all with leaves of myrtle;

A gown made of the finest wool,
Which from our pretty lambs we pull;
Fair-lined slippers for the cold,
With buckles of the purest gold;

A belt of straw and ivy buds,
With coral clasps and amber studs;
And if these pleasures may thee move,
Come live with me, and be my love.

The shepherd swains shall dance and sing,
For thy delight, each May morning;
If these delights thy mind may move,
Then live with me, and be my love.

I quote one passage from Tambourlaine on Beauty, which shows how exquisitely sensitive was the mind of this wayward youth on that great theme of the poet. It is taken from a soliloquy of Tambourlaine while thinking of his absent love, Xenocrate :

"'What is beauty,' sayeth my sufferings then?
If all the pens that ever poets held,
Had fed the feeling of their masters' thoughts,
And every sweetness that inspired their hearts,
Their minds and muses on admired themes;
If all the heavenly quintessence they still
From their immortal flowers of poesy,
Wherein, as in a mirror we perceive
The highest reaches of a human wit;
If these had made one poem's period
And all combined in beauty's worthiness,
Yet should there hover in their restless heads
One thought, one grace, one wonder, at the least,
Which into words no virtue can digest."

Many of Marlowe's writings were lost. Those that have been preserved are of several kinds, in all of which he was excellent. But his greatest talent

was for tragedy. We notice the three leading: "Doctor Faustus," the "Jew of Malta," and "Edward II." The ideas on which the tragedy of "Faustus" is founded are to be met with in the literature of all ages. The oldest type of this character that we are acquainted with is Job. It is the idea of a man who has for a certain season been given up to the control of evil. That takes different forms among different writers. In Job we have a good man surrendered for a limited time to the control of Satan, without any misconduct of his own, but merely for the sake of being tempted. In other cases, a daring man is made to covenant with the Devil for unlimited power and knowledge, and opportunities for pleasure, for which he is to give his soul in exchange. This is the case in the Faustus of Marlowe.

In "Faustus" the ambition of the leading character of the play was for knowledge. One of the superstitions of the Middle Ages was that there were certain occult sciences which were to be known only by those who had made

acquaintance with supernatural agencies. These were all considered to be evil; and thus while men feared those who had attained to such familiarity, at the same time they regarded them as destined to be wholly lost to happiness in the next world. Such a character as Faustus was well suited to the daring intellect of such a man as Marlowe, and he has drawn him well. There are passages of very great power and a few of much beauty in this play. The final catastrophe when the season of his greatness is over, and the devils come at the appointed time to remove him from the earth, is truly terrific.

The following is a striking passage, being an address to the ghost of Helen, which, summoned by Mephistopheles, appeared before him:

"Was this the face that launched a thousand ships
And burned the topless towers of Ilium?
Sweet Helen, make me immortal with a kiss!
I will be Paris, and for love of thee,
Instead of Troy shall Wittenburg be sacked;
And I will combat with weak Menelaus,
And wear thy colors on my plumed crest:

"Yea, I will wound Achilles in the heel,
And then return to Helen for a kiss.

Oh, thou art fairer than the evening air,
Clad in the beauty of a thousand stars;
Brighter art thou than flaming Jupiter
When he appeared to hapless Semele;
More lovely than the monarch of the sky,
In wanton Arethusa's azured arms."

The "Jew of Malta" is fully equal to "Doctor Faustus." It is a striking illustration of the prejudice and the hatred in which the Israelites had been held for centuries by the Christian world. Barabas is the greatest of the millionaires of Malta, and no man could love money more eagerly, or talk of it with a greater zest. The pride of wealth is well expressed in the following soliloquy after receiving the returns of sales in the far East of his Spanish wines and oils of Greece:

"Fie! what a trouble 'tis to count this trash!
Well fare the Arabians who so richly pay
The things they traffic for with wedge of gold,
Whereof a man may easily in a day
Tell that which may maintain him all his life.
The needy groom that never fingered groat,
Would make a miracle of thus much coin;
But he whose steel-barred coffers are crammed full,
And he who all his lifetime hath been tired
Wearying his fingers' ends with telling it,
Would in his age be loth to labour so;
And for a pound to sweat himself to death.
Give me the merchants of the Indian mines
That trade in metals of the purest mould;

The wealthy Moor that, in the eastern rocks,
Without control can pick his riches up,
And in his house heap pearls like pebble stones
Receive them free, and sell them by the weight:
Bags of fiery opals, sapphires, amethysts,
Jacinths, hard topaz grass-green emeralds,
Beauteous rubies, sparkling diamonds,
And seld-seen costly stones of so great price;
As one of them indifferently rated,
And of a carat of this quantity
May serve in peril of calamity
To ransom great kings from captivity.
This is the ware wherein consists my wealth;
And thus, methinks, should men of judgment frame,
This means of traffic from the vulgar trade
And, as their wealth increaseth, so inclose
Infinite riches in a little room."

While he is enjoying such thoughts, and the power which they impart to inflict suffering upon the Christians, Malta is invaded by the Turks under Selim Calymath, and the Jews are required to contribute half their wealth to the national defense. In addition to this, under pretense that the calamity of war has been sent because of their too great toleration of the unbelieving race, the house of Barabas is seized and converted into a nunnery. In this house is concealed immense treasures of which the authorities have never known. In his anguish Barabas thinks of a plan

to save this portion. He has a young daughter, very beautiful, Abigail, whom he persuades to become a nun. She is thus enabled to save this portion of his treasures. But in this time Don Mathias, one of the Lords, and Ludovic, the Governor's son, have fallen in love with this daughter, who is described as:

"A fair young maid, scarce fourteen years of age,
The sweetest flower in Cytherea's field,
Cropt down the pleasures of this fruitful earth
And strangely metamorphosed to a nun."

Upon the return of prosperity, Abigail quits the convent, and falls in love herself with Don Mathias. Barabas manages to bring about a duel between Don Mathias and Ludovic, in which both are killed. Then Abigail becomes converted in good faith to Christianity, and again takes the veil. This event causes as great grief as was felt upon the loss of his treasures. He curses his daughter, and having poisoned her with all the inmates of the convent, he is himself at last brought to merited punishment. He dies unrelenting and with horrible curses upon his lips.

The passage is very fine in which

Barabas is described as going to the nunnery at night and receiving the jewels which Abigail throws from her window:

"Thus, like the sad pressaging raven, that tolls
The sick man's passport in her hollow beak,
And in the shadow of the silent night
Doth shake contagion from her sable wings;
Vexed and tormented runs poor Barabas
With fatal curses towards these Christians.
The uncertain pleasures of quick-footed time
Have ta'en their flight, and left me in despair;
And of my former riches rests no more
But bare remembrance, like a soldier's scar
That has no further comfort for his main.
O, thou that with a fiery pillar led'st
The sons of Israel through the dismal shades,
Light Abraham's offspring, and direct the hand
Of Abigail this night, or let the day
Turn to eternal darkness after this;
No sleep can fasten on my watchful eyes,
Nor quiet enter my distempered thoughts
Till I have answer of my Abigail.
Now I remember those old women's words,
Who, in my youth, would tell me winter's tales,
And speak of spirits and ghosts that hide by night
About the place where treasure hath been hid;
And now methinks that I am one of those;
For, whilst I live, here lives my soul's sole hope,
And when I die, here shall my spirit walk."

But the greatest of Marlowe's tragedies is "Edward II." This play is founded upon the history of that monarch, and is one of the greatest of all the historical plays. Edward began his

career in the midst of the most favorable circumstances. His heroic father, Edward First, had drawn to himself and his family the love of a united people; and Wales, that had given birth to the young prince at time-honored Cærnarvon, had given in its allegiance. Edward had married the beautiful Isabella of France, and thus secured the prospect of a long career of glory and happiness. But he had not inherited the great qualities of his father. With the strange weakness which has so often visited kings, he attached himself to worthless favorites, Piers Gaveston and the Spencers. Treating with neglect his queen, he finally lost her love, and in an hour, evil for all, she gave herself to Mortimer. Then followed the tragic things of this unhappy reign, the sacrifice of Gaveston, and the Spencers; the dethronement of the king; his murder by the instigation of his queen and her lover; and then the retribution to them both at the hands of the young Edward the Third.

The tracing of all this terrible history is done in a way which is worthy of

the great days of Grecian tragedy. A mighty king surrounded by all the circumstances which make royalty so much an object of desire to men, being led along those high paths which are so dangerous to travel; and failing to choose the best things, and then gradually descending into ruin and despair; all these things are handled by one who shows that he is a master of his art. Gaveston, though wholly destitute of any qualifications of statesmanship, yet was of a gentle family and courtly manners. No favorite ever knew better how to manage a weak master; and to preserve his influence over him. We shall see that he understood human nature and that he had learned how to employ it for all the purposes with which thoroughly selfish courtiers learn it. Gaveston had returned from France. The king, we know, had to go over there not only to espouse Isabella, to whom he had long been engaged, but for the purpose of paying the accustomed homage to the king of France for the Duchy of Guienne, which, though a French province, belonged to the English

crown. Gaveston is vain and insolent in the consciousness of power. See how he proposes to entertain the king:

"I must have wanton poets, pleasant wits,
Musicians that with touching of a string
May draw the pliant king which way I please,
Music and poetry is his delight;
Therefore, I'll have Italian masks by night,
Sweet speeches, comedies, and pleasing shows;
And in the day, when he shall walk abroad,
Like sylvan nymphs pages shall be clad;
My men like satyrs grazing on the lawns,
Shall with their goat-feet dance the antic lay.
Sometime a lovely boy in Dian's shape,
With hair that gilds the water as it glides,
Coronets of pearl above his naked arms,
And in his sportive hands an olive-tree,
To hide those parts which men delight to see,
Shall bathe him in a spring; and there hard by
One like Actæon, peeping through the grove,
Shall by the angry goddess be transformed,
And running in the likeness of a hart
By yelling hounds pulled down, and seem to die:—
Such things as these best please his majesty."

Whoever will read this play carefully will gather a very accurate knowledge of the history of that interesting reign. The drawing of the characters of Mortimer and the queen is most admirable. The shame and grief of Isabella when she discovers that with no fault of her own she has lost the love of her husband, are well described. So are the courage of Mortimer, his disgust for the puerility

of a crowned king, both in the senseless love of a brainless favorite and in his neglect of such a queen, and then his ambition for the regency during the minority of the young heir apparent. It is highly entertaining how pity on his part and gratitude on hers gradually grow into love; and then how a love so unlawful leads to crimes, and renders them cruel and remorseless and savage. That was a most artful stroke of policy which, after Gaveston was exiled, caused him to be recalled in order that he might be murdered. All know the story of his execution by the great Warwick, a name destined to become famous in the putting down and raising up of kings. But when he is executed, the king felt a sense of wrong which made it appear for awhile that he was going to assert the manhood which he ought to have inherited from such an ancestry. Thus he speaks of Warwick and Mortimer:

"By earth, the common mother of us all,
By heaven, and all the moving orbs thereof,
By this right hand and by my father's sword
And all the honours 'longing to the crown,
I will have heads and lives for him as many
As I have manors, castles, towns and towers!
Treacherous Warwick! Traitorous Mortimer!

If I be England's king, in lakes of gore
Your headless trunks, your bodies will I trail,
That you may drink your fill, and quaff in blood
And stain my royal standard with the same;
That so my bloody colors may suggest
Remembrance of revenge immortally
On your accursed traitorous progeny.
You villians that have slain my Gaveston."

Rousing from his pusillanimity he prevails against his enemies for awhile, and Mortimer and Isabella take refuge in France. But they return with a new army and defeat him. Let us see how he bewails his lot among the monks with whom he has sought a sanctuary, and who he fears will betray him:

" Father, thy face should harbor no deceit,
Oh, hadst thou ever been a king, thy heart
Buried deeply with sense of my distress,
Could not but take compassion on my state;
Stately and proud in riches and in train,
Whilom I was powerful and full of pomp
But what is he whom rule and empery
Have not in life and death made miserable?
Come Spencer; come Baldock, come sit down by
me;
Make trial now of that philosophy
That in our famous nurseries of arts
Thou suck'st from Plato and from Aristotle.
Father, this life contemplative in heaven;
Oh! that I might this life in quiet lead!"

The history of the world affords no instance of a greater fall; or greater

suffering of a king than in the case of Edward the Second. The very consciousness of guilt in Mortimer and and the queen lead them to invent the most exquisite pains of body and mind for him to undergo. With wonderful tenacity he, whose guilty soul dreads the eternal world, clings to life in the deep mud and water of the dungeon of Killingsworth Castle, where he has been imprisoned. The horrors of that imprisonment have been described in a manner that no man has ever surpassed, and, as for the relation of the end of the miserable king, Charles Lamb said with truth that in horror it has no equal.

Such were some of the things done by this young man when at twenty-nine years of age his career came to its tragic end. One night in Deptford, a suburb of London, while engaged at a drinking place in strife with a rival for the love of a low woman, he was stabbed with his own knife which his opponent, seizing his hand, turned against him.

Rude and wretched as were lives of

such men they were made so more by accidental conditions than individual native depravity. History has not yet told a full true tale of the times of her whom some styled Great Eliza and others Good Queen Bess. With gifts and culture that ought to have made her a model for society to be guided by, her manners were oftimes as coarse as her tyranny was audacious. She not only cursed and swore, but cuffed the heads of noble men and women, and, basest of all indignities this, spat in their faces. She loved poetry and poets and was often tempted, even as she repeatedly promised to reward them at least for the laudations they bestowed upon her. Expectations allowed and afterwards disappointed broke the hearts of Spencer and Lyly, and others, while many, hopeless and defiant, were driven to lead disorderly lives and be easily overtaken of death.

Then that English public in the defeat and persecution of the religious faith of their forefathers, while devising others of many sorts, partly from

ignorance, partly from fanaticism, partly from envy, and much also by a hypocrisy suddenly and strangely born, turned against these naturally gentle spirits that from all time had mainly constituted the teaching element in states, and without remorse or pity saw them humbled, cast out, living in want and falling into early graves.

V.

BEN JONSON: "Every Man in His Humour;" "Cynthia's Revels;" Sejanus;" "Catiline;" "Volpone;" "The Alchemist;" "The Staple of News;" "The Devil Is an Ass;" "The Sad Shepherd."

IT is surely a disadvantage in one respect to live cotemporary with a genius that towers undisputably over all others. This was one which gave to him, whom we are now to consider, much pain in his own day, and possibly served somewhat to hamper efforts which, but for Shakespeare, whom he regarded his principal rival, might have had more brilliant results. Ben Jonson was born in Westminster in 1574, ten years after Shakespeare. His father had been a poor clergyman, and the family had come from Scotland. The father died, it seems, before Ben was born, and his mother, being without the means of supporting her family, married, within a year after the birth of her

son, a bricklayer. The boy went to a private school near St. Martin's in the Fields and afterwards, by the liberality of a friend whose name we do not know, was sent to Westminster school, and later procured a place in Cambridge. But he remained there only for a short period. It is supposed that the extreme poverty of his parents needed him for business. But he had been a devoted student while at Westminster school, and under the learned Camden, who was one of the masters of that institution, had acquired a vast amount of learning for one so young. Being put by his stepfather to his own business, he soon became disgusted with it; and, finding no other means of escape, ran away and joined the army, a portion of which was then engaged in the Low Countries. A brave and gallant soldier he made indeed; and was full of ambition for promotion. But in the English army, as nowhere else, it is exceedingly difficult to rise without connections or strong recommendations, or with such extraordinary military talent as would render one's rise unavoidable. After

one campaign he quit the occupation of a soldier and returned to London. The vocations of young men as poor as Jonson was then are seldom undertaken by choice. Circumstances determine them, and it is to these circumstances, which often seemed truly accidental, that we are to ascribe some of the greatest things that have been done in the world. This poor young man, having thus tried two vocations, one of which disgusted him and the other could bring him no hope of promotion, determined at length to go upon the stage. To young men without family connections and without pecuniary means and therefore with the thought of having nothing or not much to lose, there is something very tempting in the idea of going upon the stage. The display of what is to be seen there, the footlights, the array of pleasant faces, the appearance of mirth, and freedom from care; all these lead many there at least for a time, and when they have once gotten there it is seldom that they come away. Jonson would have gone to anything honorable, except brick-laying, that

would have wrought him a living. A new impulse had been given to the theatre by the company at Blackfriars, with Shakespeare at the head of the main parts of the business. So he went upon the stage. He does not seem to have done anything in this new sphere worthy to be mentioned, except two things which are not naturally associated with it. The first of these is that having gotten into a quarrel with a brother actor, a duel ensued in which he killed his adversary, and was for some time imprisoned. Quite as serious a thing as this, he fell in love with a girl as poor as himself, and before either of them could take the time to reflect upon the absurdity of such a thing, they married. If he had not been a poor actor he might never have become an author. But now having to support a wife, and children afterwards, and seeing the success of Shakespeare in that line, and being a man of far superior education to him, he began to write as much for bread as for fame.

No doubt Shakespeare contributed in giving this determination to his course.

He did assist in bringing out his first play, "Every Man in His Humour." This took its name from a work which had but lately appeared in England, and created much interest. It was a translation of a work called "Examen de Ingenios" in Spanish, whose object it was to maintain that men's characters and dispositions, and consequently most of their actions, depended upon the humours in their systems, the moist, the dry, the hot and the cold. It was from a sort of fancy to ridicule the current belief in that system that Jonson brought out his first play and gave to it the name of "Every Man in His Humour." He was then twenty-two years old and had a wife and two children. Fortunately for him his wife was one of the domestic kind, and having always lived on a little, could make a little, now that she had two children, go a good way farther. If he had allowed her the complete control of his pecuniary matters possibly it would have been well for both, but he was a poor manager and a willful man, and it was often whispered outside the family that she

was something of a shrew. This comedy succeeded very finely, and he set out at once upon a full career of authorship.

And now let us consider the effect upon him of much education in books. It was fortunate that at this era, when there was much needed a dramatic literature suited to modern civilization, the genius that was to be the father of it had not been educated in the schools, and therefore trammeled by precedents. Shakespeare being thus unrestrained was the more able to strike out in the bold paths which he made. Now Jonson fell into this error which Shakespeare was thus able to avoid. His education at school and at the University, and his studies afterwards, had made him a pedant; and the rivalry which he felt for Shakespeare helped to make him more of a pedant. Shakespeare's irregular dramas he never could endure, and he believed that the only reason why Shakespeare had written them was because, not having been educated like himself, he did not know any better. These old rules of dramatic composition, he believed, ought never to be

altered; they were the very perfection of art. For the romantic drama he not only had no fancy, but he hated it. But he succeeded in this first drama, and although his success gave no pain to Shakespeare, yet it did give pain and offense to the other contemporary dramatists, Marston, Lodge, etc., who could not endure that so young a man should out-strip them in the race for popular fame. The result was a series of endless disputes and literary quarrels which endured for many years. But Jonson was quite superior to all of these. Only Shakespeare was ahead of him. And how this occurred he was never able to understand, nor become reconciled to it. He would be constantly asking himself, and often other persons, how such a man as Shakespeare who knew little Latin and less Greek, and who paid almost no attention to Sophocles and Aristophanes and Menander and Terence, could find such favor. Instead of following the laws of these great writers, or at least endeavoring to do so as far as was possible, he wrote along as if they were not in the slightest

degree in his way. He not only mingled the incidents of several days in the same play, but those of several weeks and months, and even, as in the Winter's Tale, of several years. And then he even introduced the sportive into his tragedies, a thing that was wholly inconsistent with all precedent. He and Shakespeare used often to argue these questions at the club. This was at the Mermaid Tavern. It was called the Apollo. The "Mermaid" on Friday Street was a famous place for good eating. The members were himself, Shakespeare, Cotton, Carew, Donne, Beaumont, Fletcher, and others.

Thomas Fuller, in his book called "The Worthies of England," tells us that in this tavern Jonson and Shakespeare used to have many "wit combats," as he terms them.

"Many" he says, "were the wit combats between him and Ben Jonson, which two I behold like a Spanish great galleon, and an English man-of-war. Master Jonson, like the former, was built far higher in learning, solid, but slow in performance, while the English man-of-war, lesser in bulk, but lighter

in sailing, could turn with all tides, tack about and take advantage of all winds by the quickness of his wit and invention."

This was the burden of these discussions. We know that the attacks came from Jonson, and that he warred upon the innovations which Shakespeare made upon what he considered sacred. It was this very rivalry doubtless which made Jonson, who had a very combative spirit, disposed, as the contest grew, to adhere more closely to classical forms.

Yet there never was any actual hostility between him and Shakespeare such as there was between him and the lesser dramatists. For while Shakespeare himself was incapable of envy, and indeed must have felt himself to be too great to stand in need of envying any other person, Jonson, on the other hand, from the very peculiar bent of his mind and the nature of his education, honestly considered himself superior to Shakespeare, and in these "wit combats," as Fuller calls them, tried to recall him from his wanderings, and fix him in the true road to great-

ST. MARY'S COLLEGE OAKLAND, CAL.

ness. The two were personally friendly. William Rowe says that their acquaintance began with the first introduction of "Every Man in His Humour." Jonson handed it in to one of the players to be read, and he, having turned it over carelessly, was about to throw it aside, when Shakespeare happening to see it, read it, and recommended the author to the public. The presentation of this comedy was received with great popularity. When such a piece of good fortune happens to a man like Jonson, who has been needing it not only for the gratification of his self-esteem, but for bread, he is apt to esteem it too highly. Heretofore, he had been upon friendly terms with Marston and Dekker, and their likes. Together they had been struggling along that weary road, and had sympathized with one another in the midst of the difficulties of authorship. But now this splendid success made the young author treat his old companions with supercilliousness, and even disdain. Pedantic, highly irascible, he must make enemies of old

friends; and although he and they did some things in common afterwards, they were never fully reconciled.

"Every Man in His Humour" was followed by "Every Man Out of His Humour." There might be something in the name, and but a slight change was made in that of the next "child of his invention." This also was successful; but not quite so much so as the first. In this second comedy Jonson followed too closely upon the Latin and Greek comedies, which we remember to have been more satirical than humorous. It represents the meanness of the world rather than its pardonable foibles, and tends instead of exciting our laughter, to provoke our contempt and even our hatred. Jonson's reputation had become so great that the queen had made known her intention to be present at the first appearance of the play. In acknowledgment of this condescension he appended an epigram which, for gross flattery, can scarcely find its equal. This was in 1599. Shakespeare afterwards performed his third piece, "Cynthia's Rev-

els," far inferior to the others. The best play was the "Poetaster." By this time he had been converted to the classical drama fully and in this he made a personal satire upon his enemies. Marston and Dekker are the characters intended in this drama under the names of Crispinus and Demetrius. He also satirized the soldiers and the lawyers to such a degree that he very narrowly escaped prosecution. Finding himself liable to such serious difficulties in comedy, and that his powers in that line, so far as he could judge by the public estimate, did not improve, he formally announced to the world that his next appearance should be in tragedy. In 1603 appeared his first real tragedy. This was "Sejanus." This subject was well chosen. Sejanus, the ambitious minister of Tiberius, who rose so high and then suddenly fell so low, was a fitting subject for tragedy upon the old models. This is indeed a very great production. The author was fully acquainted with all the history of that fearful reign, and in a masterly way represented the striking scenes.

The play was first brought out at the Globe theatre, and Shakespeare took a part in it. This was in 1603; and this is the last time in which we know certainly that Shakespeare ever appeared as an actor. The piece succeeded fully. It has its own share of the majesty of the ancient drama, and in the portrayal of characters it is excellent. But in this last respect he had but to follow history.

And this is the principal objection not only to this but also to his only other tragedy, "Catiline," that he too closely follows history. They are versifications and dramatizations of Sallust and Tacitus. The speeches that are given are almost the speeches as they are written by these historians. Jonson had genius enough to rise far higher than he did, if his learning, and the pedantry which it created, had not narrowed his judgment. His very vanity and his irascible temper but made him the more obdurate and persistent in this devotion to a system which was obsolete, but which he thought to restore, and had no doubt that he would

be able to do so. A vain man never gives up the belief that as everybody else is wrong, so he will be able after due time to convince them of their error and reclaim them. We can well imagine the different tempers with which he and Shakespeare would discuss these questions at the "Mermaid." How infinitely superior Jonson thought the "Sejanus" was to "Julius Cæsar," for instance, or what a poor speech that of Mark Anthony over the dead body of Cæsar, to Cæsar's speech in behalf of Catiline, which the author, as it were, had translated from the incomparable Sallust! Shakespeare, caring nothing for the criticisms so as his plays continued to be well received by the public, would doubtless keep in good humor, although possibly, when Jonson would grow too personal in talking about the unities and the chorus, he might request him to go to Guinea or some such place, and carry his chorus and unities along with him. Finally, the principal defect of these tragedies is that they are wanting in pathos without which tragedy, however

exalted in style and however successful in the delineation of character, is insufficient to produce the great objects for which it was originated — sympathy with misfortune. In reading Jonson's tragedies, we are filled with admiration for his fine descriptions, his noble language, and even for his successful delineations of character; but we never feel like shedding tears, which are the highest compensation and the sweetest pleasure that we ever receive from the perusal in this form of the crimes and sorrows of mankind.

Jonson wrote only these two tragedies. But he probably spent as much time upon these as Shakespeare spent upon any half dozen of his. Thinking that he must be perfectly acquainted with every circumstance, little and great, in the actions he was to represent, he elaborated and studied with an amount of patience and work which would have been sufficient for a full history of them in all their particulars.

After this Jonson devoted himself in the intervals of his leisure again to

comedy. Three of these appeared in succession: "Volpone;" "The Silent Woman;" and the "Alchemist," all having very high merit. "Volpone" and the "Alchemist" are allowed to be his best. The scenes of "Volpone" are laid in France. The leading character is Volpone a powerful noble, rich, selfish and fond of pleasures, but most fond of those that are forbidden. To this Volpone is attached one of the most cunning and unprincipled of knaves named Mosca, whose business it is to minister to his master's appetites. Volpone is a bachelor, and his most subtle trick to increase his influence and his wealth is the prevalence of the notion that he is a great invalid, and, as he is expected to die soon, through Mosca he disseminates the idea that he intends to bequeath his estate to those who are the most liberal in bestowing presents upon him while he lives. Whoever has read much of the classical dramas will see at once the resemblance between this comedy and them, the miser being a favorite character. Speaking to Mosca, Volpone says:

"Good morning to the day; and next my gold!
Open the shrine that I may see my saint,
Hail the world's soul and mine! more glad than is
The teeming earth to see the longed-for sun
Peep through the horns of the celestial Ram;
Am I to view thy splendor darkening his,
That, lying here, amongst my other hoards,
Should like a flame by night, or like the day
Struck out of chaos, when all darkness fled
Into the centre. O thou son of Sol,
But brighter than thy father, let me kiss
With adoration thee, and every relic
Of sacred treasure in this blessed room.
Well did wise poets by thy glorious name,
Title that age which thou would have the best,
Thou being the best of things and far transcending
All style of joy in children, parents, friends,
Or any other waking dream on earth:
Thy looks when they to Venus did ascribe,
They should have given her twenty thousand Cupids;
Such are thy beauties and our loves! Dear Saint,
Riches, the dumb god, that givest all men tongues,
Thou canst do naught, and yet maketh men do all things;
The price of souls, even hell, with thee to boot,
Is made worth heaven. Thou art virtue, fame,
Honour, and all things else. Who can get thee,
He shall be noble, valiant, honest, wise—
Yet I glory
More in the cunning purchase of my wealth,
Than in the glad possession, since I gain
No common way; I use no trade, no venture;
I wound no earth with ploughshares, fat no beasts,
To feed the shambles; have no mills for iron,
Oil, corn, or men to grind them into powder.
I blow no subtle glass, expose no ships
To threatenings of the furrow-faced sea,
I turn no moneys in the public bank,
Nor usure private."

There is very much more of this sort wherein the author has drawn perhaps the most cunning, ruthless scoundrel to be found in all poetic literature. A man need go no further in order to find human nature in its worst and most contemptible aspect than in "Volpone."

The "Alchemist" is another powerful production. In that also we have another batch of precious rascals. The leading rogues are Subtle, the conjuror; and Face, his co-partner, who is a butler, but in the disguise of a captain. The principal dupes are Dapper, a lawyer's clerk addicted to gambling, and Sir Epicure Mammon, a poor fool who is in search of the philosopher's stone and the elixir of youth. This visionary idea of the philosopher's stone was quite common even among educated men a little before this period, and the object of this drama was to bring it into ridicule. True to his principles to study all the learning that was to be had upon whatever subject he wrote about, Jonson, before writing this play, made himself acquainted with the entire theory of the philosopher's stone, and even

learned the whole of the jargon of alchemy.

I said that he wrote these little plays in the intervals of business, for he was made poet laureate to King James I., and as such he had to prepare and superintend the masques and other pageants of the court. To give one instance of the meanness of this, the meanest of kings, Marston and Chapman had written a comedy called "Eastward Hoe!" and Jonson was thought, though he afterwards denied it, to have assisted in this drama. In it there was an allusion to the Scotch, in which they were somewhat ridiculed. The king, having heard of the piece, imprisoned both Marston and Chapman. Jonson, however, voluntarily accompanied them to prison in order to share their punishment, and it was probably through his participation and his interest that they were enlarged. He was well paid by King James, who, in this respect, was more liberal than Elizabeth. On the death of the king he lost his position, and as he had saved nothing of the

earnings of years, he was very poor. Add to this the fact that he was old, and that his faculties of mind and body had become impaired by lingering too long at the wine of the "Mermaid." He had now to write again for bread; but the youthful vigor was gone, and his comedies henceforth were failures. "The Staple of News," "The Devil Is an Ass," "The New Sun," "The Magnetic Lady," "The Tale of a Tub," are all quite inferior to the average of his earlier dramas. It is melancholy to know how the brave-hearted old man thus struggled and struggled in vain with poverty and the infirmities of age. He deserves praise in that he was brave and faithful to the principles in which he believed. The votary of the muse of olden times, he kept her shrine as well as he could in the days of a new and adverse worship, and was true to her to the last. In his delineation of individual character, he was preëminently great. His comedies have been justly called the "Comedies of Character." He represented contemporary manners and characters. In this he was superior to Shakespeare;

but Shakespeare was his superior even in this phase of the same idea, that he represented the things appertaining to men and women that are unusual, and that belong to them of all times and all countries. The genial humor, the all-sidedness of Shakespeare he never had, and the peculiarity of his mind was such that he never could have obtained them, because according to his education and his ideas they were of no value, so variant were they from old modes which his deep learning and his deeper prejudices prevented him from finding to be obsolete.

One of the most beautiful productions in poetry is the last thing that he wrote. This is "The Sad Shepherd." The aged, broken, disappointed poet seemed to have mustered the scattered and broken pieces of his genius for this last work.

The minor works of Jonson have many beauties and other excellencies. These are found in his lyrics, epigrams, etc. The ode to Celia, beginning "Drink to me only with thine eyes," patterned after some of the love

letters of Philostratos, has not been surpassed in favor by any in that or subsequent periods. All lovers of music are familiar with it, and all singers have sought, and most of them have failed, to render it fitly in song.

VI.

BEAUMONT AND FLETCHER: "Philaster;" "The Maid's Tragedy;" PHILIP MASSINGER: "The Renegado;" "The Fatal Dowry;" "The City Madam;" "A New Way to Pay Old Debts;" "The Virgin Martyr."

BEAUMONT AND FLETCHER: a partnership in literature. To us this seems strange. It is curious that two men should thus have been united in the productions which come exclusively from the exertions of that invisible and subtle thing, the human imagination. How are two of these agencies, especially in the field of pure fancy, to compare their separate thoughts and images and combine them into one harmonious picture? Yet this partnership was not very strange in that day. "Eastward Hoe!" was the joint production of Marston and Dekker with some little investment in it by Ben Jonson. Such connections were very common in individual plays. That of

Beaumont and Fletcher and their extraordinary abilities served to make them more distinguished than the rest in this particular. It was one founded, however, as much upon mutual regard as upon the other reasons for which such relations are sometimes established. The most of such connections were purely of a business character. The poorest and most unhappy men that have lived in this world probably have been those who were authors by profession, and of these, with a few exceptions, dramatic authors have been the poorest and most unhappy. The men who wrote dramas in the times which we are considering wrote for bread. The fellow feeling of poverty and misery, and the hope of being able to accomplish more by combining forces than exerting them separately, would often draw together two, and sometimes three, into a partnership which might be limited to one or three plays. and the proceeds of their sales divided like the profits of any other business. This last motive, however, it is probable, had nothing or not much to do with the

union of Beaumont and Fletcher, at least with the former, who, it was said, inherited an estate sufficient to support him.

The difference in the dates of the births of these two friends is usually set down as ten years, though one of their biographers, Dyce, fixes it at five. But the date usually assigned to Fletcher is 1576 and to Beaumont 1586. It is certain, however, that the younger man died ten years before the elder. Therefore most of the works which appear over their joint names were written by Fletcher.

John Fletcher was the son of Doctor Richard Fletcher, afterwards Bishop of London. The most notorious thing recorded of his father, who was as time-serving a prelate as lived in that age, was his importunate attempt in the morning of the execution of Mary Queen of Scots, to convert her to the Protestant Church. His reward for this insult, heartless under the circumstances, was his elevation by Elizabeth to the see of Bristol.

Francis Beaumont was the son of one

of the judges of the Court of Common Pleas. Both were educated at Cambridge. Fletcher had written two plays, "The Woman Hater" and "Thiery," before he and Beaumont formed that connection which continued during their joint lives. Beaumont had been intended for his father's profession, and was for awhile a student of the Inner Temple. But an intimacy sprang up between him and Fletcher and never was a closer between two men. They occupied the same room, wore each other's clothes and slept together until Beaumont's marriage. Even this fact did not interfere with their literary partnership.

After the accession of Beaumont to literature, they in good time produced their first play, "Philaster, or Love Lies Bleeding." The preceding works of Fletcher had been unsuccessful, and it is thought that Beaumont had written some plays which were equally so. But the appearance of "Philaster" showed that the new firm, whatever they may have been individually, were destined, when joined, to make a brilliant career.

Contemporary with the British drama, that in Spain had begun its rise, and, next to the British, was destined to be the richest in Europe. That of the other European countries had not recovered from the bonds of the ancient classical rules. Shakespeare in England, and Calderon and Lope de Vega in Spain, had first and contemporaneously broken these bonds and started the romantic drama, on the basis suited in each to the civilizations of their several countries. Beaumont and Fletcher had studied the Spanish drama. Being both men of education, they had each become well acquainted with those new ideas which Calderon and Lope de Vega had introduced into the literature of Spain. These were to represent everyday life. This drama was called "Capa y Espada" (the drama of the Cap and Sword).

There is a peculiar tinge of romance in the literature of Spain, which was imparted by the Saracens, who, for a long time, occupied the southern part of it, and who, at that time, were the most cultivated people in Europe. No peo-

ple are as fond of adventure, surprising denouements, and intrigue, as the Spaniards. Beaumont and Fletcher imported these ideas into the British drama.

There is comparatively little of intrigue in the comedies of Shakespeare. One can usually foresee, soon after the opening, how they are to end. Many of them are purely fanciful. In those where there is an invention, even this gives place to the author's main object, the creation of distinct and individual characters. Ben Jonson also, as we have seen, wrote comedies of character, but there is little of intrigue in them. On the other hand, those of Beaumont and Fletcher are comedies of intrigue. Not purely so, for, like Jonson, being both well educated men, they were fond of the classical, and in their works are evidences of a disposition to observe the unities. With Beaumont Jonson was very intimate, and he condescended sometimes to consult him in arranging his plots. Thus both Beaumont and Fletcher used to describe in smooth phrase whatever was exalted, and especially whatever was tender and

pathetic. But the distinctive quality of their dramas is the pleasure that arises from the conduct of subtle intrigues and the leading of them to an unexpected development.

It was a singular freak of fortune that the plays of these two very young men, who were not so sorely in need, should have had a better run than those of their contemporaries, whose daily bread depended upon the success of theirs. But pleasure-seeking people like to see cheerfulness in those who undertake to minister to their enjoyment. And indeed few things must be so difficult as for a man to make merriment, when the consciousness is ever about him that if he fail, he and those he loves best must be hungry and cold. In reading Beaumont and Fletcher one can see the evidences of a sense of leisure and security. Their pleasant scenes are arranged with all the order and nicety which a cheerful spirit employs in planning an entertainment which he foresees is going to please all who are to be invited. These plays, therefore, became soon the favorites of

the stage, on which they were far more popular for a time, than Shakespeare's.

There was another reason for this popularity, not very complimentary to the morals or the tastes of our ancestors. That was the frequent indecencies which they carried. Two reasons may be given for the immoral employment of these indecencies. First: The bad examples of the Spanish drama. Suspicions and infidelities in Spanish life, represented so to nature in the dramas of that language, were too tempting to such men to be resisted by them. But a more convincing reason was this: The sentiment of Puritanism, as it was derisively called, had been growing with wondrous rapidity in England. The more the Puritans were divided among themselves, the more separate and numerous and strong and hostile they became to the adherents of the Established Church. Their hostility was evinced in nothing more than in the admonitions that were given to the theatres. Such a hostility had its natural effect upon both. The more the Puritans inveighed against the immoralities of the stage,

the more indecent the stage must become. The best jests that could be made against the enemies of the stage were those which made the subject-matters of their complaint the more pertinent and offensive. This was the beginning of that long career of cant and hypocrisy on one side, and ribaldry and infidelity on the other, in which true piety seemed destined to perish.

I said that the first joint production of these poets was "Philaster." This ranks among the best. The scenes are laid in Sicily. The heroine is Arethusa. We know at once from this name that the poets are familiar with ancient mythology, and that they have followed the nymph of Diana in her flight from Alpheus, the river god in Elis, and across the Sicilian Sea. Arethusa is the daughter of the king of Sicily, who is in love with and is loved by Philaster, a native prince and the rightful heir to the throne. But her father has destined her for a Spanish prince, Pharamond. Delicacy is a fine thing in woman, and generally speaking it does not look well for her

to avow her love until she is asked. But circumstances alter cases. When a fine young lover is devoted to a young woman, who knows without doubt that he would gladly marry her if he could, but is restrained from attempting it because he feels certain that he could not, she might even, out of compassion for him, tell him to try it. But Arethusa was a princess, and Philaster was without power, although well beloved by the people. King's daughters must be allowed greater privileges than other women; and if they are not they will take them. So this princess, not like her namesake, who was averse to matrimony, sends for Philaster and this is the conversation which they hold:

Philaster — Madam, your messenger
Made me believe you wished to speak with me.
Arethusa—'Tis true, Philaster; but the words are
Such I have to say, and do so ill beseem
The mouth of woman, that I wish them said,
And yet am loath to speak them. Have you
Known that I have aught detracted from your worth?
Have I in person wrong'd you? or have set
My baser instruments to throw disgrace
Upon your virtues?
Philaster—Never, Madam, you?

Arethusa—Why, then, should you, in such a public place,
Injure a princess, and a scandal lay
Upon my fortunes, fam'd to be so great,
Calling a great part of my dowry in question?
Philaster—Madam, this truth which I shall speak will be
Foolish; but for your fair and virtuous self,
I could afford myself to have no right
To anything you wished.
Arethusa—Philaster know
I must enjoy these kingdoms.
Philaster—Madam, both?
Arethusa—Both, or I die; by fate I die, Philaster,
If I not calmly may enjoy them both.
Philaster—I would do much to save that noble life:
Yet would be loath to have posterity
Find in our stories, that Philaster gave
His right unto a sceptre and a crown
To save a lady's longing.
Arethusa—Nay then, hear:
I must and will have them, and more—
Philaster—What more?
Arethusa—Or lose that little life the gods prepar'd
To trouble this poor piece of earth withal.
Philaster—Madam, what more?
Arethusa—Turn then away thy face.
Philaster—No.
Arethusa—Do.
Philaster—I can endure it. Turn away my face!
I never yet saw enemy that look'd
So dreadfully, but that I thought myself
As great a basilisk as he; or spake
So horribly, but that I thought my tongue
Bore thunder underneath, as much as his;
Nor beast that I could turn from: Shall I then
Begin to fear sweet sounds? a lady's voice,
Whom I do love? Say, you would have my life;
Why, I will give it you; for 'tis of me
A thing so loath'd, and unto you that ask
Of so poor use, that I shall make no price:
If you entreat, I will unmov'dly hear.

Arethusa—Yet, for my sake, a little bend thy looks.
Philaster—I do.
Arethusa—Then know, I must have them and thee
Philaster—And me?
Arethusa—Thy love; without which all the land
Discovered yet will serve me for no use
But to be buried in.
Philaster—Is't possible?
Arethusa—With it, it were too little to bestow
On thee. Now, though thy breath do strike me dead,
(Which, know, it may), I have unwript my breast.
Philaster — Madam, you are too full of noble thoughts
To lay a train for this contemned life
Which you may have for asking: to suspect
Were base, where I deserve no ill. Love you!
By all my hopes I do, above my life!
But how this passion should proceed from you
So violently, would amaze a man
That would be jealous.
Arethusa—Another soul into my body shot
Could not have fill'd me with more strength and spirit
Than this thy breath. But spend not hasty time.
In seeking how I came thus; 'tis the gods,
The gods, that make me so; and, sure, our love
Will be the nobler and the better blest,
In that the secret justice of the gods
Is mingled with it. Let us leave and kiss;
Lest some unwelcome guest should fall betwixt us,
And we should part without it.

Bellario is a girl in boy's apparel, which she has assumed in order to be near Philaster, whom she loves. There is an amount of plot and numerous escapes and astonishing developments in this play which would satisfy all those most fond of such things. Philaster and Arethusa succeed at last in their love, and Bellario is

very well satisfied with being their servant. Bellario became a most popular and famous character. She is the prototype of that class of females whom we meet throughout our subsequent dramatic literature, who, loving beyond their hopes, put on boy's clothes, and follow their lovers into all sorts of places and through all sorts of adventures. They are always unfortunate in their loves, and distinguished for the most unselfish coöperation with their lover's efforts to marry somebody else.

These men continued to write together for ten years until 1616, when Beaumont died. In this time Beaumont wrote two plays separately and Fletcher four, and they jointly wrote twenty-four. After Beaumont's death Fletcher wrote, in the ten years he survived his friend, twenty alone and ten in connection with other dramatists.

Among their joint productions one of the most celebrated is "The Maid's Tragedy." Aspasia is the heroine. These men doubtless had read Thucydides, and knew of the weakness of the great Pericles for the fair Samian woman, Aspasia.

The noble Amintor is betrothed to Aspasia, but he, for the sake of political promotion, abandons her for Evadne, the sister of the general Melantius. The pictures made of Aspasia's grief are very touching. In the following she counsels her maids, Olympias and Antiphila:

Aspasia—"Did you ne'er love, wenches? Speak Olympias:
Thou hast an easy temper, fit for stamp.
Olympias—Never.
Aspasia—Nor you, Antiphila?
Antiphila—Nor I.
Aspasia—Then, my good girls, be more than women, wise;
At least be more than I was; and be sure
You credit anything the light gives light to,
Before a man. Rather believe the sea
Weeps for the ruined merchant, when he roars:
Rather, the wind courts but the fragrant sails,
When the strong cordage cracks; rather the sun
Comes but to kiss the fruit in wealthy autumn,
When all falls blasted. If you needs must love,
(Forced by ill fate) take to your maiden bosoms
Two dead-cold aspics, and of them make lovers:
They cannot falter, nor forswear. One kiss
Makes a long peace for all. But man—
Come, lets be sad, my girls.
That down-cast of thine eye, Olympias,
Shows a fine sorrow. Mark, Antiphila,
Just such another was the nymph Œnone
When Paris brought home Helen. Now a tear;
And then thou art a piece expressing fully
The Carthage queen, when from a cold sea-rock
Full with her sorrow, she tied fast her eyes
To the fair Trojan ships, and, having lost them,
Just as thine eyes do, down stole a tear."

They were two highly gifted men. Birth and other accidents had given to them acquaintance with the habits and the witty and meaningless thrusts and repartees of courtiers not possessed even by Shakespeare. Then they knew of the better things in courtiers, their sincere loves and sore disappointments. It is curious how pathetic they can be at times; how tender and delicate; and then how soon they fall into indecencies, even obscenities. It seems a pity that they were such time-servers. The divine right of kings is shown to be one of their worships. The scene in the "Maid's Tragedy," where Amintor, having led Evadne into the bridal chamber, finds that she is the king's paramour, and himself chosen by him to be known abroad as the ostensible father of her offspring, is the very incarnation of intensest grief. Yet, his submission when he finds that it is the king who has wronged him makes a case of passive obedience too gross to be credited of one who has in his being even the smallest element of manhood.

These men only dallied with the

emotions which they were well capable of portraying in their best, legitimate exercise, and preferred to trifle with, instead of treating with reverence, the things by which good men are ennobled. They held the stage until the time came when the necessity of cleaning it was apparent to all eyes, and then they were relegated to the silence to which long ago they should have been consigned.

The last to be considered in this series is Philip Massinger, who, except in the matter of poverty and suffering, was unlike any of the preceding. His is one of the saddest among the many sad lives of poets. His father for many years was an employee in the family of Pembroke, at whose seat, Wilton, the son spent the years of his childhood, and, as it was conjectured by some, acted as page to the countess, and had for his god-father, Sir Philip Sidney. Entered at St. Alban's Hall, Oxford, in 1602, in 1606 he suddenly left without a degree. It was said that this was owing to the fact of his becoming a convert to the Catholic faith. His

father had died not long before, and so had the old earl. His son and successor, William Herbert (the "W. H." to whom Shakespeare's sonnets were dedicated), although a generous, even munificent patron, could not brook such conduct, and the youth was left to his own resources. Such a change in faith during that period was as if the convert was dead, or, what was worse, become leprous.

Little is known of Massinger thenceforth. He seems to have lived, as much as possible, apart from such as Peele and Greene, and Marlowe, by whose excesses, and especially whose impiety, his sensitive, serious, religious nature was shocked beyond endurance. These he had to meet sometimes, even frequently, for the purpose of conference upon their joint productions. For, although not as extensive as that between Beaumont and Fletcher, connections were among these others. It seemed to be necessary for them to have much to do in common in order to help and be helped in a work of all others most inadequately paid for.

The price for a play then amounted

to a little over twenty dollars, often not as much, and when we consider how many of these must have been rejected, we can form an idea of how precarious must have been the lives of playwrights, and how the fellow feeling of neglect and want served to bring them together in coöperative endeavors. Few things could be more pathetic than the following appeal by Massinger and some of his humble friends to Hinchlow, a stage manager, which will tend to show how miserable and poor were professional authors generally:

"To our most loving friend, Mr. Philip Hinchlow, Esquire, these:

Mr. Hinchlow:—You understand our unfortunate extremitie, and I do not thinke you so void of Christianitie, but that you would throw so much money into the Thames as wee request now of you, rather than endanger so many innocent lives. You know there is £ X more at least to be received of you for the play. We desire you to lend us £5 of that; which shall be allowed to you, without which we cannot be bayled, nor I play any more till this be dispatched. It will lose you £ XX ere the end of next week, besides the hindrance

of the next new play. Pray, sir, our cases with humanity, and now give us cause to acknowledge you our true friend in time of neede. Wee have entreated Mr. Davison to deliver this note as well to witness your love as our promises, and always acknowledgment to be ever,

Your most thankful and loving friends

(NAT FIELD).

"The money shall be abated out of the money remaynes for the play of Mr. Fletcher and ours." Signed by Robert Du Borne; and the following by Massinger:—"I have ever found you a true loving friend to mee, and in soe small a suite, it being honest, I hope you will not fail us. PHILIP MASSINGER."

The most of the earlier works of Massinger were lost, and in a very curious way. These works, together with forty other plays of different authors, were placed in the care of Warburton, the herald, to keep. He turned them over to his cook, and the latter, in order to save her master the expense of buying paper with which to cover the pies that were daily baked for dinner, employed these manuscripts for that purpose. When Warburton called for

them, they were found to have been baked with the pies and used to stop the holes in the kitchen windows. The following were among those lost in this way: "Minerva's Sacrifice, or the Forced Lady;" "The Noble Choice, or the Orator;" "The Wandering Lovers, or The Painter;" "Philerezo and Hippolita;" "Antonio and Vallia;" "The Tyrant;" and "Fast and Welcome." In connection with Fletcher he wrote many others. The earliest of those that have been preserved is the "Virgin Martyr," a tragedy. The scenes are laid in Cæsarea and founded upon the persecutions of the Christians in the reign of the Emperor Diocletian. Then comes the "Old Law," to which Middleton and Rowley contributed. Then the "Unnatural Combat," then "The Bondman." Of the remaining plays, and indeed of all his productions, the most famous are: "The Renegado;" "The Fatal Dowry;" "The City Madam," and "A New Way to Pay Old Debts." Of all these the one that has been acted much the most frequently, and upon the whole has been

the favorite with those who visit the theatre, is the last. The character of Sir Giles Overreach was made famous by Keane, the actor, and has ever since been greatly admired when represented by a man of abilities. In it Edwin Booth did some of his best work.

Massinger stands very nearly on a level with that second rank of dramatists after Shakespeare. Of all these he was the most serious. The eternal struggle with poverty, and even with hunger, weighed down a spirit that was naturally serious. His tragedies are quite superior to his comedies. In pathos he is far superior to Jonson, and in the arrangement of his plots he is often equal to Beaumont and Fletcher. In his comedies it is easy to see the difficulty with which he who was so unhappy could create scenes and words for others' merriment. No writer for the stage was ever more unfitted for the obscenities which comedy then, in order to be fully successful, seemed to need. The merriment which he created came from a mind and heart that could

have no participancy in it. But he must make the merriment or die in jail or perish in a garret, and he therefore dashed off his comedies with a coarseness of language which we know must have disgusted him as much as they disgust us. In spite of their being comedies, there is a vein of seriousness running through them all, which has led to their being called by the name of tragi-comedies.

There are few things which the literary public have more regretted than the destruction of Massinger's early dramas. At the period of the appearance of "The Virgin Martyr," he was nearly forty years old. His plays were quite numerous and in those twenty years of a man's best time, and especially in the ten years from thirty to forty, the greatest efforts of his genius must have been exerted. If we could have those works restored, it is very probable that the judgment of the world would no longer hesitate whether to assign him to the place next above Beaumont and Fletcher and Jonson or next below them.

Of all the early dramatists, Massinger's allusion to religious subjects are the least to be censured. Coarse and obscene indeed he is sometimes, but never profane. The wars with the Puritans made the stage a place where pious men could less and less resort. But Massinger, who was the most serious of all the play writers, abstained from that worst form of incivility — sacrilege.

He remained poor always. He died in 1640. We know almost nothing about his connections with other persons. He seems to have been without family, without friends, and even without acquaintances beyond the small circle of the comedians. Nobody was present at his death. He went to bed one night and was found there dead the next morning. He was buried in St. Mary Overy's Church. The sexton made this entry "March 20, 1639–1640, buried, Philip Massinger — A Stranger." As there was nobody to close his eyes when he died, so there were none to weep when he was buried. The poor comedians went along to help in that last business;

but they had their own sorrows, and some of them thought, probably, that Massinger, now lying so quiet under the little church, might be better off than themselves.

Massinger, as a playwright, has always been regarded among the highest. He was particularly happy in introductions that served to engage interested attention from the playgoers. If he had not felt himself constrained to conform to popular tastes he would have accomplished much greater things. This kept him from the profound study of human nature and accurate portrayal of it, of which he was abundantly capable. Great passions he did not delineate as well as minor. The grave and the dignified he expressed as well as the best. His Camiola in "The Maid of Honor" is one of the finest impersonations ever conceived. That is a perfect scene wherein, appearing before the bad king she is expected to kneel, she says:

"With your leave, I must not kneel, Sir,
While I reply to this: but thus rise up
In my defense, and tell you, as a man,
(Since when you are unjust, the deity

Which you may challenge as a king, parts from you),
'Twas never read in holy writ or moral,
That subjects on their loyalty were obliged
To love their sovereign's vices."

Of all the dramatists in his time he was the cleanest in character, manners, and words; and for that he lived apart from them and died friendless and alone.

NOTE.—The Ober Ammergau Passion Play, in its revival from time to time, is the last remnant of the Miracle Plays.

French Literature.

FRENCH LITERATURE

I.

The Revival in France.

THE south of France being settled by the Visigoths, the mildest of the northern barbarians, and from its geographical position and its climate being less used to exciting themes, had its earliest literary development in the songs of the tender passion. While the poets of Spain sang of wars and adventures with the Moors, and celebrated the heroes of the battlefields, the troubadours sang of fair ladies.

The gaiety of this early French literature has never entirely passed away, and the Frenchman of to-day is still a genuine descendant of that race, ever distinguished as the most polite and impressionable of modern peoples.

In these present studies of French literature, I propose to begin at a com-

paratively late period, when the founding of the French Academy under Richelieu established at Paris the center of the literature of all Europe; with a preliminary notice, however, of one writer, anterior to this period, who in one species of writing was a leader and forerunner to all Europe.

This was Montaigne, the father of the Essayists. This singular son of a singular father probably little foresaw the fame which he was to acquire. His father had him taught Latin in his childhood, exclusive of any other tongue, so that Latin became his vernacular, and he had afterwards to learn French as a foreign language. First he became an advocate; but the tumultuous times of the League coming on in the reign of Henry III., being a man of peaceful disposition he retired from all active pursuits to his estate, and the time he had left from travel was devoted to that desultory sort of writing to which he gave, what was intended to be considered a modest title, the name of "Essai."

Essai, as you are aware, means an attempt, a partial consideration of a sub-

ject which deserves more extended discussion, either from abler hands or from the same in more enlarged opportunities. The term has gradually been adopted as applicable to short disquisitions upon all varieties of subjects, whether of morals, politics, literature, art or common life.

The very first attempts in this line are amongst the most interesting and spicy that are to be found in any language. This Frenchman, in the retirement of his chateau, when the rest of his countrymen were in the turmoil of those terrible and continuous civil dissensions, during a period of many years, recorded the results of his desultory observations, readings and reflections, in a style so piquant that they have become long celebrated throughout the world. His essays contain an immense amount of historical and political information with most interesting, but at the same time, most rambling speculations.

What makes them more interesting than they might be otherwise is the acquaintance they give us with the author himself. Montaigne seems actually to

have thought aloud, especially when thinking about himself. It is evident of all interesting personages to Montaigne, the most so was Montaigne. His garrulousness of himself, even of his whims and infirmities, are a source of continual entertainment to the reader. His vanity is not in the slightest degree offensive, because of the entire simplicity with which it is exhibited and its perfect harmlessness. In this respect he is as pardonable as a mother who is proud of her first-born baby.

Montaigne is one of the writers of France whom a Frenchman of any amount of education would be ashamed to acknowledge not having read. It is probable that no author of modern times has been so universally read by his own countrymen, a fact that continues until now, notwithstanding that three centuries have elapsed since his day. Though neither profound nor very erudite, neither a satirist nor a great humorist, he has been among his own countrymen the most popular author that has lived in France, and, in

this respect, his match is not to be found outside of it.

The revival of literature was properly so called as its first efforts were directed to revive Greek and Roman ideas and forms, a revival which in France has deviated from its original workings less widely than in any other country in Europe. France has ever since been chiefest in what is known as classical instead of romantic literature.

A series of poets, respectable, and some with a degree of eminence, came on, beginning with what is known as the Pléiade consisting of Ronsard, Daurat, Du Bellay, Belleau, Jodelle, Baïf and Izard.

It was in the following style that Ronsard, the leader of this new band, spoke of the need of a change in the national literature:

"Oh how I long to see these springs wither; to chastise these small youths; to beat these attempts to dry up these fountains. How I wish these forlorn ones; these humble expectants; these exiles from bliss; these slaves; these obstructionists were packed back again

to the Round Table! Leave all these old French poems to the floral Games of Toulouse,—such as rondeaus, ballads, royal songs, lays, and other such spicy things, which corrupt the taste of our language and are of no other value than to bear witness to our ignorance. Be assured, my readers, that he will be the genuine poet, whom I look for in our language, who shall make me indignant, shall sooth and rejoice me, shall cause me to grieve, to love, to hate, to wonder, to be astounded; in short, who shall hold the bridle of my affections, turning me to this side or that at his pleasure."

Here we see what a change has come from the time when these gentle poets of Provence were the masters of song. The new enthusiasm was destined to make a magnificent career. But it has been a strange career, and it has been less great than it would have been, but for a sort of despotism in France, political and literary, which, while it has accomplished great things in some respects, served to hamper literary and especially poetic genius, by requiring it to follow too closely this first imitation of the classics.

Classicism has forever since the times of the Plèiade been the distinguishing characteristic of French literature, especially dramatic, and though many men of genius have endeavored to free themselves from this despotism and set out upon a new and independent career, such efforts have been discouraged, and the French drama of to-day is yet, to some degree, an imitation of that of Terence, Plautus and Seneca, who were themselves imitators of the Greek dramatists.

Let us briefly consider the history of this literary dynasty which made Paris so entirely the capital of France — the capital more absorbingly so than any city has become in any other country. It began in circumstances peculiarly interesting, in that they show what benign influence in a most corrupt society may be exerted by even one gifted, high-spirited and pure-minded woman.

The court of France had been corrupted by those three woman, Catherine de Medici, Marie de Medici and Marguerite de Valois, to a degree that is now appalling and almost incredible to

read about. During the reign of Henry IV., Louis XIII., and part of that of Louis XIV., this world, except probably during some of the times of the Roman Empire, has never seen as much contrast between the lawlessness and luxuriousness of the great, and the squalor, poverty and misery of the lowly—a contrast that culminated in the war of the Fronde, in which the common people, driven to madness by their wrongs and sufferings, rose against the government and produced that chaos which resulted in a state of literature like that of politics.

In this state of things Catherine de Vivonne, a young lady of Italy, was married to the Marquis de Rambouillet. Disgusted with the manners and the morals of the court, this beautiful, noble-minded woman, while yet young, not far beyond twenty years of age, retired to her husband's private house, and there for many years received and entertained the best and purest literary talent among the men and women of Paris. As these reunions increased she had built a splendid mansion, destined forever afterwards to

be celebrated as the Hôtel de Rambouillet. The leading literary genius of literature then was Malherbe, and, as the favorite of the Marquise, he led in that encouragement to letters which was to exert so signal an influence. At this Hôtel all literary men were received, whatever might be their social position, unless their manners were such as to shock that delicacy which among the best aristocracy was the perfection of good breeding.

The impulse given to literature, under the auspices of this remarkable woman, was incalculably great and lasting. It was only in her old age when her crown descended to her daughter, the Marquise de Montausier, that an artificiality and an affectation found their way among them which induced the epithet of "précieuse," and drew upon them a ridicule that was fatal.

Julie, the daughter and successor of Catherine de Vivonne, inherited all the virtue but not the judgment and the taste of her mother. It had been better probably for Mademoiselle if she had married the Marquis

sooner. He had been a long and faithful lover, but Julie delighted more and more in the homage which she received from men and women as the heir apparent to the Kingdom of the Rambouillet. Under her rule the romancers were the favorites. Of these the chief was Mademoiselle Scudéri. She it was who became the head and leader of that school of romanticists in France, which refined the art of love, and the rules of manners and sentiments, to a degree that their fall must come in time when the public taste should become educated sufficiently to discover and grow tired of their extravagances. Clélie, the last and most notable of Scudéri's novels, was produced in the year of the death of the Marquise de Rambouillet.

The faithful Montausier courted and courted, year after year, years after years, but Julie put him off and put him off. He had gotten almost every poet in France to write verses in her praise, which he had gathered into an album and called Guirland de Julie. Yet it was not until four years after

the completion and presentation of this Guirland that she at last yielded to his entreaties and became the Marquise de Montausier, and then she was thirty-eight years old.

The Précieuse soon afterwards lost their prestige and the dynasty of letters passed into stronger hands. But the example of the Marquise de Rambouillet had this effect among others —it established for woman in France an influence in literature that remains to this day, and of a kind and importance that are known nowhere else.

Among the women who were of this coterie, I mention especially Madame de Sévigné, who, though less courted in her day than Mademoiselle Scudéri, has become far more celebrated since, especially as being the most entertaining letter writer, not only of her country, but of all countries; not only of her generation, but of all generations.

It is curious to think how few of the letters — the private, friendly, gossipy correspondence — of men of letters are interesting. This faculty seems the

very rarest. After Madame de Sévigné in France, and Charles Lamb in England, the way is long to find the next whose letters have a charm that it is a cordial pleasure to yield to.

Of the habituées of the Hôtel de Rambouillet, was a young man of illustrious family, who, although he was but two and twenty years of age, was already a bishop, and destined soon for the cardinalate and for a greater career than any man, not a monarch, has made in modern times. This was the Bishop of Luçon, afterwards Cardinal Richelieu. It would be interesting to consider the political career of this most remarkable man, who, under Louis XIII., subdued the enemies of the crown of France at home and abroad, and consolidated its government in time for the subsequent great achievements of le Grande Monarque, Louis XIV. But I must speak only of his connection with the literary movement of his time and the direction which his genius gave to it.

With all the ambition that has been ascribed to Cardinal Richelieu, it is believed that the literary element was the

chief. He had sat, when a young man, at the feet of Madame Rambouillet, and listened with delight to the wit, the poetry and the prose of the gifted men and women who were accustomed to assemble there. Partaking of the ambition which these reunions inspired, he wrote, besides some religious pamphlets, a tragi-comedy which he named "Mirame."

When he rose to power and had erected that splendid palace named by him the Palais Cardinale, but afterwards known as the Palais Royale, which is so full of historic interest, he added to it a theatre for the production of his drama. It must succeed—for it was the work of the greatest minister in Europe, presented to a select audience of friends and dependents in his own residence, which rivaled that of the greatest monarchs of the earth. The applause was so great that the author was transported with delight, leaned out of his box in order to give to the delighted audience a good view of himself, and felt that he had been born for as great a work in literature as

in politics and religion. The cares of state would not allow further authorship at his hands, but he could assume, and he did assume, its direction in the hands of others, and established that régime, partly for good and partly for evil, by which the literary endeavors of the French have ever since been for the most part controlled.

Among the thoughts that had been struck out from the discussions of the Hôtel de Rambouillet was that of founding some great central authority in matters of literary taste, especially regarding the proper development of the French language. A thought of this sort had, as early as 1570, been in the mind of Baïf, a disciple of the school of which Ronsard was the head. This idea was the establishment of a club for the study and proper development of French grammar and orthography. But, in the political convulsions of those and succeeding times, nothing or little was done in this direction.

Reopened in times of quiet in the minds of men like Rivault, Valentin, Conrart, and others, the all-absorbing

mind of Richelieu seized upon it; and in 1634 he established the Academy of France, at once the proudest, most authoritative, and most able literary corporation that was ever instituted. The avowed object of the institution of the Academy was the perfecting of the French language; and the making of it the Court language of the world. It is curious to consider what endless labors, what minute painstakings, were employed upon such a work.

It was nearly half a century before the publication of the dictionary, for which a committee and an editor were early appointed. The vast length of time consumed in this work, on that of a purely philological nature, provoked many a ridiculous jest from those who sought reputation outside of the Academy, as the following:

> "Six months they've been engaged on F,
> O, that my fate would guaranty
> That I should keep alive till G."

The establishment of such an institution as the Academy must necessarily exert a commanding influence upon the national literature. At the most splen-

did capital in Europe, where courtly manners and courtly sentiments under that magnificient minister were risen to the highest possible height, the development it gave to the French language, naturally rich in polite expressions, must soon place it at the head of the living languages of the world. Under this influence it did become, and has continued to be, the diplomatic language of Europe and America.

The times were now favorable for great literary achievements. Richelieu had established the French monarchy upon a basis that was to endure for two centuries; he had established the French Academy that was to be for all time the arbiter of literary excellence. The works of literary men heretofore had been in great part desultory, owing mostly to the uncertainties of the results of successive political struggles. The unbecoming levities that characterized the Mysteries and Moralities, the Sacred Comedy, as they were sometimes called, had been prohibited representation. A national drama had been started both in Spain and in Eng-

land, which, though widely different in one and the other, was eminently national and suited to the different characteristics of the two nations.

It was evidently a misfortune for the French drama, a misfortune from which it never recovered, that its rise was contemporary with the establishment of the French Academy, whose strange and persistent adherence to classical rules obstructed that freedom which was so essential to the growth of this, the most important, department of a nation's literature.

At the time of the establishment of that celebrated institution a very great man was then living, who, though less than thirty years of age, had already exhibited the possession of intellectual powers which if encouraged, or if not hindered, were equal to the very greatest achievements. He was not a Parisian and of that circle who met at stated times in the splendid salons of the Marquise de Rambouillet. He was from Rouen in the North Country, the central place of the ancient trouvéres, as the poets of that region were called, in

contradistinction to the troubadours of the South. Like the great dramatists of Spain, Pierre Corneille was religious in the tone of his being, and his first literary works were of a religious character. He never took orders, like Lope de Vega and Calderon, but the serious tone remained with him always. His first works were translations in verse of the "Office of the Holy Virgin" and the "Imitation of Christ" of Thomas à Kempis.

A curious accident that was which made Corneille a dramatist. He had fallen in love with a young lady to whom he introduced a friend in order to aid him in his suit. That friend pleaded the cause as well as he could; but the lady one day hinted to him that if he were to speak in his own behalf, should he be so inclined, his words might be put to better purpose and obtain more satisfactory results. Upon this hint he substituted his own for the name of his friend, and his suit prevailed. Fortunately for his own peace Corneille made a joke instead of a serious matter of the affair, and the more

easily because in another young woman he soon found what compensated him for the loss of the first. Her name was Mademoiselle Milet. The rejected suitor wrote his first drama on the occasion, and, in honor of the gay young female, slightly transposing her name, called it "Mélite." The facility with which this was produced led him to other works, partly serious, partly sportive, until the year 1636, when he was just thirty years old. Then he produced his tragedy of "The Cid."

This is one of the greatest achievements of human genius. In full sympathy with that ardent admiration which the Spanish, and indeed all Christian people, felt for the great *Campeador*, who had so often defeated the Moors, the common enemy of Spain and Christendom, he selected him for his hero; and, following the dictates of his own genius, presented him in those attitudes which to such a man were seen to be the best for the highest purposes of tragedy. It seemed as if a great career was before this young dramatist from the North. Indeed there was, still

it was less than it might have been, and could have been, but for the trammels that were placed upon his muse.

When we place "The Cid" of Corneille by the side of the "Mirame" of Richelieu, the distance is great between them in the elements which appeal to the serious, ardent emotions of our hearts, that genuine pathos which is the best characteristic of the tragedy. But there was a greater distance between them in another respect, which then and ever afterwards in France has been considered superior, namely, in relative conformity to the standard of the Greeks — a standard which in all ages in that country has never been departed from. In this respect the "Mirame" was the superior. It had been made to conform evenly with those models which a different people with a different religion and a different civilization had made, but which had become adopted in France in defiance of all those demands which were made by the conditions of modern peoples. The necessity of following this standard, to a man, who, like Shakespeare,

was not one to be guided by any special school, hindered Corneille from being what he was born capable to be — almost, if not fully, equal to him.

It was in vain that the nobles of France, and the gentlemen, and the citizens came in crowds to see this great drama, and burned with passion at the recital of the brave deeds of the mighty Cid. "The Cid" lacked the unities of the tragedies of Sophocles and Euripides and Seneca, and therefore the critics of Paris, at the instance of Richelieu and the Academy, condemned it. The very passion that this drama displayed was one of the matters that was objected to by the Academy. Richelieu had asked of them their criticism, and that request was properly understood to mean an order for condemnation. What was required of a tragedy, according to their views, was a stateliness, a dignified grief in misfortune, such as had been felt by the demigods and heroes of the ancient drama, as they silently and composedly yielded at length before the decrees of fate. These curious

words occur in the sentence pronounced by the Academy:

"A piece is only good when it gives a reasonable contentment, that is, when it satisfies the learned as well as the people. We ought to inquire, not whether "The Cid" has pleased, but whether it ought to have pleased."

Now what did Corneille do after the publication of his sentence? We should have thought that he would have appealed to the people, who at last are the rightful arbiters of the drama, and who, everywhere, except in France, are its real arbiters. For after this sentence they continued to applaud as before. But he did no such thing. Before those great tribunals, the court and the Academy, even the great Corneille did not undertake to stand with defiance. He went to work and produced a series of dramas on the model prescribed by the court and the Academy, the first of which, "*The Horaces*," whether in revenge or in subserviency, it is not known, he dedicated to Cardinal Richelieu. These tragedies are the more to be admired because they show what may be done by a man of

lofty genius who feels himself bound, in conformity to irresistibly powerful influences, to gauge his work by a double standard—the parts of which are hostile between themselves.

Among them "Cinna" has been regarded as the most successful in that difficult endeavor. It is a play which though observing the rules of the classic drama, yet teems in many scenes with true pathos and dramatic incident which are the offspring of modern, in contradistinction to ancient, living. One of the most remarkable characters in all dramatic literature is the Æmilia of "Cinna." The Emperor Augustus had murdered her father, but his favorite, whom he loved and confided in so much as to desire to divide with him the Empire, was her lover, Cinna. The conflict in this noble young woman's mind between her love for Cinna and her desire to be revenged on the Emperor is managed with distinguished ability. There are passages in this drama that are equal to the best in any dramatic poet.

Yet this enforced compliance with rules which he could not fail to know

as exacting and wrong certainly hampered his genius, and to some degree cooled that poetic passion which was his by nature, and which is so necessary for the highest success. In taking his heroes and heroines from Grecian and Roman story, he could not but impart to them that too stately carriage which is never consistent with true pathos. In his hands the Roman remains, not quite but almost, a Roman still, an inevitable consequence to the dramatist, who, instead of addressing the men and women of his own generation, imagines himself addressing those of two thousand years ago.

The man who stood and who yet stands at the head of the classic, the principal school of French literature, is Boileau. If the age of Louis XIV. may properly be called the Augustan age of French literature, Boileau with even greater fitness may be said to be, as he has often been styled, the Horace of that age. With powers thought to be sufficient for the production of a great epic, Boileau chose rather to be a Horace than a Virgil.

His perfect education, his thorough

command of the French language, his eminently critical mind, led him to be a corrector of the faults of others' works rather than a producer of great masterpieces of his own. His first production was his satires; and then his epistles. With a freak of genius like that which actuated Pope in "The Rape of the Lock," he produced his mock heroic epic of "Lutrin," founded on the disputes of the monks of Chartreux.

His satires fall below those of Horace; but his epistles have been asserted to be the best of their kind in the literature of all ages. It was as a critic that Boileau was most highly esteemed. In this respect he was without a rival in his day, occupying the same relative position in France that Dr. Johnson did in England a century later. He was not only powerful like Johnson, but he was honest like him. Although a courtier he was never a sycophant; and many anecdotes are told of the manly independence which, during a long service, he maintained at the court of the most willful and despotic monarch that ever sat upon the throne of France.

II.

The Age of Louis XIV.

In one respect, at least, the age of Louis XIV. was fitly called the Augustan age of French Literature. It took its name from that great monarch in whose person were united all the powers of the empire for every purpose, domestic and foreign. In the Roman Empire whoever would be notable or prosperous must repair to Rome and solicit patronage from the great and only source of power. Wherever there was a man of talent, whether in Gaul or Hispania, whether in Greece or Illyria, whether in Scythia or Thracia, that man came to Rome and laid his aims and his ambition at the feet of the Emperor Augustus Cæsar, and thus the age, abounding as it did in eminent names, names grown eminent under the patronage of that potentate, was styled the Augustan.

So it was, preëminently, during the

period of Louis XIV., the longest reigning, the most prosperous, the most magnificent that Europe has ever seen. For seventy-two years that man was king of the French. The feudal and popular strifes had been settled by Richelieu and Mazarin before he came upon the throne. He came, too, when the literary renaissance of the French people had gotten fairly under way. The Academy was fully established, the French language was rising under its influence to become the most polished and courtly of human tongues, and the reunions at the Hôtel de Rambouillet and the Saturday receptions of Mademoiselle Scudéri had served already to concentrate at Paris the greater portion of the literary talent of the country. Never was there a young monarch so gifted by nature and manners to take the lead of a people under such conditions. The graces of his person, his royal demeanor, his boundless condescension and munificence, made him at once the idol of his people; and the brilliant success of his foreign wars enabled him to preserve his popularity to

the very last. Yet he was the most arbitrary, the most lofty-minded monarch that ever sat upon the French throne. His policy was early foreshadowed, when, on an occasion while his ministers were speaking of the State, he cut them short with the words, "The State, it is I."

It was on this idea that he constituted the State, that the power, the government, the genius, the glory of France were concentrated in himself, which controlled him ever afterwards, and made his government the most purely personal that any country in Europe has ever had. Already Paris had become more avowedly a capital than London, or Vienna, or Madrid. Such had been the policy of the controlling spirits of the last two reigns.

Under Louis XIV. Paris became everything for France. The residence of the grand monarch! every idea that was great or of any importance must originate there, or repair there for development and successful operation; every man of genius, of whatever kind, must not only visit the capital, but there

he must abide, and draw the supplies for prosecuting his work from that one grand inexhaustible source — the king.

The books are numberless that tell of the splendor of the Court of Louis XIV.: its boundless expensiveness; its contrast with the life of the common people, both in the country and in the towns. The great wonder, in reading of these things now, is how long this contrast was allowed to endure, and how unresistingly a brave people could tolerate poverty, oppression, and exaction in order to sustain these splendors of a monarch and his favorites. But of this condition we are not to speak, except as to its influence upon the literature of the nation. It is marvelous how that literature did develop, and how it was directed by that monarch and his court.

In the time of the Cæsars the men of letters conceived their thoughts in Rome. There they put them upon paper, or if elsewhere, it was, as in the case of poor Ovid, because of their banishment, wherein they longed to be recalled to the capital. The themes

for Virgil and Horace were the sovereign himself, or his ancestors, fables among the demigods; and of Seneca they were the heroes of Grecian story, all of royal and some of heavenly descent. The things they celebrated in verse were such as were meant to remind their imperial master of what it was, how grand! how felicitous! to be the monarch of a great people. The works which they created were masterpieces of genius; they were destined to endure for all time; they represented to perfection the height of the civilization of the times in which they were produced; and when, in the overthrow of that civilization, they were neglected and cast aside, the literature of the new civilization seemed as if it never could begin until these works were brought forth again and the love and admiration for them revived.

Now, in France this revival was comparatively late. In Spain and in Italy it had taken place long before; and those nations, in time exchanging the ancient models for those of romantic historic, had made a splendid career,

which, however, endured only for a few generations. Spanish and Italian literature were in their decline when the French first began on its full career. Germany had no national literature; and the English were forming their own on its own isolated, irregular methods. And in this we can perceive some of the reasons of that direction to French literature given first by Ronsard and his brethren of the Pléiade, led along by Richelieu, and finally assumed and concentrated in the court of Louis XIV.

The men who controlled the opinions of France, believed that the decline of the literature of Italy and Spain was to be attributed to that romantic spirit which had led these nations to abandon Greek and Roman forms, and, taking the heroes of modern Europe, celebrate their achievements after the fashion of the first Christian lyric poets, even as ancient tragedy had risen out of the lyrical pieces of the first rude minstrels of Greece. They believed that for a modern literature to be great, and to continue great, it must resume these

ancient models which seemed to be perfect, and the only perfect ones. These opinions, besides the examples of Spain and Italy, had other foundations in that arbitrary policy which, during several reigns, had been forming the government of France upon the model of that of the Cæsars, under which all the great works of literary genius were devoted to celebrating the deeds of those with whose fortunes only the great of earth were in sympathy.

To the people of France, the common people, it was interesting to attend upon representations of the deeds of the brave Christian warrior, who had done so much for Spain in her long mighty struggles with the Moors; but to that court at Paris, the Cid was not a man to be thought about in comparison with the great kings of Greek and Roman story; and so, when Corneille's first and greatest tragedy appeared, the Academy, at the instigation of the Cardinal minister, inquired not whether it had pleased — for it *had* pleased, the people wept and shouted at the exploits of the great captain — but if it ought

to have pleased. And they decided that it ought not; and for the remainder of his life, as we have seen, Corneille, so far as possible, was made to conform to the exactions of those who controlled the public opinions of France.

It was thus that began in France that classicism, as it has always been called, which, in the drama, especially, at least the serious drama, has always prevailed; and which has rendered French dramatic literature, in spite of the greatness of some of the men who have cultivated it, less national and less considerable than that of any European nation.

RACINE.

The tragic poet, who was more fully than Corneille the production of the classicism enjoined by the court of France, was Racine. His was a nature religious like that of Corneille, but more refined and tender. Nearly exactly contemporary with the king, and held to the court through his friend the powerful Boileau, his muse early sought

out the great names in classic history and fable. His first, celebrated in the "Thébaïde," were the unhappy sons of Œdipus, long ago immortalized by the pen of Sophocles. Then came his "Alexandre," with Porus, the giant King of India; then "Andromaque," wife of the great Hector; then "Britannicus," telling of the rivalry between this great Roman and the Emperor Nero for the love of Junia; then "Bérénice;" then "Baiazet;" then "Mithridate;" then "Iphigénie;" then "Phèdre," the miserable wife of Theseus. Later in life his mind turned more to religious thoughts, and he wished to become a monk of the Order of the Carthusians. Diverted from this purpose, he chose for his themes the actions of Scripture characters, and produced his "Esther and Athalie."

Like Corneille, Racine was qualified by nature for the greatest heights of tragedy, if his genius, like Shakespeare's, could have been unfettered. But the very names of his dramas show, in obedience to the ruling ideas of his time, that he considered the utmost suc-

cess possible to modern dramatic effort was an approximation to the works of the great ancients. Yet, when a man of genius essays to work, no matter after what model, he will accomplish great things, and that genius will assert itself after its own individual and independent bent in spite of the trammels that would hold it in an ordered way. We have seen in Corneille how passion, genuine, natural and irregular, would sometimes burst forth into utterance that would almost put to the blush the solemn dignity of the ancient drama. So Racine, though professing to follow at one time the great dramatists and at another Corneille, would bring out the tenderness of his own nature, that drew tears of sympathy which the pitiful feel for distress in all conditions of life.

In such a condition of things, with a great writer, it was but natural that his female characters should surpass the male. A good woman, gentle, sensitive, pure-minded, in any state of society is the type of her class everywhere. There may be several kinds of heroes. A hero in the early days of

Thebes, or of Mycenæ, was not the same with a hero of Spain or modern Italy. But a good woman, such as the noble wife of Hector, may illustrate one age as well as another. The male characters of Racine, though bearing such names as Œdipus and Pyrrhus, and Theseus and Polynices, were at last the courtiers of that palace of Versailles, towering far above whom was the Grande Monarque, whose unapproachable greatness must forever keep theirs in subordination. But his women were the types of excellent womanhood, which in all society is everywhere the same.

A fair example of Racine's female characters is Andromaque. All are familiar with the history of this woman, who, in the palmy days of Troy, was the wife of Hector, the eldest and bravest of the sons of Priam, and the mother of his only son, Astyanax. At the fall of the ancient city the young widow fell into the hands of Pyrrhus, the bastard son of Achilles, who had slain her husband. The conqueror fell in love with his captive, though he was espoused to Hermione, daughter of

Menelaus and Helen. It is most touching to witness the struggles in the mind of this woman between the respect for the dead and her sense of duty to the living. Andromaque, daughter of Eetion of Cilicia, had been noted for her affection for her husband. It was told of her that she used to feed his horses with her own hand. The most tender and touching episode in the Iliad is that parting scene between the husband and his wife when he went forth to meet the great Achilles, who was destined to slay him and drag his body around the walls of the city. Pyrrhus offered on the one hand the rebuilding of Troy and the placing of Astyanax, her's and Hector's son, upon the throne; on the other hand the destruction of the last remnant of the Trojan race. What will this relict of a brave man, and the mother of an only son, do in such an emergency? For the sake of her son, too young to feel the dishonor and the resentment, looking far forward to his forgiveness when he shall be restored to the throne of his ancestors, and be thinking of her in the shades below, her

love for her offspring triumphs over her honor for her departed husband, and she gives up herself, everything, to the base conqueror. In accordance with the usages of the classic drama, which required the preservation of the unities of time and place, the heroines (like the heroes) must have their confidential friends with whom they converse in the intervals of the action of the play. In the conversations between Andromaque and her confidante, there is a most touching delicacy. This is to be seen in the instructions which she gives as to how this friend is to speak with her son when she — his mother — is no more. The boy's mind, as it grows from childhood forward, is to be kept full of the images of his great father. "Tell him," she says, in effect, "of what manner of man his father was, when Troy stood, and he was her main bulwark. Tell him how the kings and mighty men both of Asia and of Europe trembled at mention of the name of Hector." These last commands are ended with those few words wrung from a mother's heart which could not withhold their

utterance, "And sometimes speak to him of his mother, also."

It was this tenderness in the heart of Racine, which made him of all the dramatists, the most successful in the delineation of the sentiment of love, especially of love in woman, where it pours itself forth, fresh and pure, without the worldly ambitions which control this passion in the hearts of men. He had all the warmth and the enthusiasm of a modern chevalier; and, in spite of the rules to which his muse was subjected, succeeded in creating many scenes in which the heart was allowed to pour itself forth in that irregular tide of feeling which is natural, in all conditions of society, to those who feel in the profoundest depths of their being.

It was the tragic drama that was especially hampered by the constraints of classicism. There is in the nature of sportiveness a sort of independence of all regular rules, which will assert itself, and whose assertion is necessarily uncontrollable. A man may refrain from weeping, at least from exhibiting the outward signs of weeping, and

often the deepest and always the most dignified grief is that which is endured in silence and confined within the heart of the sufferer. Such was the tone of the griefs in the classic drama, departures from which, by modern tragic poets, were so discouraged by the judgment of the controlling critics of France.

But mirth is not subject to such control. Whoever feels like laughing must laugh in spite both of the inhibitions of others and even his own resolves. Indeed, laughter is the more genuine and irrepressible when such inhibitions and restraints are placed before its expression. How true it is that often a trifling occurrence, which, in ordinary circumstances, would scarcely move a smile, yet, when it happens in conjunction with serious things, and we feel that mirthfulness is improper, leads us to overleap the restraint and break out into shouts of laughter.

In the midst of a society surrounding such a court as that of Louis XIV., the comic drama must rise speedily, and to its highest height. The same hindrances, in kind though not in degree,

were in France as in Spain, when the people began to desire some other fun besides that uncertain sort that was afforded by the religious plays.

MOLIÈRE.

The modern French comic drama had struggled along, and mostly in the provinces.

For many years a young man followed in the train of a strolling company. He had been all over France, and became acquainted with the many lighter phases of French character. Before then he had learned all about Paris, his native city, where his father being the tapissier (upholsterer) to the royal household, he had opportunies of seeing the ridiculous in its largest exhibitions. From an actor he became a dramatist. His first drama, "L'Étourdi," had carried Lyons by storm; and the next year, 1654, his "Le Dèpit Amoureux," had a similar success in Languedoc. By this time he made bold to come to Paris where was a young king, gay, wilful, already preparing in his heart to place himself above the consti-

tuted authorities of the Church. It was a bold stroke young Molière made for the applause of the capital, but it was well studied, aimed with matchless precision, and its fall was most triumphant.

I spoke in my last lecture of the Hôtel de Rambouillet, and the decline underwent by the standard established there at the Saturday receptions of Madamoiselle Scudéri. By this time the controlling tone of Parisian cultivated society had passed to the court, and yet the wits of both sexes who assembled at the salons of this lady clung to the sentimentalities of D'Urfée and his set. Molière opened his theatre in Paris with his "Précieuses Ridicules," in which these sentimentalists were exposed to such ridicule that they were scattered and hushed forever. In one night Molière rose into universal favor.

Close upon "Précieuses Ridicules" followed "Le Cocu Imaginaire," L'École de Maris," "Les Fâcheux," Le Malade Imaginaire," "Le Medecin Malgré Lui," Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme" and "Tartuffe." In "Tar-

tuffe," which is considered his most powerful drama, he painted the hypocrite in colors that are the most striking that this character has ever appeared withal. The popularity of these dramas, the boundless fun which they produced, and sometimes the approach they made to profanation of sacred things, so alarmed the Church that they succeeded in obtaining an order for the suspension of the "Théâtre Illustre," as Molière's was called; but in one way and another the order was avoided by the connivance of the monarch, and in writing plays and in acting the leading parts himself, Molière spent the remainder of his life, actually dying while presenting his last play "Argon."

The plays of Molière were exactly of the kind suited to that society and to the French. Even these fun-making works must partake to some degree of the formal ideas of the times derived from classic models. In the midst of the fun which comes from healthy laughter, there was the laugh of derision and contempt which comes from the sight of meanness and villainy, and the shout

of triumph at their exposure and punishment.

In Molière's last years there was that to impart to his life a bitterness which of all others is perhaps of the keenest suffering. At forty years of age he married a pretty young actress of seventeen, whose coquetries rendered his existence miserable. There is in this life scarcely to be found a condition less to be envied than that of a man thus mated, whose efforts to appear younger than he is for the purpose of holding an impossible love subject him to constant failure and unending ridicule. Partly from this cause, partly from the conditions of that society, his plays, though very great, lack that genial, healthy humor which belongs to English comedy, which a man may enjoy without one drop of the bitterness that comes either from hate or from comtempt.

LAFONTAINE.

Next to Montaigne, Lafontaine is probably the writer that is most read by Frenchmen. Contemporary with Mo-

lière, he was too good natured and too indolent to be hurt by the latter's superior success as a dramatist. I mention him along with Molière, because incomparably lower than he as a comic dramatist, he was before any of the remainder in his time. Of his dramas, only one, "The Enchanted Cup," was ever able to hold a considerable place either upon the stage or in the minds of readers. The great fame of Lafontaine is founded partly on his Tales, but mostly on his Fables. The former have long ceased to be read with the avidity which they first inspired, because the purer state of modern society has become offended by their indecency.

Lafontaine was the very weakest character of his generation. He deserted his wife and child simply because he could not endure the trouble of taking care of anybody, even himself. A niece of Cardinal Mazarin, who had been banished for a season from court to the Château Thierry, which was under his charge, took him with her on her return to Paris, introduced him at court, and for the rest of his life

one and another of the wealthy took care of him.

It was a singular attitude which Lafontaine ever maintained in that splendid society. He was the butt of universal ridicule. His talk, whether of books, of politics, or ordinary matters, was the very incarnation of absurdity. Of principles, or opinions of any sort, he had none. He praised whatever was powerful, whatever was fashionable, and he maintained that whoever did not do the same was a fool. He laughed immoderately sometimes at the most serious things, really believing them to be funny. Rabelais was the great buffoon of France and of the world. One day Lafontaine seriously asked, in a circle of distinguished persons, which they considered the greater humorist — Rabelais or St. Augustine. He hung onto first one then another of the court, until the last, Madame de la Sablière, who had him when he was extremely old, concluding to diminish her establishment, wrote thus to a friend: "I have dismissed all my people, except my dog, my cat,

and Lafontaine." When she died, an acquaintance hearing the news, and starting to repair to the house in order to fetch the old man away, met him in the street crying like a child. "I was on my way to you," said he.

But when this unpracticable creature took up his pen then it was that he charmed as no other man of his day, and but one of any other time could charm. Without accuracy, and without reasonable sequence in thinking, with little inventive power, and with most careless observation, he wrote with a piquancy that infatuated all readers. His gift in the felicitous expression of his native language was unequaled. The intermingling of the pathetic and the humorous is more harmonious than in the style of any writer of the world; so is that of the wise and the simple. Of all story tellers, at least of stories short and of little import, he was the most interesting. His fables, his greatest work, in which he playfully satirized the weaknesses he was witness to, and which displayed himself in that gay court, so illustrative are they of the things of

which they were the types, have been styled the true, the only epic poem of France.

BOSSUET, BOURDALOUE, MASSILLON.

France has undoubtedly produced a larger number of great orators than any other country. It is but reasonable that these should have first appeared within the bosom of the church. For, besides the superior grandness of those themes on which a preacher had to discourse, all other eloquence, outside of that of the pulpit, has never been able to accomplish much except in a state that is free.

Pericles, Demosthenes, Cicero, Anthony, Hortensius, Cotta, lived in the free ages of Greece and Rome. When liberty was overturned, and the speech of the orator had to be gauged by the rod of arbitrary power, eloquence left the world to return no more until the restoration of the liberty under whose auspices it was born. History and tradition tell us of several great orators who rose in the Church when it became delivered from persecution. But soon

after this event the civilization of Europe hastened in its dissolution, the languages of Greece and Rome ceased to be the spoken languages of the world; and eloquence, even with the free, must wait for the establishment of other tongues.

Under Louis XIV. none but a Churchman could be an orator, for the great questions of politics were not settled by discussion, but according to the will of the monarch. Even in the Church, eloquence could not rise until the French language could take on that development which has made it, of all modern tongues, perhaps the most suited for oratorical expression. Of that long list of eloquent divines for which that age was distinguished, Bossuet, Bourdaloue and Massillon are the most distinguished. The first was a Secular, the second a Jesuit, the third a Brother of the Oratory founded by St. Philip Neri.

The praise of exquisite reasoning, conjoined with a diction that was perfect in its finish, belongs to Bourdaloue, as well as the greatest reputation for genuine humble piety.

Massillon was greatest in portraying the terrors of living without God in the world and going unprepared to meet His judgment.

Bossuet was the great combatant for rightful authority, first the rightful authority of the King of Kings, and afterwards, and in too near succession, that of the King of France. In genius, in lofty commanding power of words, he was the greatest of this great trio. But for one infirmity he would perhaps be considered universally, as he has been by many, the greatest pulpit orator of all ages. Devout, ardent, full of faith in Christianity and the authority of the Church, if he had lived under a monarch less despotic, or been a braver man, there was no height possible to human endeavor that he might not have reached. But he loved his King, he loved more than a subject, and one sprung as he was from the bourgeoisie, that exertion of despotic power which claimed to have over France a control similar to that which the Almighty had over the Universe. The infirmity led him if not to flatter his sovereign, at

least to excuse, or not to oppose many of his actions, which were destined to inflict mournful injuries both upon the Church and upon France. Not that he ever yielded entirely to this despotism; and it was but another evidence of the splendor of his talents that he could so write, and especially so speak, as to be the admired of all parties. He had learned in youth all the requirements of a courtier, being when only seventeen years of age one of the favorites in the Blue Room of the Marquise de Rambouillet, and he profited by this early education. He was the court preacher. and certainly never man knew so well how to preach before a powerful monarch, and no man, statesman or preacher, ever knew better than he how to coast along that dangerous line between such a servile subservience as would stunt genius, and especially the attainment of great oratorical renown, and the independence of spirit that must endanger the favor of such a monarch as Louis XIV.—at once the greatest, the most powerful and the most imperious in all modern times. If Bossuet had

been a braver priest, and if his courage had not been molested, there is no calculating the blessings he might have been to the Church of whose principles he was a representative.

Louis XIV. was a Catholic, but such was the enormity of his pride, that he could not endure that it should be said that the head of the Church was higher than the head of France. Hence arose that Gallican Church, which, though never daring to avow hostility to the See of Rome, yet for two hundred years was to that See a cause of trouble and anxiety. Like all other errors it must pass away in time.

Bossuet was a very great man. There is no saying now if he could have hindered the rise of Gallicanism. It is most probable that he could not, and that he knew he could not. If so, then it is probable that he considered how injurious it would be to the Church, if an open hostility to the ambitious claims of the reigning monarch should deprive his country and his generation of the service that his magnificent gifts could render in those fields that were

yet left for their exertion. There is no doubt, that, great preacher as he was, devout Catholic as he was, he loved the splendors of that splendid court; he loved the numerous suite, the costly insignia which the monarch, munificent as he was proud, allowed to the favorite bishop of his dominions. Then, such was the adroitness of that monarch, that his own claims were not put forth in such guise as to painfully shock the common Catholic sentiment of France. Bossuet therefore believed, or he acted as if he believed, that he could be true both to the King of France and the Pope of Rome, and that he could most usefully employ his great talents in combating the enemies of both.

A work that has taken, destined for all time, its place among the standard works of theological controversy, is "Les Varietés" a work which shows that he was not less gifted with the pen than with the tongue.

Another shadow upon the fame of Bossuet was cast by his treatment of one of the very best and loveliest men

that ever lived, who was about thirty years his junior, but whose rapid rise made him a rival to the great preacher, both in the nation and at the court, This was Fénelon. A native of the province of Périgord, educated at the Du Plessis College in Paris, having received holy orders at the Seminary of St. Sulpice, made superintendent of an institution for the reception of female converts, his first work was on the "Education of Girls," a work which, though written by a very young man, has ever since been regarded as one of the best standards created at any time on that theme. Unfortunate as it was for his own peace of mind, it was fortunate for the rest of the world that he was selected by the monarch as tutor of his grandson and heir apparent to the crown—the young Duke of Burgundy. Herein was the most beautiful relationship that ever obtained between teacher and pupil. Perhaps never was undertaken such a task by one more fitted for its duties and more faithful in their discharge, and perhaps never was a pupil more susceptible to the benign

influences of so great a teacher. The teacher, while imparting to his pupil the knowledge of general things necessary to be learned by all youths in schools, led this boy with the promise of a great kingdom into the study of the great exemplars good and bad of all times. He pointed out to him the benignant careers of the former, and made him remark in those of the latter the misery that comes from evil deeds, not only upon the sufferers, but the inflictors. He led that young, docile mind to consider how glorious may be the rule of a prince who labors continually for the weal of his people; and how empty is the glory that attains that exalted estate, when this first great duty is neglected.

Between the two an affectionate friendship grew, destined, in spite of future inhibitions to their society, to continue until the untimely death of this young prince in whom there was so much of promise for France. In his hours of leisure from the daily lessons to his charge, he wrote, all in the aid of the office he had in hand, his "Fables,"

his "Dialogues of the Dead," his "History of the Ancient Philosophers," the "Life of Charlemagne," and began that more famous than these, his "Telemachus." In return for the signal services he had rendered, he was made, in 1695, Archbishop of Cambray.

Soon thereafter began those controversies on the subject of Quietism, the advanced party in which, under the lead of Molinos was carried to such extremes that the other party, led by Madame Guyon, was not able to secure the respect that was really due to persons who were known to be — many of them — among the most devout members of the Catholic Church. In compassion for Madame Guyon, against whom a persecution was begun — a compassion that became more pronounced when she submitted without complaint to the condemnation of her opinions by the commission appointed for their consideration, Bossuet submitted to Fénelon a work which, when the controversy was supposed to be settled, he had written; and asked his endorsement. This work was entitled "States of Prayer." Féne-

lon refused to give it; and wrote a work which he named "Maxims of the Saints in the Interior Life." This manuscript was surreptitiously published, after having been stolen from the author's study.

It is sad even now to contemplate the hostility that was engendered between these great prelates, in which the older, backed by the influence of the court, warred with an acrimony of whose relenting there has ever been a doubt. Some of the maxims were condemned at Rome, and the younger antagonist quickly bowed before the judgment of the Holy See, recanted everything that had been condemned, and gave to his recantation as much notoriety as was possible.

Yet such beautiful submission was not enough for that court. The "Telemachus" had been published in the while, this also surreptitiously. The flatterers of the king persuaded him that this and the other works written for the instruction of the young Duke of Burgundy had been written in covert hostility to his dynasty.

Was Bossuet among these flatterers? We cannot say with certainty. Some maintain that he was at their head. The great monarch believed, or pretended to believe, that he himself was intended in the character of Sesostris; that his minister Louvois was meant in that of Proteselaos; that Eucharis was intended to represent Mademoiselle de Fontanges, one of his female favorites; and Calypso, her who stood at the head of this fond list, Madame de Montespan.

"Put not your trust in princes," said the wise man. Henceforth Fénelon was confined within the limits of his Archdiocese. There were some who said that Bossuet, touched by the humble submission of his rival to Rome, and the friendlessness to which he had been reduced, strove at last to restore to him the favor of the king without success. Even the young Duke of Burgundy was refused the sight of his beloved preceptor. But he loved him none the less until his death, which was soon after followed by that of him whose precepts had imparted to his youth the principles that made his

young manhood such a promise to the people of France.

It was a beautiful life; its remainder was spent in the best works to which a priest of God may devote himself. Not many of Fénelon's sermons were preserved. These, however, rank among the very highest in pulpit eloquence.

III.

Diderot, Voltaire and Rousseau.

The age of Louis XIV. was eminently prolific in men of genius. The establishment of the French Academy, the congregation of minds of all varieties of gifts around a court which liberally encouraged their development, especially where, as was mostly the case, they were devoted to the exaltation of the reigning sovereign, opened a vast field for intellectual endeavor. In the pride of his power that sovereign had sought and in some degree succeeded in humbling the Church to which France had always been faithful, and establishing one of which he himself was the head. To these endeavors all the talent of the nation, if it expected encouragement, or even if it only aimed to avoid neglect or persecution, must contribute. We have seen how even the eloquent and devout Bossuet was made to play a part in this adulation.

This long reign of seventy-two years, the wasting wars, the boundless expensiveness of the court, its bad morals for which there was a fatal example in the habits of the monarch, the distress and poverty among the common people, all these things produced a state of society on which religion exerted a continually weakening influence. When the aged king died at last, there was not one of his descendants alive except a child, his great-grandson. Then the Regency fell into the hands of the Duke of Orleans; and society degenerated yet further to a degree that a pure mind shudders to read of its revolting abominations.

In the midst of such a state of things there began to arise a spirit of free thinking in the minds of a numerous body of men of varying intellectual capacities. Yet among them were a few names who in this latter respect towered far above the rest of their countrymen. The spirit of independence at first made serious endeavors with such men as Descartes and Bayle, whose interior lives were comparatively

pure, and especially in the latter, yet influenced by religious fears if not by other religious considerations.

In the process of its development it fell under the control of such men as Diderot, D'Alembert, Voltaire and Rousseau, and from first one and then another position of advancement culminated into a degree of lawlessness the equal of which has never been known in the history of mankind.

The leader of this set, especially in that enterprise from which their genuine name was obtained, was Diderot. He had been intended for the Church, but very early left his studies in that direction for mathematics, philosophy and sociology. For the purpose of giving wider dissemination to his views, and of obtaining more organized coöperation from his familiars, he began the preparation of that work destined to become forever famous and to impart its name to its contributors—the "Encyclopédie des Arts, des Sciences, et des Métiers."

The preliminary discourse of this vast work was written by D'Alembert

whose Christian name, because he could obtain no other by rightful authority, was Jean Le Ronde, which was given to him because at his birth he was left exposed, by his mother, at the door of the church of that name in Paris. These two men were wonderfully gifted for the work they had in hand. The mind of D'Alembert, outside of his social and religious inquiries, was directed mostly towards the physical sciences, and his investigations have made him deservedly illustrious in this department of inquiry.

Diderot, in the intervals when he would rest from his main work, amused himself with writing novels and petty comedies in which religion and social decency were treated with disrespect, derision and hostility. In addition to these a good part of his time was occupied in correspondence with Voltaire and Grimm, and others of that class which show a state of society in France that was scarcely if any better than that of the worst condition of the Roman Empire.

The Encyclopedia, begun in 1751,

was finally completed in 1769, occupying a period of eighteen years. The editors and the leading contributors were destined thereafter to be known as Encyclopedists, and their influence in small part for good, but mostly for evil, was vast and most prolonged. In that department which was purely evil two names are far more famous than those of Diderot and D'Alembert.

These are Voltaire and Rousseau. Curious indeed and eventful were the careers of these two men, the most prominent and noxious outgrowth of the society of the eighteenth century.

An incident or two in the youth of Voltaire illustrates to some degree the immense distance between the higher and lower ranks of society, which contributed to form his subsequent career of rebellion against authority of every kind. A satirical writing on the reign of Louis XIV. appeared shortly after his death, and Voltaire, wrongly suspected as the author, was imprisoned for a year in the Bastille. On another occasion, when, in a company of wits, he gave to a man of quality a retort which

drew upon him laughter, the man of quality had him flogged in the streets of Paris by his footman. Bent upon revenge, Voltaire took some lessons in fencing and afterwards challenged his enemy. Then he was again thrown into the Bastille for another six months, and released on condition that he would leave the country.

Such was a sample of that grinding oppression to which the common people of France were subjected during the regency of the Duke of Orleans in the minority of Louis XV. In such a state of things it might be imagined what one from among these common people would do, when, without religious faith, without moral obligation, but with a revengeful, malignant and otherwise evil heart, with invincible audacity, with a perfect command of a language — for some purposes the most perfect of existing tongues — with the highest capacity both to think and to work with rapidity and without cessation, he could have a fair field and length of time.

He lived to be eighty-four years old,

and the ninety volumes that he left are the results of that powerful, rapid, ceaseless work. They comprise the only epic poem in the French language, tragedies, comedies, odes, satires, histories, essays, letters, every form of composition for which pen and paper were ever employed, the most of which were meant to pull down and to destroy whatever existed that was good and precious, either in fact or in the hearts of mankind, and to exalt his own single, selfish self above all beings except that only One whom he acknowledged beyond humanity, God. In this last one respect he differed from Diderot, the founder of the Encyclopedists. He was an atheist. Voltaire did believe in a God. But he believed only that at first God made the world and set it going, and then retired to let it take care of itself with the use of whatever instincts and opportunities it had been provided withal. These instincts and opportunities which fell to his lot, he employed with a freedom which it is wonderful to contemplate. Disregarding the laws which the better part of so-

ciety believed God to have made for the government of mankind, and the individual conduct of its members, keeping himself within, and just within, the pale of human laws, he worked day and night, in season, and out of season, for the advancement of his own ends, which he seemed to regard as hostile to the ends of all the rest of mankind.

He worked and he made money, not so much by his books, as by trade and lotteries, and other chance speculations. He satirized and sneered at all that was considered good and sacred; he scoffed at the Church and at Christianity; he laughed at the obligations of marriage; and then when death came to him, the approach so terrified him that he became a maniac, and his last struggles were so terrific that they horrified and appalled those who were witnesses to them. It seemed, indeed, as if the furies told of in fable had been let loose upon him when age and imbecility had subdued his power for wrongdoing and left only remorse and the dread of retribution.

The life of Voltaire is a curious one

to study, both as to its representations of an age not long past and of the exhibition it affords of the lengths to which a most gifted intellect will go, when it is entirely broken off from the bonds of religion and any principle of morality and honor. For neither the greatest nor the smallest of his infirmities was his want of veracity. A falsehood with Voltaire, if it could serve his purposes, was as much prized as the truth. When he first essayed to get into the Academy, although he had spoken and written much against Christianity, he did not hesitate to deny both, and when at last, through the influence of Madame de Pompadour, he succeeded on his second application, he returned to his old ways only with increased bitterness. His moral character was the very incarnation of unlicensed profligate evil. In his terror at the last it did indeed seem as if he would have availed himself of the refuge of religion, but his furious madness cut him off from that opportunity.

In the study of German literature we read about the strange infatuation,

amounting to subserviency, paid by the people of that nation in that period to the French. A part of this was owing to Voltaire who resided for some years at the court of Frederick, afterwards surnamed the Great. This portion of the life of the great Frenchman was extremely interesting in itself, going as did his career through all the shades of relationship from the very height of cordial favoritism down to the extremes of hostility and disgust. Parts of this are laughable, or would be except for the contempt which it inspires. This last-mentioned feeling has never been created in such abundance by any human being who ever lived as by Voltaire. But his influence upon German literary genius was powerful, and it was pernicious. It was the chief glory of Lessing that he destroyed it and that he did so effectually.

Retiring from Berlin, and feeling not fully secure in his native country which he had virtually abandoned, and whose best possessions he had vilified, he settled, though then sixty-four years old, in a country place near Geneva, where,

as restless and as ambitious and as passionate as ever before, he continued to work until the last.

In those eighty-four years of life vouchsafed to this man, his work was as various as it was extensive, in science, art and philosophy, as well as in literature. The world now seldom ever notices those philosophical works in which he avowedly sought to overthrow Christianity, and his works on history, science and art, though praised in their day, have been overshadowed by the greater things that have been produced since. He is now of interest to the student of literature, mainly for his dramas, especially his tragic dramas, in which, with all his varied accomplishments of other sorts he ranks along with Corneille and Racine.

If Voltaire had been a better man he would far outrank both these men to whom he was superior in genius. Whilst he was in England he had studied well Shakespeare, who was totally unknown to the French, and whom they at first considered both a madman and a barbarian ; but from Shakespeare

he got much of the idea of that deeper delineation of passion which the rules of the stately tragic drama excluded.

The following observations from Schlegel's lectures, are apposite to this discussion:

"French tragedy from the time of Richelieu developed itself under the favor and protection of the court, and even its scene had, as already observed, the appearance of an ante-chamber. In such an atmosphere, the spectators might impress the poet with the idea that courtesy is one of the original and essential ingredients of human nature.

But in tragedy men are either matched with men in fearful strife, or set in close struggle with misfortune. We can therefore exact from them only an ideal dignity, far from the nice observance of social punctilios, they are absolved by their situation. So long as they possess sufficient presence of mind not to violate them, so long as they do not appear completely overpowered by their grief and mental agony, the deepest emotion is not yet reached. The poet may be allowed to take that care for his persons which Cæsar, after his death-blow, had for himself, and make them fall with decorum. He must not exhibit human nature in all its repulsive

nakedness. The most heartrending and dreadful pictures must still be invested with beauty and imbued with a dignity higher than the common reality. This miracle is effected by poetry; it has its indescribable sighs, its immediate accents of the deepest agony, in which there still runs a something melodious. It is only a certain full-dress and formal beauty which is incompatible with the greatest truth of expression. Yet it is exactly this beauty that is demanded in the style of a French tragedy."

Voltaire labored assiduously to bring the French theatre into a more reasonable condition in this respect, and, so far as the important matter of external arrangement was concerned, he succeeded. This was the abolishment of the boxes on either side of the stage in which persons of quality used to sit, whose continued chatterings greatly inconvenienced the actors on the narrow space allowed for their representations.

His first efforts in the line of the Greeks, were "Œdipe," "Mérope" and "Oreste." Descending from the Greeks to the Romans, he had his "Brutus," his "Morte de Cæsar," his "Triumvirat."

But his greatest works were those in which, discarding the forms of the ancients, here stored to the stage that modern hero of chivalry, which since the time of the Cid had been banished from it.

Splendid, indeed, are the tragedies of "Zaïre," "Alzire," "Mahomet," "Sémiramis" and "Tancrède." In "Zaïre" the passions of love and jealousy are portrayed in a manner unknown and unimagined by the greatest of the Greeks, and they are only such as can be felt by woman as she has become since Christianity and chivalry have exalted her to her proper scale in the being of society.

In "Alzire" the poet made a picture almost perfect of the struggles of the heroine Alzire. On one side there was the love of her country (Peru), its ancient, though less cultured, manners, and her first lover there, and what seemed higher obligations in the new sphere to which she was raised. In reading this great drama, one cannot but feel genuine sympathy as in a case of real perplexity befalling the young, the beautiful, and the innocent.

In "Mahomet," horrible as is the plot and violative as it is of history and the personal character of the prophet, yet the passion is such as comports with the loftiest demands of tragedy.

It is a mark of the wonderful talent of this man that in these two dramas ("Zaïre" and "Alzire") with his own sentiments towards Christianity, he should so well have understood what it could induce a true believer to feel and what to speak. It was as if for the time being he had parted from his infidelity, and in that interval felt all that fervor which for so many ages has sustained and strengthened and animated the sufferers upon the earth.

But even here the intellectual insincerity of Voltaire was evident often. Witness the anecdote of his instructions to a certain actress who was preparing for a part in one of his tragedies. In answer to some of his suggestions, she said, "Were I to play in this manner, sir, they would say the devil was in me." "Very right," answered Voltaire, "an actress ought to have the devil in her." This shows that at least his own

intellect, not to mention his moral sensibility, was below the high standard in tragic feeling, in which the truly great who suffer are not subdued by suffering into expressions inconsistent with manly dignity and womanly delicacy.

Voltaire's immense powers, his wit, his satire, his art in reasoning, his perfect command of words for every form of writing, gave to his principles the most pernicious influence. The following words of Victor Hugo are eminently discriminating:

"Voltaire leaves us a monument more astonishing by its extent than imposing by its grandeur. It is not an edifice of the august order. It is no palace for kings, it is no hospital for the poor. It is a bazaar elegant and vast, easily moved through, irregular, displaying untold riches flungon mud-heaps, offering to every interest, to every vanity, to every passion, the very thing that suits it best, dazzling to the eye, but rank to the nostril, presenting impurities as pleasures, alive with merchants, tramps, idlers, but seldom showing a priest, or a poor workingman. Here are splendid galleries, thronged incessantly with wonder-lost crowds; there

are dark caverns which nobody boasts of ever having visited. Under those sumptuous arcades you can find countless masterpieces of art and taste, glittering with gold and diamonds, but for the bronze statue, with the severe and classic forms of antiquity, you may look in vain. Decorations for your parlors, and boudoirs, you will find in abundance, but no ornaments for your sanctuary, for your oratory. And woe to the weak man who has nothing but a soul to lose, if he exposes it to the seductions of this magnificent abode, of this monstrous temple in which everything is thought of except truth, and everything worshipped except God."

When one thinks of those daring apostles of evil in the eighteenth century, with the horror that is inevitable, there is mingled in the case of one of them, a commiseration, which is something of a relief, that comes from the indulgence of compassion. Bad as he was, worthless in conduct and in principles, he was not a defiant scoffer and hater of virtue and religion. He was not an atheist, nor a deist.

A low-born Swiss, he had no opportunities for battling against the poor

condition to which he was born. His evil, selfish, idle nature, led him to neglect his work, to steal for his living; and his strongest attachments were for those low like himself; but Rousseau, in the midst of his worthlessness and his vices, had some undefined belief in religion, and some fear of that terrible punishment which might befall him in another state of existence. This indefinite belief and this fear were not sufficient to restrain his evil practices with himself, or with his pen, but they lead us to imagine that under more favorable circumstances his career might have been less intensely hurtful to himself and to society.

To read the early life of Rousseau is somewhat like reading the life of any tramping thief, who has obtained a precarious living by wandering about from place to place, begging what he could not steal, and stealing what he could not beg. The children born of him and Thérèse, who was yet lower than himself, were sent to the foundling-hospital. When at last the kind of talent that he possessed was exhibited,

he found temporary shelter with first one then another person in France, England and Switzerland, until death came and put an end to his earthly career.

After his death there was published his celebrated "Confessions." He had boasted that no human being had ever written such a record of his own doings. In this he was correct. The history of mankind gives no instance wherein a man with such plainness of speech told the world he left behind him of a career in which the grossness of evil is the ever recurring and almost perpetual theme. The audacity with which this was done almost approached the sublime. Rousseau declared that when the judgment day should come he would appear before the great Judge of Heaven and Earth, with his book in his hand, and say that was what he should have to offer in his own defense — his confessions of all or a considerable portion of the sins and atrocities that he had committed.

But what was the secret of the influence of such a man without education, and without principles? First, it was

the absolute rottenness of the state of society. We do not know, we cannot fully realize, how corrupt was that age of Louis XIV. in France. Not only religion, but honor, seemed to have lost their bearings. Not only men but women had grown to regard an obligation as something which it was both unmanly and unwomanly to keep. *Biensèances*, as they were called, were worth infinitely more than religion and honor. That society would have been, or pretended to be, shocked by a young lady's slightest indiscretion; but when once she was married then there was a higher law which was to govern conjugal conduct, and it required more strength than fell to the lot of most to resist the ridicule which followed upon the faithful discharge of conjugal obligations.

Now, Rousseau saw all the hollowness of such a state of society. If he had been a good man, hating this state as he did, there is no calculating the good he might have done. But he was a savage by nature, and he had gotten to believe that the savage state was better

for mankind than that in which the people of France were then living. Though not gifted like Voltaire with an elaborate education, Rousseau knew better how to talk and how to write in presenting to the people the ideas of that ideal society in which everybody did as he pleased, and where there was no such thing as relationship between governor and governed, superior and inferior.

The great works of Rousseau, his "Contrat Social," his "Nouvelle Héloïse" and his "Émile" are founded on this idea of unlicensed freedom. A law of any sort was a thing hateful in his eyes, and he made it hateful to a very large portion of the people of his generation. There was much that was sincere in his hostility to the pedantry and the affectation and the sneering of Voltaire and his set. There was much of genuine feeling in Rousseau, in opposition to this artificiality of the upper society of France.

Rousseau undertook to lead in a great movement to bring back the days of simple-heartedness. This school be-

came a sentimental one, but it was of a nature that had neither genuine manliness, nor genuine femininity. It was an indolent longing for ease and freedom, and unlicensed liberties of all sorts. In the times of the Trouvères and the Troubadours, there was abundance of sentiment; but it went along with courage in men and virtue in women, and a sacred regard to God, and truth in both.

A critic, speaking of Rousseau's influence on German literature of this time, thus talks :

" An evil conscience has always much to do with sentimentality. It is the more or less clear consciousness of self-produced unmanliness. Rousseau — the weak, unstable Rousseau — now rising to the heights of sublimity, and now sinking to vulgarity, at one time flattering his own weaknesses, at another despising himself again — is a personification of the whole species. It is the unchivalrous character of modern times ; it is man disguised in petticoats as a punishment for his cowardice ; it is the temporary reversal of the sexual poles — a transferring of feminine timidity, feminine weakness of character,

feminine longings, feminine frivolity, feminine vanity and love of finery, feminine excitability, and preëminently of the feminine luxury of tears to the once, vigorous, steadfast, proud, calm and cold man."

Rousseau — poor, vagabond Rousseau — subsisted always on the charities of others. All his life he was under the thrall of the low, vulgar Thérèse, with whom later in life he took the marriage bonds which he had taught to be the most useless and oppressive of all. Long before his death he was consumed by the evil passions which he had indulged. They distorted his features, making of him another man whom few persons recognized, and earlier than Voltaire, and for a longer duration, he was a maniac.

In the midst of the insupportable sufferings of France from the baleful influences of its men of letters, her cry and that of all Europe was shrieked for deliverance. Then came the Revolution, that vast, angry, resistless, conflagration in which much of good was consumed by the abounding evil that had absorbed it.

Spanish Literature.

SPANISH LITERATURE

I.

Spanish Ballad Poetry.

ONE of the most interesting themes for the study of those who are fond to contemplate the history of mankind, especially in ages long gone by, is the career of the Arab race. To Ishmael, the son of the bondwoman, the prophecy came that his hand should be against the hand of other men, and the hand of other men against his. It is a melancholy story which tells of how the free woman, the lawful wife of the Patriarch, jealous for the claims of her own offspring, cast out the unhappy Hagar, with her son, in whose veins was the commingled blood of the Hebrew and the Egyptian. Expecting to die in their exile, they were comforted by the Almighty. The boy grew to be a mighty archer, his mother obtained for him a wife from his kindred of Egypt,

and he dwelt in the wilderness of Paran. A mighty nation sprang from this original. Ever keeping up their characteristic of hostility to the favored of mankind, their wars and their conquests are the most thrilling that history has recorded.

When the learning of the Greeks and Romans left its native places, it found among the Arabs almost its only repositories. It is one of the most singular facts that to that nation, now in its decay, and yet occupying the deserts in the East, Europe is indebted for its first revival of this ancient civilization. Having taken possession of the northern portions of Africa, under the name of Moors, they extended their conquests across the Mediterranean and founded an empire rivaling that of Bagdad, at Cordova, in Spain.

This occupation of the peninsula continued for eight hundred years. The invaders came into Europe a people advanced in arts and arms, bringing the lore, not only of the Greeks and the Romans, but that, more fervid and thrilling, of the distant East. The religion

they brought was that strange faith founded by the camel-driver of Mecca, which, after twelve centuries, is still the faith of tens of millions of human beings. They found a people uncultured, unused to great wars, simple, unexceptionably Christian, but brave, patriotic, and devotedly attached to their country. They got nothing without resistance, but by perseverance they obtained, in time, all of that romantic country, except the extreme northwest, where the brave Pelayo, protected by the mountain barriers, maintained for himself and his followers the only independence of native Spaniards, and saved the national identity of his people.

But a whole nation could not thus follow its last armies and subsist amongst the fastnesses of the mountains, or on the limited territories of Biscay and the Asturias. The great body of the people must remain in their native places, submit to the conquerors and obtain from them whatever indulgence it might suit their whims to allow in the development of their own separate existence.

A milder policy characterized this Mahommedan rule in the West than that which had followed its advance in the East. Except that a double tribute was exacted from the Spaniards, and they were required to pay taxes for their church property, they were treated with leniency, allowed the free exercise of their religious faith, and encouraged in all endeavors for their own well-being. Under such a rule from a vastly more cultivated people, the native inhabitants must necessarily have been assimilated to the foreigners. In the lapse of time they came into the adoption of many of the oriental habits, both intellectual and physical. Spaniards attended upon Moorish princes and chieftains, fought in their wars, learned their literature, and adopted much both of their ways of living and their language.

Among these Moors of Spain there was an exalted culture, not only of the understanding but of manners. Brave and warlike they were, yet gentle and courteous and generous. Being such they engrafted their civilization more

easily upon the people. In time those Spaniards who dwelt in their midst were called by the name of Mozarabes, and were distinguishable from the Moors themselves in almost no respect except their adherence to the faith of Christianity.

The most despotic acts of the conquerors were those in which they required their own language to be taught to their Christian subjects, and to be used by them. But these acts were submitted to. In process of time the language of the natives was well-nigh lost. Christian Bishops had to translate the Scriptures into the Arabic language, and in the archives of the cathedral of Toledo, the Archiepiscopal city of Spain, are yet to be seen ecclesiastical documents in this foreign tongue.

All historians speak of the splendor of this Moorish empire in Spain. It seemed to be destined to prevail, not only in that country but over all Europe. But with that band who retreated beyond the Northwestern mountains, and preserved their separate existence, the love of country and their religion

grew side by side with the hatred of the conquerors of their brethren of the South; and during those eight hundred years of occupation there was not absent for one hour, from the hearts of the Spanish people, the wish and the resolution to drive the invaders back into Africa and repossess the land of their ancestors. How many a battle was fought, how many a knightly deed was enacted during these centuries of conflict!

From the Moors the Spaniards had learned the art of singing the exploits of their brave and the charms of their women. Besides, in this border warfare between two peoples distinguished for the beauty of their daughters and the knightliness of their sons, there were loves necessarily springing up between Spanish knight and Moorish lady, Moorish knight and Spanish lady, all the more ardent because of resistance and of danger. These were to be sung or narrated in lofty-toned Chronicles in a language varying through many a change, according as the separate existences of different bodies of the Spanish

people multiplied those changes, until the establishment of the solidarity of the whole.

When, after the lapse of ages, the patriots from the North had gotten into the South, their countrymen had long lost the tongue of their ancestors, and in all respects, except religion and patriotism, had been converted into Moors. Yet there was no one controlling language even among those Spainards who had lived separate from the Moors. Of the four dialects, Castilian, Galician, Catalonian, Valencian, the Castilian became, through political influences, the leading one; but all these, with the dialect of the South, which had adopted that of the Moors, were made to unite (only with Castilian preponderance) to form the language, which, in accord with the eventual establishment of nationality, was called Spanish.

The retreat of the Moor was as tardy as his advance had been rapid. It was not until three centuries after the conquest of Spain that we hear of one great captain, and one great conquest.

The greatest name that has come out

of the confused annals of the eleventh century is that of Rodrigo Diaz de Bivar, commonly called the Great Captain, sometimes the Campeador, but oftener the Cid. This mighty warrior had founded for his sovereign, Ferdinand I., the empire of Castile at Burgos. In his many years of heroic warfare he drove the enemies of his country south and southeastward, and his last action was the rescue of Valencia far down upon the Mediterranean. The first literary productions of Spain were in honor of the Cid, his exile, his return, his various exploits. I say his exile, for the Spaniards, like other nations, have at times treated their great heroes with ingratitude, and, like Coriolanus with the Volscians, he had to join himself sometimes with the enemies of his country with whom he had found a home and welcome protection. The songs and the chronicles in honor of the Cid were mighty influences in continuing and keeping fervent the religious and patriotic fire of the people.

Fortunately for the purposes of

Spanish literature there came to the throne of Castile a series of monarchs beginning with some who were eminently qualified to lead in the career of civilization. Deeply religious, gifted with that stately grace which seems peculiar to Spain, they encouraged their people in all arts useful to the establishment of nationality and the development of their being. Alphonso X. had the Holy Scriptures translated into the Castilian tongue, and this was more than three hundred years before the birth of Martin Luther. Alphonso XI., in the midst of a busy and stormy reign, was not only a poet himself, but he gave encouragement to literature, by making progress in it the condition to favor and offices.

Not only kings and ministers of state were poets, but dignitaries in the Church, and priests, secular and regular, and occasionally nuns, devoted much of their time to the cultivation of letters. For of all Christian people, the Spaniards have been the most unchangeably religious. I do not say the most devout, but they have been most undeviatingly

attached to their faith, and the most docile to the teachings of the Church. Of that long list of writers in the Spanish language, the most eminent, have, for the greater part, belonged to the clerical profession, and the sweetest poetry of Spain, the serious and the gay, has emanated from the parsonage and the cloister.

Earliest among those reverend poets whose works are of interest is Gonzalo de Berceo, a secular priest. Of his numerous works that which has been most admired is the "Miracles of the Virgin." I give a translation of the opening passage:

"My friends and faithful vassals of Almighty God above,
If ye listen to my words in a spirit to improve,
A tale ye shall hear of piety and love
Which afterwards yourselves shall heartily approve.

"I, a Master in Divinity, Gonzalo Berceo hight,
Once wandering as a pilgrim, found a meadow richly dight
Green and peopled full of flowers, of flowers fair and bright,
A place where a weary man would rest him with delight.

"And the flowers I beheld all looked and smelt so sweet,
That the senses and the soul they seemed alike to greet,

While on every side ran fountains through all
this glad retreat,
Which in winter kindly warmth supplied, yet
tempered summer's heat.

"And of rich and goodly trees, there grew a
boundless maze.
Granada's apples bright, and figs of golden rays.
And many other fruits beyond my skill to
praise;
But none that turneth sour, and none that e'er
decays.

"The freshness of that meadow, the sweetness
of its flowers,
The dewy shadows of the trees, that feel like
cooling showers,
Renewed within my frame its worn and wasted
powers;
I deem the very odors would have nourished
me for hours."

This was written a hundred years before the birth of Chaucer, and, in spite of the insufficiency of the translation, there is to be seen somewhat of the same freshness to be found in the works of the latter. The peculiar circumstances of Spanish life gave an earlier and stronger impulse to romantic literature than had been produced in other nations, and imparted a character almost unique.

The controlling ideas of the Spaniards were their religion and their country. Their prose, therefore, must par-

take to a great degree of poetry. The historical romance in verse, and the chivalric romance in prose, went hand in hand in recording and singing the exploits of their countrymen.

A work which exerted a wonderful influence upon the development of that literature was the "Amadis de Gaul," written by Lobeiras, a Portugese, for the cause of Portugal was common with the rest of the peninsula in the struggle with the Moors. A cumbrous book to be read now, and not very interesting, is the history of the love of Amadis and Oriana, the "Child of the Sea;" but it stimulated that religious, patriotic people wonderfully, both in the performance of heroic deeds and in recording those of others.

Such is the abundance of this early poetry in Spain, so numerous were the poets, all of whom were warriors or priests that we should have supposed that a larger number of the names of these gifted authors, and a larger number of their works would have been preserved. But in the ever confused condition of the different dialects, in

the absence of the knowledge and opportunities of cultivating the art of writing, notwithstanding the vast number that have come down to us, the greater part were lost, and there is many a beautiful soul-stirring ballad, the name of whose author has not descended to us. Indeed, like those of the minnesinger of Germany, these songs, many of them, were not written until years after they were composed and their authors were dead. The songs had lived in the hearts and upon the tongues of the people, and were written down in peaceful times when the great work of Spanish endeavor was completed, and after the singer had long been dead.

The earliest form of this literature was the ballad, and this form has occupied ever since in Spanish literature a more prominent part than a similar form has occupied in any other European literature, not even excepting Germany. They took that form of eight syllabled asonants, as they were called (in which the rhyme was in the last vowel instead of the last syllable), which is easy to write. Sometimes they were broken into

stanzas of four lines and thence called redondillas or roundelays. The sweetness of this form of writing, and the ease with which it was produced, caused it to be often introduced into the Chronicles in which purported to be recorded faithfully the actions of contemporary times.

It has always been deeply regretted that so much of this early literature has been lost, especially the ballads. For some of those which have descended to us are of exceeding beauty. In this neighborhood of two knightly peoples there must have been, as I have before said, many passages of romantic adventures growing out of the loves of the individual Moors and Spaniards. For the men of both races were as brave as the women were beautiful. How various are these ballads, from the war song to the song of the lover! How various these among themselves according as they tell of triumph or disaster, successful or unhappy love! As the Moors slowly withdraw towards the South, a melancholy interest attaches to their decline, and compassionate things

are said in music which it is touching to hear.

The following is an instance wherein is told how a Spaniard effected an entrance into the house of a Moor, where alone was a beautiful Moorish maiden:

"I was a Moorish maid Morayma,
I was that maiden dark and fair.
A Christian came, he seemed in sorrow,
Full of falsehood came he there.
Moorish he spoke—he spoke it well—
'Open the door, thou Moorish maid,
So shalt thou be by Allah blessed,
So shall I save my forfeit head.'
'But how can I, alone and weak,
Unbar and know not who is there?'
'But I'm the Moor, the Moor Mazote,
The brother of thy mother dear.
A Christian fell beneath my hand;
The Alcalde comes, he comes apace,
And if thou open not the door,
I perish here before thy face.'
'I rose in haste, I rose in fear,
I seized my cloak, I missed my vest,
And rushing to the fatal door,
I threw it wide at his behest.'"*

Of these ancient ballads the number collected and published in the "Cancionero de Romances" and the "Libro de Romances" is largely over a thousand. Their subjects are fictions of chivalry, especially Charlemagne and his peers, some on Spanish history and

* Ticknor's "History of Spanish Literature," vol. 1, p. 110.

traditions, some founded on Moorish adventures and the rest on private life.

Far in advance of the romances of Arthur and his knights were the first ballads of Spanish chivalry, of which the Cid was the theme, and Charlemagne and his peers came in, but not for the sort of song with which his praises had been sung in France, for that monarch had allied himself with the Moors, and many a song of triumph rose from his defeat. The disaster that Charlemagne's army under Roland suffered at Roncesvalles* gave existence to some of the most striking ballads. In "Lady Alda's Dream" is to be seen that knightly tenderness for the suffering of beauty, which a victorious hero can thoroughly feel in the midst of triumph. Of all the old ballads of Spain the following is probably best known to English readers:

"In Paris Lady Alda sits, Sir Roland's destined bride,
With her three hundred maidens, to tend her, at her side;
Alike their robes and sandals all, and the braid that binds their hair,

* Ticknor's "History of Spanish Literature."

And alike their meals in their lady's hall the
whole three hundred share.

"Around her in her chair of state, they all their
places hold.
A hundred weave the web of silk, as a hundred
spin the gold,
And a hundred touch their gentle lutes to soothe
that lady's pain,
As she thinks of him that's far away with the host
of Charlemagne.

"Lulled by the sound she sleeps, but soon she
wakens with a scream,
And, as her maidens gather round, she thus re-
counts her dream:
'I sat upon a desert shore, and from the mountain
high,
Right toward me, I seemed to see a gentle falcon
fly;
But close behind an eagle swooped, and struck
that falcon down,
And with talons and beak he rent the bird as he
cowered beneath my gown.'

"The chief of her maidens smiled and said, 'To me
it doth not seem
That the Lady Alda reads aright the boding of her
dream.
Thou art the falcon, and thy knight is the eagle in
his pride,
And he comes in triumph from the war and
pounces on his bride.'
The maidens laughed, but Alda sighed, and
gravely shook her head.
'Full rich,' quote she, 'shall thy guerdon be, if
thou the truth hast said.'
'Tis morn; her letters stained with blood, the
truth too plainly tell,
How, in the chase of Ronceval, Sir Roland fought
and fell.

The most numerous and the best among these ancient ballads are those that relate to the heroes of Spain, from the Moorish conquest to their expulsion, the most illustrious of whom is Bernardo del Carpio, the son by secret marriage of Count de Saldado and a sister of Alphonso The Chaste. Next are those in honor of Fernan Gonzales, who in the tenth century recovered Castile yet another time from the Moors, and became its first Sovereign Count. After these follow those on the Seven Lords of Lara.

In these last-mentioned ballads there is a mine of inexhaustible beauty. In all Spanish history there is probably no portion so full of romantic interest as that which is celebrated in these ballads of the Seven Lords of Lara. There is a double interest in them grown out of the intermingling of Spanish and Moorish feeling and action. The base Velasquez betrayed the seven sons of his brother to the Moors, who murdered them and had their father imprisoned in a Moorish castle. But here the brave Lara was seen and loved by a

Moorish lady of exalted rank, who, uniting her fortunes with his, bore him a son. This son. half Spaniard, half Moor, became the celebrated Mecdama, who, espousing the cause of his father and his murdered brethren, executed terrible revenge upon his and their kinsman.

Yet it was the Cid who was the most frequent object of the song of these early poets. Some of these are of exquisite beauty. The Cid had been married almost in boyhood to the daughter (Ximena) of his father's enemy, in order to settle the deadly feud between the two families. He did not know it at the time, but he was loved, and perhaps could have married Urraca, the daughter of Ferdinand the Great who had assisted in the ceremonies of his knighting. Years afterwards when, on the death of the King, wars have sprung up among his children, and the Cid has taken part with Sancho against Urraca, Queen of Zarnora, she, while standing upon one of the towers, thus taunts him with the loss of the felicity which he might have obtained:

"Away, away, proud Roderic,
Castilian proud, away!
Bethink thee of that olden time,
That happy, honored day,
When at Janus' holy shrine
Thy knighthood first was won
When Ferdinand, my royal sire,
Confessed thee for a son.
He gave thee, then, thy knightly arms,
My mother gave thy steed;
Thy spurs were buckled by these hands,
That thou no grace mightst need.
And had not chance forbid the vow,
I thought with thee to wed;
But Count Lozano's daughter fair
Thy happy bride was led.
With her came wealth, and ample store,
But power was mine, and state;
Broad lands are good, and have their grace,
But he that reigns is great.
Thy wife is well, thy match was wise;
Yet, Roderic, at thy side
A vassal's daughter sits by thee,
And not a royal bride."

But there are many others of these old ballads, besides those of chivalry, and of history and the wars with the Moors. These are on scenes in private life, unconnected with wars or other stirring adventures. In this respect the Spanish literature is the very richest and most interesting in all the literature of Europe. Rich as is the borderland of Scotland and England in the ballad, far more so as well as more varied is Spain.

There is especially one trait in these ballads which is to be found nowhere else. The satirical and the playful and the picturesque in the ballad are not to be seen except in that of Spain. Lofty, soul-stirring as are some, full of tenderness, compassion, and soft melancholy as are others; yet that versatile people, so prone to poetic thoughts on all subjects on which the human heart could ponder and obtain consolation and entertainment, could find sport in those comic miscarriages which, with serious things, make up the sum of human existence. This playful mischievousness is in no ballad literature except that of Spain, and there is among it much that is charming. Instance the one beginning:

> "Her sister, Miquela
> Once chid little Jane."*

In this old ballad literature there is to be found much of poetry after the style of the troubadours of Provence. In this lovely region extending from Italy on the Mediterranean shore to Spain, the Visigoths, the mildest of the northern barbarian races, had settled,

* Ticknor's "History of Spanish Literature," vol. 1, p. 136.

and a poetry sweet and gentle like the region had sprung up. From long time proximity had made kindred the poetry on either side of the Pyrenees, and the Spaniards of the Northeast, unlike their hardier countrymen of the Northwest, cultivated to a considerable degree this literature, which in the hands of the troubadours was mostly devoted to love.

This literature received, however, a far-increased attention when the crown of Provence passed, in the twelfth century, by the marriage of its heir, to Raymond Berenger, the Count of Barcelona; and further, by a similar acquisition from the Count of Barcelona of the kingdom of Arragon; and yet further by the exile of the troubadours who almost as a body belonged to the heresy of the Albigenses.

The literature of the troubadours belongs, however, more particularly to that of France. I have mentioned it in this connection for the sake of its influence in the formation of the manners and language of that portion of Spain which, from geographical and political conditions, was most subjected to its influence.

When the different provinces became eventually united, and Spanish nationality was firmly established, this lighter poetry, like the dialects of the Catalonians, Valencians and Galicians gave way before the march of that Castilian which had grown up vigorous and independent beyond the Northwestern mountains.

As this ballad literature descends, it changes its tone in accord with the waning power of the Moors. When their possessions were limited to Granada, their last stronghold there, in that picturesque region, with the ever-increasing assurance of their eventual entire expulsion, the Spanish ballad, in the North so warlike, subsided from that lofty tone and told more of the affairs of the heart, of games and tournaments.

It is admitted on all sides that the ballad literature of Spain is at once more varied and more national than that of any other nation. I conclude this lecture with the following from Ticknor's "History of Spanish Literature:"

"But, besides what the Spanish ballads possess different from the popular poetry of the rest of Europe, they exhibit, as no others exhibit it, the nationality which is the truest element of such poetry everywhere. They seem, indeed, as we read them, to be often little more than the great traits of the old Spanish character, brought out by the force of poetical enthusiasm, so that, if their nationality were taken away from them, they would cease to exist. This in its turn has preserved them down to the present day, and will continue to preserve them hereafter.

"The great Castilian heroes, such as the Cid, Bernardo del Carpio and Pelayo, are even now an essential portion of the faith and poetry of the common people of Spain, and are still in some degree honored as they were honored in the age of the Great Captain, or farther back in that of Saint Ferdinand.

"The stories of Guarinos and the Defeat of Roncesvalles are still sung by the wayfaring muleteers as they were when Don Quixote heard them in his journeyings to Toboso, and the showmen still rehearse the adventures of Gayferos and Melisenora in the streets of Seville as they did at the solitary inn of Montesinos when he encountered them there.

"In short, the ancient Spanish ballads are so truly national in their spirit that they became at once identified with the popular character that had produced them; and that same character will go onward, we doubt not, till the Spanish people shall cease to have a separate and independent existence."

II.

Cervantes, Mendoza and Aleman.

For seven hundred years the greatest expenditures of Spanish endeavors had been made in the cause of religion and patriotism. The literature of the gifted among them had been devoted on the one hand to magnify the most blessed of the Saints in that happy Calendar with the Mother of God at its head, and the exaltation of those who had dared the furthest, and borne the most conspicuous part, in the wars both upon their religion and their country.

Spain has long ceased to be numbered amongst the Great Powers of Europe. Yet there is due to the history of that romantic country a respect of its kind to which none in modern Europe is entitled. Not one of these has been so beset by foreign invasions, nor has any one so persistently and successfully resisted them.

During these seven centuries the

faith of the Spanish nation remained the same, as well as the desire and the determination to establish Spanish independence. In these centuries of trial it must needs be that literature must be for a long time mainly poetic, and be made to celebrate chiefly the saintly in religious and the heroic in knightly endeavors.

It is not within my purpose to notice the numberless religious legends, except so far as they are sung in that unique literature, in this respect more interesting the older it is, nor to discuss whether or not their numbers and their nature may have given a benign or an injurious impulse to the religious being of the nation. We are rather now to consider one result of so protracted a period of general and individual excitement.

The publication of the romance of "Amadis de Gaul" yet further intensified the love for the heroic which for centuries had been the principal characteristic of the Spaniards. Then in the daily life of the nation and of individuals, there were frequent occurrences, so

similar to those even the most marvelous in this romance that it was not surprising that these should come to be regarded by many as of real existence.

Out of this belief and the exuberance of fondness for the heroic, there grew up the habit of knight-errantry, which led many a knight, for the want of adequate exercise to his valor at home, to wander about in search of adventures. The most intense earthly joy among such was that which arose from combat. These knights espoused the cause of weakness, innocence and the oppressed of every kind. In the lapse of time such indiscriminate and unlicensed warfare must become extravagant and injurious to the development of reasonable nationality.

Such was the case in Spain at the coming of a man, who, in some respects, is one of the most remarkable in the history of letters. The mighty struggle with the Moors had ended after the union of the crowns of Arragon and Castile, by the marriage of Ferdinand and Isabella, and the consolidation into one of the whole political power of Spain.

Near the capital of the nation in 1547, fifty years after the expulsion of the Moors, was born Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra.

The youth of this extraordinary man, after his course of education at the universities of Alcalá and Salamanca, was spent partly in that splendid capital of Madrid, where he became a devotee to the theatre and the practice of writing pastorals and dramas, and partly in travels in foreign countries. Enlisting as a soldier in war, he was present at the celebrated battle of Lepanto, in which, under Don John of Austria, Europe was miraculously delivered from the invasion of the Turkish power, then so powerful and so dreaded by all Christian peoples. Here he lost his left hand, a loss of which to his dying day he never ceased to be proud. Afterwards he was taken prisoner by the Moors in Africa, and was kept in captivity for eight years. Returning to his native place poor and destitute of powerful friends, he thought to resume the pursuits of his earlier manhood and gain subsistence and fame by devoting himself to

writing for the stage which, with the advent of peace, had become the centre of literary endeavors in the nation. His efforts in this line will be briefly considered in the next lecture when I come to speak of the Spanish drama.

We have seen in our studies of English literature how the superiority of the poetry of Lord Byron, so painfully discouraging to the prestige of Sir Walter Scott, drove him into that other field — prose romance — in which he was destined to win his greatest fame. So it was with Cervantes. The drama of Spain fell under the sway of that wonderful priest, Lope de Vega, and Cervantes, unable to contend, especially with those odds against him which I will mention hereafter, was forced to withdraw like Scott into the sphere of prose. Mankind will never cease to be thankful for this necessity.

Whatever of bitterness or even contempt there may have been in the heart of this man in the contemplation of a state of society which put before him a man to whom he felt himself superior, we cannot measure now. He would

have exalted, had it been possible, the Spanish poetic literature, especially the Spanish drama, from that condition which has ever made it controlled by the tastes of the populace of Spain. Unable to do this he went with all his might against another condition of that literature, and in this endeavor he accomplished a success unexampled in the history of letters.

The universal fondness for the "Amadis de Gaul," and other heroic romances, recollections of the numberless heroic actions of their ancestors during the centuries against the Moors, had produced a state of society which to the serious mind of Cervantes was most injurious, and which he felt should be checked. He was sufficiently practical to know that this could not be done otherwise than indirectly.

It would have been worth almost a man's life, at least his personal security, to make a direct attack upon this favorite work, with its kindred, and the habits of thought they had created. For the nation at large in their simplicity accepted as mainly true the actions

therein recorded. Therefore he chose for his purposes two imaginary representatives of contemporary Spanish character and manners.

One of these, Don Quixote, was a brave, generous, high-spirited, noble-minded knight, whose refined and exalted nature was so overwrought by contemplation of the glorious actions in the ancient days of heroism, as to have lost to a degree the balance of a mind naturally strong and gifted, and been impressed with a desire, in spite of the prevalence of peace, to restore that state of society, and even at length to imagine that it had already returned. Now, a knight must have his esquire. An esquire himself was but a knight in embryo, a youth being trained in the use of the sword, in the study of the achievements of knighthood, growing constantly in the hope of living to add his own to that glorious record. But it would have seemed incredible, and would otherwise have been impracticable, that two insane persons from the same rank in life should have gone out upon such enterprises. It was a most

felicitous thought, therefore, when Sancho Panza was selected for this rôle — Sancho Panza, a "compound of grossness and simplicity," whose understanding was too dull to comprehend the absurd folly of the aspirations of the knight, and whose selfishness led him to confide in the prospects of reward which seemed so flattering.

It was thus that was conceived that greatest of the romances, "Don Quixote." The mad knight on his poor steed, the dull squire on his ass, Dapple, these are they who sally forth to reënact the lofty deeds of the heroes of olden times, to fight with giants and rescue captives. In this career there is a series of dramatic actions, so numerous, so manifold, that it is simply a wonder that the mind of one man could have invented them all. Beyond all praise is that perfect art with which these two characters are contrasted and yet made to harmonize and coöperate.

Unlimitedly absurd as are many and many an action of the knight, ridiculous and inconvenient and painful as are sometimes the results of his foolish

endeavors, yet on the dull, gross, selfish understanding of his follower he obtained and preserved an influence which imparts an interest to their society always intense and always natural. The knight takes the wind-mill to be a giant. Sancho Panza has not the slightest doubt but that his master is mistaken, yet after the disastrous encounter he is as ready as before to follow. In "Sancho Panza" there was no more of sentiment than there was in "Dapple." It was well there was not, for then the contrast, which makes up the success of the book, would be destroyed. Neither was there much more of character than there was in "Dapple." Of all liars he was the chief among mortals, but this served to set off better the delicate sense of veracity which was so beautiful to contemplate in his master.

Yet the understanding of Sancho was too limited for him to understand the absurdity of the lives the two were leading. The half and half views he continually takes of things, partly coming obstinately to his own conclusions and partly yielding to those of his master,

are the very perfection of comedy. Witness the assent he gives to the general conclusions of "Don Quixote," that what had passed on a certain occasion was all enchantment, doggedly excepting from this general judgment himself being tossed in a blanket. No enchantment there!

Now, of all characters who are liable to be deceived, those are among the most so who are liars themselves, especially when to this lack of veracity is added a gross selfishness. Around the innocent and truthful of this world there is often a wall which, though not seen by the eye, is a defense against evil and danger. Though virtue is sometimes betrayed, yet it is its own best defender in the long run, while falsehood and grossness inflict upon themselves their own punishment. It was thus with Sancho Panza, whose selfishness and mendacity made him more the dupe of the extravagances which turned the mind of his master. Numberless and ever varying as were the delusions which befell these adventurers, it is wonderful that the mind should never

tire in considering them. That was a happy thought of the author to intersperse his story with so many episodes. Beyond comparison interesting and beautiful are some of these episodes which although they do not claim to be so intended yet, with only two or three exceptions, contribute to the maintaining of the plot. Among these episodes are many pastorals in which sort of literature Spain abounds more than any other country.

That country, the loveliest upon earth, most romantic in its alternations of mountains and valleys, its climate ever inviting to outdoor existence, and its separation from the rest of Europe, seemed the proper home, when its wars were over, for the sweet tranquillity of the pastoral. Cervantes had written, when quite a young man, two pastorals, the "Filena" and the "Galatea," in obedience to the demand of his countrymen for that sort of literature. But his mind was too large to be content to devote itself to that department, which, narrow though it is, is correspondingly one of the most difficult.

Portugal was the favorite home of the pastoral, and it happened that in a Portuguese port the young Spaniard had a rival for the affections of the lady he loved best. He fought the stranger with the latter's weapon and vanquished him, for, on the appearance of the first part of "Galatea," the lady gave in to his suit and became his wife; and that conquest prevented the completion of the work.

But this talent so early developed was availed of in his great work, and many an idyl of marvelous beauty occurs in the history of Don Quixote.

Now, what was the object of Cervantes in this work? Some critics, with uncommon subtlety of understanding and fondness for speculation, have attributed it to that singular combination of the serious and the sportive in a great genius, which spontaneously, and with definiteness of purpose, sets out to illustrate these two phases of human existence in the alternate sequences in which they occur in the world, just as a philosopher would discuss the various characteristics of the human understand-

ing. But Cervantes was not without a purpose, and a lofty, patriotic, humane purpose. He had seen his countrymen given up to an extravagant admiration for the books of chivalry to a degree as to hinder the development of a national taste that was absolutely essential for the production of a sound national literature. It was his purpose, and so he avowed, to assist and if possible to destroy this fondness, by exhibiting the utter absurdity of the chief events narrated in these romances. He seized upon these adventures, took them from all sane and sensible persons, and handed them over to a crazy knight and a dull peasant and sent them all over Spain to exhibit these adventures in their ridiculousness and nakedness. Never since the world began was a set purpose so thoroughly accomplished.

When "Don Quixote" appeared, men of all conditions, even those heretofore most familiar with chivalric romances and most fond of them, wondered that they had not seen for themselves the endless absurdities of that of which they had been so continued admirers; and thus,

instantaneously and with one blow, a single man overthrew a great system, and overthrew it finally and forever.

And now we are come to the consideration of another species of literature which originated in Spain under peculiar circumstances, and which, though writers in other tongues, have cultivated it, is yet preëminently Spanish. It was named El Gusto Picaresco, or the style of Rogues.

Long wars, indeed wars of all kinds, while they sometimes develop great virtues which lead to the establishment of great principles, yet give rise to many vices.

It is long before a nation that has been at war can settle down fairly to the pursuits of peace. Indeed, entire peace did not come to Spain with the expulsion of the Moor. In subsequent alliances with Italy, the vast enterprises of Charles V. made the Spanish nation continue to be a nation of warriors; and the pursuit of arms, except by the humblest in Spanish society, came long to be considered the only one that was entirely becoming to a Spaniard.

In such a state of society the number of idlers is always great; soldiers disgusted with warfare, returned home, yet unfit for other employments; and others whose living was made by their wits, and whose wits, being their only capital, became in process of time most wonderfully productive.

The Spanish people considered themselves, and justly then, the greatest of earth. Under Charles V. they dreamed of a Spanish empire to become great as that of the Cæsars. Added to these conditions, the discovery and realization of the enormous riches of the New World made the obtaining of subsistence so easy in that favored country that the ordinary labors of a people, in agriculture, mechanics and trade, were left only to the sober minded, the industrious and thoroughly upright, while thousands of others spent their time in idleness, or in that sort of work, of its kind often most laborious, in getting a living without honest work, and often especially for the enjoyment of the satisfaction which such a means of livelihood imparted.

In these times not more full of brave soldiers were the armies of Spain in distant fields than were her towns at home of rogues and vagabonds. The central resort of these was Seville, then the capital of Charles, where dwelt the princely merchants who owned that vast continent of riches beyond the Atlantic. So large a body of citizens, exerting so great an influence upon society, must be celebrated in that literature which, turning from ancient themes, was beginning to represent modern and contemporary life.

Cervantes in his "Novelas Exemplares" (Moral Tales), especially in the "Gitanilla" (Little Gipsy), and his "Riconete y Cortadillo," employed himself for a time in this kind of work; but afterwards his nobler and more serious nature led him to other endeavors.

The man who may be said to have led in this strange literature was Mendoza, though the one most distinguished in it was Mateo Aleman, of Seville. Mendoza was a statesman and noble of the very highest rank; and to public affairs his life was mainly

diverted. It is said that while a youth at the university he wrote that celebrated novel "Lazarillo de Tormes," the first of its kind.

"It is the autobiography of a boy, little Lazarus, born in a mill on the banks of the Tormes, near Salamanca, and sent out by his base and brutal mother as the leader of a blind beggar, the lowest place in the social condition, perhaps, that could be found in Spain. But, such as it is, Lazarillo makes the best, or the worst, of it. With an inexhaustible fund of good humor and great quickness of parts, he learns at once the cunning and profligacy that qualify him to rise to still greater frauds, and a yet wider range of adventures and crimes in the service successively of a priest, a gentleman starving on his own pride, a prior, a seller of indulgences, a chaplain and an alguazil, until at last, from the most disgraceful motives, he settles down as a married man; and then the story terminates without reaching any proper conclusion, and without intimating that any is to follow. Its object is — under the character of a servant.

with an acuteness that is never at fault, and with so small a stock of honesty and truth, that neither of them stand in the way of his success — to give a pungent satire upon all classes of society, whose condition Lazarillo well comprehends because he sees them in undress and behind the scenes."*

Powerful as was the impression made by this work upon the public, it was much less so than the work of Aleman, which followed it. This was entitled "Guzman de Alfarache." In the hero of this play there ran the blood of both the Spaniard and the Italian, for, within the last few years, ideas and manners from Italy had been imported and engrafted upon the society and the literature of Spain. This Guzman was the son, or supposed himself to be the son, of a disreputable merchant of Genoa, who had settled in Seville. He ran away from home in boyhood and entered upon a career of scoundrelism, the like of which is to be found nowhere else.

The popularity which followed the publication of this work was next, if not

* Ticknor's "His. Span. Lit.," vol. I., p. 471.

equal, to that of Don Quixote. The abundance of such characters in the country, the amount of fraud and trickery that were common in all employments, rendered the thrilling narrative of "Guzman de Alfarache" the common talk of all classes of society, and successors and imitators appeared in abundance during a period of many years, such as Perez, Espime, Yanez y Rivera, and Quevedo, until finally, in the hands of the last mentioned, a man more lofty minded than his predecessors in this field, these writings began to be intermingled with romantic tales and ballads, showing that the public appetite for such as the scenes of the "Lazarillo" and "Guzman" was satiated.

But the influence of this literature extended far and wide on its first appearance. The "Guzman" was translated into the several languages of Europe, and novels with rascally adventurers for heroes in all countries had their historians and their thousands to read their recorded achievements. In this imitation France has the honor to have been the most successful of all.

The "Gil Blas" of Le Sage is indeed a wonderful work of this kind. But the Frenchman had to take his hero from Spain, as if the Spanish picaro was the only genuine of his class and nowhere except in Spanish society could the record of such exploits be credited.

With the exception of "Gil Blas," the success in imitation of this remarkable species of novel has not been signal. We have in English, "Jonathan Wild," "Jack Sheppard" and "Paul Clifford," and we should be thankful that they are no better imitations, or rather that there are no worse incitements to the cultivation of bad tastes and unsound morality.

III.

The Spanish Drama.

THE rise of the modern drama began earliest in the South of Europe where Roman civilization held wider and more enduring sway. There was a rude, dramatic literature in Spain at the time of its occupation by the Moors, which was a poor imitation of the ancient classical, and which, being contrary to the tastes of the conquerors, soon passed away.

In Spain as in other European countries, the religious plays, "Mysteries" and "Moralities," as they were called, were more numerous and of longer continuance because of that state of public opinion and civil society which gave to the Church a control, almost absolute, over the literary talent of the country.

The famous Inquisition of Spain, so much talked and written about, so little understood, watched the literary progress of that country with careful and critical eyes. It seems strange indeed

how much of the efforts in that progress was tolerated by a tribunal so powerful and so exacting. But the Church was as wise as it was authoritative. Looking upon that people of so many dialects and provincial nationalities, now being consolidated into one after many centuries of conflicts in which they had been ever faithful to her, bringing with them out of these conflicts a restlessness inevitable to such conditions, an indulgence was given which now seems to us strange, but which was meant to preserve in times of peace the same loyalty which they had displayed in the times of war.

The whole of the religious drama of the Middle Ages of Europe would be unaccountable to us unless we understood the manners of the times. The Sacred Comedy, which was made to take the place of the Roman, was a most curious intermingling of the comic with the sacred. But it had its day and our ancestors had their laughs at the miscarriages of the devil and of vice, along with their tears at the recitals of the sufferings of the ancient saints, and thus began that intermingling of the seri-

ous and the sportive which was especially to distinguish the modern from the classical drama.

The modern Spanish drama is older than the English by a century and, like the English, it was first comic in its character. The "Couplets of Mingo Revulgo" have the honor of being the first of Spanish drama, and has been attributed to Rodrigo Cota, of Toledo. It was in verse, as most of the Spanish dramatic literature is, and is as coarse as "Gammer Gurton's Needle."

Such was its grossness and the boldness of its satire that the authorship was not avowed, but the resemblance between his first and the next has caused this to be assigned to the same. The second, a dialogue between love and an old man, makes a yet further progress towards dramatic development.

These dramas, however, have much of the character of the pastoral in which, as I have said before, the national literature is abundant. Many years before this, indeed, there had begun the habit of reciting in public these pastorals, though probably they were not written

for the purpose of public representation.

In the second play of Cota there is considerable amount of sprightly dialogue, and of a kind more poetical than in the first English comedies. Its theme is the absurdity of an old man who had been a hermit for a length of time suddenly turning back to the world and becoming a lover. We can imagine what fun could be made out of such a case.

The drama which has become most famous of these early works is the "Celestina," originally called "The Tragi-Comedy of Calisto and Melibea," written jointly by Cota and Rojas, of Montalvan. It is in prose and consists of twenty-one acts, but was never acted upon the stage and was never designed to be. The literary excellence of this dramatized romance, as it has been called, appearing so early—a century before Shakespeare—has been the subject of the highest encomium. Talent of a high order is exhibited throughout, as well in the portraiture of the bad as of the good characters. But

it would be difficult to find in any of the early literature of any country a work in which there is so much of indecency, not only in the thought, but in the language; and there is not to be found in any language a work in which the doings of knaves and varlets of both sexes are described in language so choice. Yet the authors claimed to have had a high and even a holy purpose, which was first to expose vice in its most attractive attitudes, and then to point to its most condign punishment. And the punishment is as terrific as the conduct of the actors has been vicious and seductive. Even the heroine Meliboca, once so innocent, but finally ruined by such acts as it seemed impossible to resist, is driven at last to suicide by casting herself headlong from a lofty tower.

The story of "Calisto and Meliboca" was read by all classes with avidity, and it formed the staple for dramatic writing in Spain for many a year and with a long list of mediocre dramatists.

The founder of the Spanish secular

theatre was Juan de la Enzina, who was born in 1468. He was a priest. Among his pieces the one called "A Vision of the Temple of Fame" and "The Glories of Castile" have been much commended. They are a sort of sacred comedies, though the "Esquire that turns Shepherd" and "The Shepherds that turn Courtiers" are of common life.

The next most prominent name to Enzina is Gil Vicente, a Portuguese.

As dramatic representations these early productions were exceedingly incongruous. It is interesting in reading them to observe the gradual but slow metamorphose of the religious plays into those of ordinary human actions and interests; to see the modern ideas that get into the heads of the ancient illustrious Bible characters.

The following is from the "Auto of the Sibyl Cassandra" by Vicente. Cassanova is a beautiful shepherdess who has vowed herself to single life. Solomon, even with the help of her three aunts, the Cumaean, Persian and Erythrean sibyls and her three uncles, Moses,

Abraham and Isaiah, fails to change her purpose. Let us try to imagine, while such a suit is going on, the maid to sing this vaudeville :

" They say 'tis time, 'Go, marry, go,'
But I'll no husband; not I, no;
For I would live all carelessly,
Amidst these hills a maiden free,
And never ask, nor anxious be
Of wedded weal or woe.
Yet still they say, 'Go, marry, go,'
But I'll no husband, not I, no.

" So mother think not I shall wed,
And through a tiresome life be led;
Or use in folly's ways instead,
What grace the heavens bestow.
Yet still they say, 'Go, marry, go,'
But I'll no husband; not I, no.

" The man has not been born, I ween,
Who, as my husband, shall be seen;
And since what frequent tricks have been
Undoubtedly I know,
In vain they say, 'Go, marry, go,'
For I'll no husband, not I, no."

The Spanish drama was something of an institution for a considerable time before it became a popular, or, as I should rather say, a secular one. Dramatic representations had been for ages in the hands of the Church, which regarded with jealousy their being devoted to other than religious purposes. Efforts

in that line under Naharro, a popular poet, were repressed and public action of plays was for a long time restricted to those which were purely religious. The main exceptions to this rule were the dramatic pageants, which, from time to time, were held in honor of the reigning sovereign. The great popular heart had not been struck until the coming of Lope de Rueda in the middle of the sixteenth century. In his hands the drama began to assume a form approximately what it has since become. His four comedies "Los Enganos," "La Medora," "La Eufemia," and "Armelina," contain the first evidences of plot, which was destined to characterize Spanish dramatic literature above all other. "Los Enganos" is very like "Twelfth Night" of Shakespeare, who, it is probable, borrowed from the Spanish poet.

But there had been, as we have seen, an early fondness for the pastoral in Spain, and pastorals were the first pieces that were represented publicly outside of those which were intended to be religious, or in honor of the monarch.

In these plays of Rueda we begin to see something of the kind of humor that about this time was beginning with the new comedy in England. Rueda, himself, was a noted player as well as playwright. His performances were in a courtyard, and nothing could have been poorer than the appointments of the stage, all of which, it is said, could be carried in a bag. They were, as Cervantes related, "four white shepherds' jackets turned up with leather, gilt and stamped; four beards and false sets of hanging locks; and four shepherds' crooks, more or less." In these plays the fools or simples were especially important personages, a character, which, as the drama developed, grew into the famous Gracioso.

Rueda had many followers as Juan de Timoneda, Alonzo de la Vega, Juan de Malara, Cueva and Romero. But little advancement had been made until the coming of the great Cervantes. Cervantes when a boy had often attended the rude exhibitions of Lope de Rueda in the streets of Madrid, and the first efforts of his genius were devoted to

writing for the stage. At least twenty of such dramas were composed by him, which were favorably received by the public. Among these the most famous is the tragedy of "Numantia," based on the siege of that ancient Spanish town, and its horrible suffering from the Roman army under Scipio. The scenes in this tragedy, which describe private and domestic affliction, are tragic in the highest degree. Especially so are the scenes between a mother and her child, and of Moranoro and his affianced Lira, when, though wasted by hunger, she yet indulges in the greater grief of the general desolation of the city and the prospective ruin of her people.

Cervantes hoped to exalt the drama of his country. Fortunately for mankind he did not thoroughly understand that condition of things which made the Spanish drama dependent upon the caprices of the public and subject to the control of the Church. He was a man that knew not how to yield his judgment to tribunals, in his opinion, less competent than himself to decide, and so he retired before one more practical

than himself, and instead of more dramas, gave the world his Don Quixote.

That more practical man who thus took the field from him was Lope de Vega, a wonderful genius. When five years old Lope de Vega was composing verses, and, as he was too young to have learned to write, he would have older children to write down his lines, paying them by giving half his breakfast. A soldier at fifteen, an ardent lover at seventeen, twice married, once an exile in the expedition of the ill-fated Armada, he finally became a priest of the Church; and this priest became the author of a list of dramas, whose vast numbers have never ceased to be the wonderment of mankind. The last days of his life were spent in his cell, the walls of which were spattered with his blood which had been spilled by his own penitential infliction. His funeral was the grandest and most imposing that was ever bestowed upon any man of letters.

It is difficult to understand how a priest could have been just such a literary man as Lope. For during all the

years in which his time was given regularly to offices of devotion and charity, he was in full fashion as a poet, and the favorite, as he yet remains, after three hundred years, of the theatre-going people of his country. The beginning of his fame and his popularity was laid in his religious poem of "San Isidro, the Ploughman," the favorite saint of Spain. Many other poems, mostly of this class, were written by him.

In his "Shepherds of Bethlehem," a long pastoral in prose and verse, occur some pieces of exquisite beauty as the following, sung in a palm grove by the Madonna to her Child:

"Holy Angels and blest,
Through these palms as ye sweep,
Hold their branches at rest;
For my babe is asleep.

'And ye Bethlehem palm trees
As stormy winds rush
In tempest and fury,
Your angry noise hush.
Move gently, move gently,
Restrain your wild sweep;
Hold your branches at rest;
My babe is asleep.

"My babe all divine,
With earth's sorrows oppressed,
Seeks in slumber an instant
His grievings to rest;

He slumbers, he slumbers,
Oh, hush, then, and keep
Your branches all still;
My babe is asleep.

"Cold blasts wheel about him,
A vigorous storm,
And ye see how in vain,
I would shelter his form.
Holy angels and blest,
As above me ye sweep,
Hold these branches at rest;
My babe is asleep."

The works of Lope, even before he became mainly devoted to the drama, were enormous. But, following in the wake of Bascan and Garcilaso, who had imported Italian ideas, he accomplished nothing that was destined to become national. He began his career as a dramatist, with the old, long-continued foundations of the pastorals and moralities, whose religious character drew toleration from the Church, without which the drama could make no progress. His success was immediate and complete. Some idea may be had of the enormous work he did, when we are informed, that, besides his other poetry, he wrote nearly two thousand dramas.

Lope saw the rock that had wrecked

Cervantes as a dramatist, and he avoided it. "He took the theatre in the state in which he found it, and instead of attempting to adapt it to any special theory, or to any existing models, whether ancient or recent, made it his great object to satisfy the popular audiences of his age," and he succeeded in establishing the national theatre upon a basis which remains to the present day. Never has there been a state of society in which these tastes of the public were more various, and the world has never seen a man who so thoroughly understood and so entirely satisfied them. There were priests and nobles, artisans, ploughmen, honest men and knaves, all of whom it was necessary for a dramatist to please.

Concerning the diversity of his dramas, Ticknor thus speaks: "There seems no end to them, whether we regard their subjects running from the deepest tragedy to the broadest farce, and from the most solemn mysteries of religion down to the lowest frolics of common life; or their style, which embraces every change of tone and

measure known to the poetical language of the country. And all these different masses of Lope's drama, it should be further noted, ran insensibly into each other — the sacred and the secular, the tragic and the comic, the heroic action and that from vulgar life, — until sometimes it seems as if there were neither separate form nor distinctive attribute to any of them."

Of the various kinds of dramas, heroical, religious and common life, his greatest success was in those called comedies "De Capa y Espada" or dramas "Of the Cloak and Sword," named in honor of the genteel class of Spaniards, who wore these habitually. The ruling spirit of these dramas was gallantry, with intrigue always involved, and generally an underplot of the inferior characters. Of these the name of their number is legion.

His versatile genius adapted itself to all wants. His dramas of common life, with characters taken from the vulgar and illiterate, had in them all that this class could desire. His heroic dramas delighted all those most gifted and most

* Ticknor's "His. Span. Lit.," vol. II., p. 205.

fond of the recitals of ancient Spanish heroism, and his religious plays made him the delight of those of his own rank and profession, especially the "Autos da Sacramentales," which were performed in the streets on occasions of the gorgeous ceremonies of the Corpus Christi.

Of the hundreds of these dramas, multitudes were written in the space of twenty-four hours, and very many in that of three or four hours. Never was there a mind so fertile and rapid in the devising of plots and counterplots and underplots. To these everything was sacrificed. As for the drawing of character, Lope knew that the audience to whom he was to appeal cared nothing for this. It would be vain to look through all of his characters for one that stands out in bold relief like those of Shakespeare. The character was of little importance, what was wanted was the intrigue; and it is simply marvelous with what rapidity and variety he could work upon this.

Beaumont and Fletcher were the first to introduce into England the comedy of intrigue. Lope de Vega and the

Spanish stage were the sources from which they were supplied. The ruling idea was to keep the denouement of a drama like a novel unforeseen to the last, at whatever cost to character, probability or historic fact. Lope gave this advice to other playwrights: "Keep the explanation of the story doubtful till the last scene, for, as soon as the public know how it will end, they turn their faces to the door and their backs to the stage."

The exactions upon a playwright in such a condition of society were exorbitant. A play was merely a dramatized novel, which, when it had been once read, was thought about no longer, but must give place to another. The great dramatist was found equal to all emergencies. To-night he would have a drama either for the gentility of the common people, with an abundance of plot and counterplot, and for to-morrow night, besides attending to his offices as priest, he would have another with new characters and other plots. The drama of last night would be laid aside until it was forgotten, and these greedy play-

goers would be looking out for another for the night ensuing this; and they would not be disappointed. It is not surprising, therefore, that of the vast number of the dramas written by Lope, less than a fourth should ever have been published. Created for the entertainment of each a single evening, they perished with their first using, and were brought forth again only when time had obliterated the memory of their plots.

Many a struggle had the theatre with the Church, for there was much grossness even in some of the comedies of Lope the priest, but the theatre prevailed in time under such compromises as seemed fair both to the Church and the world. These compromises included a reasonable number of religious plays, the acting of one upon Sundays and holidays, and the occasional closing of the theatres in respect to mournful events in the Church and the State.

The last to hold up the Spanish drama, then the richest in Europe, was Calderon. It is pleasant to recall the love and admiration felt for each other by these two great poets of Spain —

Lope de Vega and Don Pedro Calderon. The difference in conditions made no alteration. The former wrote for bread; poor and without friends, except among his own class, and the admirers of a genius which they had no means to reward except with enthusiastic praise. The other was well born and a favorite most of his life at court. Yet the older and humbler was proud of the younger, and delighted in the promise of his early youth. And the younger repaid his generous praise and encouragement with everlasting gratitude. He also was a priest, and, but for the death of Philip IV., he would have risen to great place in the hierarchy. More devout than his predecessor, the serious predominates in his dramatic writings, although he was not without much of the humor that made Lope the most beloved of all his countrymen.

Calderon lived when the glory of his country, lately at its greatest height, was beginning, unnoticed by him and the rest of the Spanish nation, to decay. Conquest and expulsion of the Moors, discovery of America, vast achievements

in many wars, had made Spain chiefest among European powers. Calderon was fired with enthusiasm for what Spain had done for civilization, for Christianity. He gloried in his country and in his religion. The latter, he celebrated in many a drama, which ranks second only to the best, second only to his predecessor, in amount of work done with his pen. These cover a multitude of themes. He had produced "The Fairy Lady," "The Physician of his own Honor," "It is Better than it Was," "Life Is a Dream," and others, when Lope, delighted with his promise, foretold its glorious fulfillment.

While he loved most the heroes of his native country, yet he celebrated many of foreign lands and of ancient and mediæval times. Notable among these are: "The Daughter of the Air," on the legend of Semiramis; "Jealousy the Greatest Monster," on the story of Herod and Mariamne; "Love Survives Life," on the rising of the Moriscoes in the Alpujarras. Of his comedies, some of the best known are "The Fairy Lady," "The Gaoler of Himself,"

"The Loud Secret," "The Scarf and the Flower," in which are a grace and a beauty unsurpassed. His favorites were the Autos, all founded on scriptural subjects. One of the greatest of these is "The Locks of Absalom." There are many sublime and most pathetic scenes in this. The tragic muse has never produced a scene more thrilling than in that wherein, at the instigation of Absalom, his brother Amnon is assassinated. In all these Autos stress is laid upon the beauty and felicity of innocence and the misery and punishment of guilt, above all glorifying the blessedness of the Holy Eucharist.

His variously fertile genius was as successful in Greek mythology, as in Perseus and Andromeda, seeing in these myths, dark as they are, prophecies of the coming of Christianity. "Theseus in the Labyrinth," "Ulysses and Circe." and the like, are all prophecies. So, in the Old Testament, as in "The Brazen Serpent," "Gideon's Fleece," "The Sheaves of Ruth," and many, many others.

In Calderon culminated that great Spanish drama, the richest in Europe, and, with the exception of the English, the greatest of all time. Like the English it was native to the soil. It was romantic and original, not like the French and Italian, classical and imitative. Never were both patriotism and religion more loyally and ably represented than by this poet, who had the happiness to live in the most glorious period of his country's renown, and then to depart before its close.

What lonely woman stoops a folly
Can fondle the lost man betray,
What shame can soothe her melancholy,
What act can wash her guilt away?

To only one her guilt is known,
To hide the shame from every eye,
To give repentance to her lover
And wring her bosom is — to die.

Lady Macbeth

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