

taves, as an eclogue, intended originally to accompany it, was not added, and did not appear till 1806;— a beautiful translation, which discovers, not only its author's power as a poet, but the remarkable freedom of his theological inquiries, in a country where such freedom was, in that age, not tolerated for an instant.⁸ The fragment of a defence of this version, or of some parts of it, is dated from his prison, in 1573, and was found long afterwards among the state papers of the kingdom in the archives of Simancas.⁹

While in prison he prepared a long prose work, which he entitled "The Names of Christ." It is a singular specimen at once of Spanish theological learning, eloquence, and devotion. Of this, between 1583 and 1585, he published three books, but he never completed it.¹⁰ It is thrown into the form of a dialogue, like the "Tusculan Questions," which it was probably intended to imitate; and its purpose is, by means of successive discussions of the character of the Saviour, as set forth under the names of Son, Prince, Shepherd, King, etc., to excite devout feelings in those who read it. The form, however, is not adhered to with

* 83 great strictness. The * dialogue, instead of being a discussion, is, in fact, a succession of speeches; and once, at least, we have a regular sermon, of as much merit, perhaps, as any in the language;¹¹ so that, taken together, the entire work may be regarded as a series of declamations on the character of Christ, as that character was regarded by the more devout portions of the Spanish Church in its

⁸ Luis de Leon, Obras, Tom. V. pp. 258-280. A passage from the original prose Castilian version of Solomon's Song by Luis de Leon is printed in his trial (Documentos, Tom. X. pp. 449-467). It differs, though not essentially, from the same passage as it stands

in the version first published in 1798. See Obras, Tom. V. pp. 1-31.

⁹ Ibid., Tom. V. p. 281.

¹⁰ Ibid., Tom. III. and IV.

¹¹ This sermon is in Book First of the treatise. Obras, Tom. III. pp. 160-214.

author's time. Many parts of it are eloquent, and its eloquence has not unfrequently the gorgeous coloring of the elder Spanish literature; such, for instance, as is found in the following passage, illustrating the title of Christ as the Prince of Peace, and proving the beauty of all harmony in the moral world from its analogies with the physical:—

"Even if reason should not prove it, and even if we could in no other way understand how gracious a thing is peace, yet would this fair show of the heavens over our heads, and this harmony in all their manifold fires, sufficiently bear witness to it. For what is it but peace, or, indeed, a perfect image of peace, that we now behold, and that fills us with such deep joy? Since if peace is, as Saint Augustin, with the brevity of truth, declares it to be, a quiet order, or the maintenance of a well-regulated tranquillity in whatever order demands,— then what we now witness is surely its true and faithful image. For while these hosts of stars, arranged and divided into their several bands, shine with such surpassing splendor, and while each one of their multitude inviolably maintains its separate station, neither pressing into the place of that next to it, nor disturbing the movements of any other, nor forgetting its own; none breaking the eternal and holy law God has imposed on it; but all rather bound in one brotherhood, ministering one to another, and reflecting their light one to another,— they do surely show forth a mutual love, and, as it were, a mutual reverence, tempering each other's brightness and strength into a peaceful unity and power, whereby all their different influences are combined into one holy and mighty harmony, universal and everlasting. And therefore may it be most

* 84 truly said, not * only that they do all form a fair and perfect model of peace, but that they all set forth and announce, in clear and gracious words, what excellent things peace contains within herself, and carries abroad whithersoever her power extends."¹²

The eloquent treatise on the Names of Christ was not, however, the most popular of the prose works of Luis de Leon. This distinction belongs to his "Perfecta Casada," or Perfect Wife; a treatise which he composed, in the form of a commentary on some portions of Solomon's Proverbs, for the use of a lady newly married, and which was first published in 1583.¹³ But it is not necessary specially to notice either this work, or his Exposition of Job, in two volumes, accompanied with a poetical version, which he began in prison for his own consolation, and finished the year of his death, but which none ventured to publish till 1779.¹⁴ Both are marked with the same humble faith, the same strong enthusiasm, and the same elaborate, rich eloquence, that appear, from time to time, in the work on the Names of Christ; though perhaps the last, which received the careful corrections of its author's matured genius, has a serious and settled power greater

¹² Obras, Tom. III. pp. 342, 343. This beautiful passage may well be compared to his more beautiful ode, entitled "Noche Serena," to which it has an obvious resemblance. Luis de Leon, like most other successful authors, wrote with great care. In the letter to his friend Puerto Carrero, prefixed to the Third Book of the "Nombres de Christo," he explains, with not a little spirit, his reasons for writing in Spanish, and not in Latin, which it seems had been made matter of reproach to him. This was in 1585, the same year that the works of Oliva were published, written in Spanish and defended as such. (See *ante*, Chap. V.

with notes 6, 12, and 25.) But Luis de Leon goes farther than Oliva did, and shows how difficult it is to write well in Spanish. "El bien hablar," he says, "no es comun, sino negocio de particular juicio, así en lo que se dice, como en la manera como se dice; y negocio que de las palabras que todos hablan, elige las que convienen y mira el sonido dellas, y aun cuenta á veces las letras, y las pese, y las mide, y las compone, para que no solamente digan con claridad lo que se pretende decir, sino tambien con armonia y dulçura."

¹³ *Ibid.*, Tom. IV.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, Tom. I. and II.

than he has shown anywhere else. But the characteristics of his prose compositions — even those which from their nature are the most strictly didactic — are the same everywhere; and the rich language and imagery of the passage already cited afford a fair specimen of the style towards which he constantly directed his efforts.

Luis de Leon's health never recovered from the shock it suffered in the cells of the Inquisition. He lived, indeed, nearly fourteen years after his release; but most of his works, whether in Castilian or in Latin, were written before his imprisonment or during its continuance, while those he undertook afterwards, like his account of Santa Teresa and some others, were * never finished. His life was always, from * 85 choice, very retired, and his austere manners were announced by his habitual reserve and silence. In a letter that he sent with his poems to his friend Puerto Carrero, a statesman at the court of Philip the Second and a member of the principal council of the Inquisition, he says, that, in the kingdom of Old Castile, where he had lived from his youth, he could hardly claim to be familiarly acquainted with ten persons.¹⁵ Still he was extensively known, and was held in great honor. In the latter part of his life especially, his talents and sufferings, his religious patience and his sincere faith, had consecrated him in the eyes alike of his friends and his enemies. Nothing relating to the monastic brotherhood of which he was a member, or to the University where he taught, was undertaken without his concurrence and support; and when he died, in 1591, he was in the exercise of a constantly increasing influence, having just been chosen the head of his

¹⁵ Obras, Tom. VI. p. 2.

Order, and being engaged in the preparation of new regulations for its reform.¹⁶

But, besides the character in which we have thus far considered him, Luis de Leon was a poet, and a poet of no common genius. He seems, it is true, to have been little conscientious, or, at least, little careful, of his poetical talent; for he made hardly an effort to cultivate it, and never took pains to print anything, in order to prove its existence to the world. Perhaps, too, he showed more deference than was due to the opinion of many persons of his time, who thought poetry an occupation not becoming one in his position; for, in the prefatory notice to his sacred odes, he * 86 says, in a deprecating * tone, "Let none regard verse as anything new and unworthy to be applied to Scriptural subjects, for it is rather appropriate to them; and so old is it in this application, that, from the earliest ages of the Church to the present day, men of great learning and holiness have thus employed it. And would to God that no other poetry were ever sounded in our ears; that only these sacred tones were sweet to us; that none else were heard at night in the streets and public squares; that the child might still lisp it, the retired damsel find in it her best solace, and the industrious tradesman make it the relief of his toil! But the Christian name is now sunk to such immodest and reckless degradation, that we set our

¹⁶ The best materials for the life of Luis de Leon, down to the end of his trial and imprisonment in 1576, are contained in his accounts of himself on that occasion (Documentos, Tom. X. pp. 182, 257, etc.), after which a good deal may be found in notices of him in the curious MS. of Pacheco, published, *Semanario Pintoresco*, 1844, p. 374;—those in N. Antonio, *Bib. Nova*, *ad verb.*;—in Sedano, *Parnaso*

Español, Tom. V.; and in the Preface to a collection of his poetry, published at Valencia by Mayans y Siscar, 1761; the last being also found in Mayans y Siscar, "*Cartas de Varios Autores*" (Valencia, 1773, 12mo, Tom. IV. pp. 398, etc.). Pacheco adds a description of his person, and the singular fact, not elsewhere noticed, that he amused himself with the art of painting, and succeeded in his own portrait.

sins to music, and, not content with indulging them in secret, shout them joyfully forth to all who will listen."

But, whatever may have been his own feelings on the suitability of such an occupation to his profession, it is certain that, while most of the poems he has left us were written in his youth, they were not collected by him till the latter part of his life, and then only to please a personal friend, who never thought of publishing them; so that they were not printed at all till forty years after his death, when Quevedo gave them to the public, in the hope that they might help to reform the corrupted taste of the age. But from this time they have gone through many editions, though still they never appeared properly collated and arranged till 1816.¹⁷

They are, however, of great value. They consist of versions of all the Eclogues and two of the Georgics of Virgil, about thirty Odes of Horace, about forty Psalms, and a few passages from the Greek and Italian poets; all executed with freedom and spirit, and all in a genuinely Castilian style. His translations, however, seem to have been only in the nature of exercises and amusements. But, though he thus acquired great * facility and exactness in his versifica- * 87 tion, he wrote little. His original poems fill no more than about a hundred pages; but there is hardly a line of them which has not its value; and the whole, when taken together, are to be placed at the head of

¹⁷ The poems of Luis de Leon fill the last volume of his Works; but there are several among them that are probably spurious. *Per contra*, a few more translations by his hand, and especially an ode to a religious life,—*A la vida religiosa*,—may be found in Vol. XXXVII. of the *Biblioteca de Autores Españoles*, 1855, which consists of all his poetical works, and a selection of

his works in prose, together with the most important part of the documents concerning his trial by the Inquisition. The volume of his poetry published by Quevedo in 1631 at Madrid, it may be worth notice, was reprinted the same year at Milan by order of the Duke of Fera, Grand Chancellor there, in a neat duodecimo.

Spanish lyric poetry. They are chiefly religious, and the source of their inspiration is not to be mistaken. Luis de Leon had a Hebrew soul, and kindles his enthusiasm almost always from the Jewish Scriptures. Still he preserved his nationality unimpaired. Nearly all the best of his poetical compositions are odes written in the old Castilian measures, with a classical purity and rigorous finish before unknown in Spanish poetry, and hardly attained since.¹⁸

This is eminently the case, for instance, with what the Spaniards have esteemed the best of his poetical works; his ode, called "The Prophecy of the Tagus," in which the river-god predicts to Roderic the Moorish conquest of his country, as the result of that monarch's violence to Cava, the daughter of one of his principal nobles. It is an imitation of the Ode of Horace in which Nereus rises from the waves and predicts the overthrow of Troy to Paris, who, under circumstances not entirely dissimilar, is transporting the stolen wife of Menelaus to the scene of the fated conflict between the two nations. But the Ode of Luis de Leon is written in the old Spanish *quintillas*, his favorite measure, and is as natural, fresh, and flowing as one of the * 88 national ballads.¹⁹ * Foreigners, however, less

¹⁸ In noticing the Hebrew temperament of Luis de Leon, I am reminded of one of his contemporaries, who possessed in some respects a kindred spirit, and whose fate was even more strange and unhappy. I refer to Juan Pinto Delgado, a Portuguese Jew, who lived long in Spain, embraced the Christian religion, was reconverted to the faith of his fathers, fled from the terrors of the Inquisition to France, and died there about the year 1590. In 1627, a volume of his works, containing narrative poems on Queen Esther and on Ruth, free versions from the Lamentations of Jeremiah in the old national *quintillas*, and sonnets and other short

pieces, generally in the Italian manner, was published at Rouen in France, and dedicated to Cardinal Richelieu, then the all-powerful minister of Louis XIII. They are full of the bitter and sorrowful feelings of his exile, and parts of them are written, not only with tenderness, but in a sweet and pure versification. The Hebrew spirit of the author, whose proper name is Moseh Delgado, breaks through constantly, as might be expected. Barbosa, Biblioteca, Tom. II. p. 722. Amador de los Rios, Judios de España, Madrid, 1848, 8vo, p. 500.

¹⁹ It is the eleventh of Luis de Leon's Odes, and may well bear a comparison

interested in what is so peculiarly Spanish, and so full of allusions to Spanish history, may sometimes prefer the serener ode "On a Life of Retirement," that "On Immortality," or perhaps the still more beautiful one "On the Starry Heavens"; all written with the same purity and elevation of spirit, and all in the same national measure and manner.

A truer specimen of his prevalent lyrical tone, and, indeed, of his tone in much else of what he wrote, is perhaps to be found in his "Hymn on the Ascension." It is both very original and very natural in its principal idea, being supposed to express the disappointed feelings of the disciples as they see their Master passing out of their sight into the opening heavens above them.

And dost thou, holy Shepherd, leave
Thine unprotected flock alone,
Here, in this darksome vale, to grieve,
While thou ascend'st thy glorious throne?

O, where can they their hopes now turn,
Who never lived but on thy love?
Where rest the hearts for thee that burn,
When thou art lost in light above?

How shall those eyes now find repose
That turn, in vain, thy smile to see?
What can they hear save mortal woes,
Who lose thy voice's melody?

And who shall lay his tranquil hand
Upon the troubled ocean's might?

with that of Horace (Lib. I. Carm. 15) which suggested it. This same ode of Horace that Luis de Leon imitated with such admirable success was also imitated in the same way and on the same subject subsequently by Francisco de Medrano, but he did it before the ode of Luis de Leon had been published. The ode of Medrano, — beginning, "Rendido el postrer Godo," — like all his translations and imitations of Horace, is well worth reading, although not equal in

richness and power to that of Luis de Leon. Horace and Virgil were evidently the favorite Latin poets of the latter. When he was immured in the secret cells of the Inquisition, and could obtain books only by special written petition to the tribunal, he asked for a single copy of each of them to be brought to him from his own cell, adding, with characteristic simplicity, "There are plenty of them." — *hry hartos*. Documentos, Tom. X. p. 510.

Who hush the winds by his command?
Who guide us through this starless night?

For Thou art gone! — that cloud so bright,
That bears thee from our love away,
Springs upward through the dazzling light,
And leaves us here to weep and pray!²⁰

* 89 * In order, however, to comprehend aright the genius and spirit of Luis de Leon, we must study, not only his lyrical poetry, but much of his prose; for, while his religious odes and hymns, beautiful in their severe exactness of style, rank him before Klopstock and Filicaja, his prose, more rich and no less idiomatic, places him at once among the greatest masters of eloquence in his native Castilian.²¹

²⁰ It is in *quintillas* in the original; but that stanza, I think, can never, in English, be made flowing and easy as it is in Spanish. I have, therefore, used in this translation a freedom greater than I have generally permitted to myself, in order to approach, if possible, the bold outline of the original thought. It begins thus:—

Y dexas, pastor santo,
Tu grey en este valle hondo oscuro
Con soledad y llanto,
Y tu rompiendo el puro
Ayre, te vas al inmortal seguro!
Los antes bien hadados,
Y los agora tristes y afligidos,
A tus pechos criados,
De tí despoceidos,
A do convertir.n ya sus sentidos?
Obras de Luis de Leon, Madrid, 1816, Tom.
VI. p. 42.

A translation of Luis de Leon's poems

by C. B. Schlüter and W. Storck, Münster, 1853, is worth reading by those who are familiar with the German. The version of this ode is at p. 130, and is in the measure of the original. Another similar version of it may be found in Diepenbrock's *Geistlicher Blumenstrauss*, 1852, p. 157.

²¹ In 1837, D. José de Castro y Orozco produced on the stage at Madrid a drama, entitled "Fray Luis de Leon," in which the hero, whose name it bears, is represented as renouncing the world and entering a cloister, in consequence of a disappointment in love. Diego de Mendoza is also one of the principal personages in the same drama, which is written in a pleasing style, and has some poetical merit, notwithstanding its unhappy subject and plot.

* CHAPTER X.

* 90

CERVANTES. — HIS FAMILY. — EDUCATION. — FIRST VERSES. — LIFE IN ITALY. — A SOLDIER IN THE BATTLE OF LEPANTO. — A CAPTIVE IN ALGIERS. — RETURNS HOME. — SERVICE IN PORTUGAL. — LIFE IN MADRID. — HIS GALATEA, AND ITS CHARACTER. — HIS MARRIAGE. — WRITES FOR THE STAGE. — HIS LIFE IN ALGIERS. — HIS NUMANCIA. — POETICAL TENDENCIES OF HIS DRAMA.

THE family of Cervantes was originally Galician, and, at the time of his birth, not only numbered five hundred years of nobility and public service, but was spread throughout Spain, and had been extended to Mexico and other parts of America.¹ The Castilian

¹ Many lives of Cervantes have been written, of which four need to be mentioned. 1. That of Gregorio Mayans y Siscar, first prefixed to the edition of *Don Quixote* in the original published in London in 1738 (4 tom. 4to) under the auspices of Lord Carteret, and afterwards to several other editions; a work of learning, and the first proper attempt to collect materials for a life of Cervantes, but ill arranged and ill written, and of little value now, except for some of its incidental discussions. 2. The *Life of Cervantes*, with the *Analysis of his Don Quixote*, by Vicente de los Kios, prefixed to the sumptuous edition of *Don Quixote* by the Spanish Academy, (Madrid, 1780, 4 tom. fol.) and often printed since; — better written than the preceding, and containing some new facts, but with criticisms full of pedantry and of extravagant eulogy. 3. *Noticias para la Vida de Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra*, by J. Ant. Pellicer, first printed in his "Ensayo de una Biblioteca de Traductores," 1778, but much enlarged afterwards, and prefixed to his edition of *Don Quixote* (Madrid, 1797–1798, 5 tom. 8vo); poorly digested, and con-

taining a great deal of extraneous, though sometimes curious matter; but more complete than any life that had preceded it. 4. *Vida de Miguel de Cervantes*, etc., por D. Martin Fernandez de Navarrete, published by the Spanish Academy (Madrid, 1819, 8vo); — the best of all, and indeed one of the most judicious and best arranged biographical works that have been published in any country. Navarrete has used in it, with great effect, many new documents; and especially the large collection of papers found in the archives of the Indies at Seville, in 1808, which comprehend the voluminous *Informacion* sent by Cervantes himself, in 1590, to Philip II., when asking for an office in one of the American colonies; — a mass of well-authenticated certificates and depositions, setting forth the trials and sufferings of the author of *Don Quixote*, from the time he entered the service of his country, in 1571; through his captivity in Algiers; and, in fact, till he reached the Azores in 1582. This thorough and careful life is skilfully abridged by L. Viardot, in his French translation of *Don Quixote*, (Paris, 1836, 2 tom. 8vo,) and forms