Like other works of the same sort, the Galatea is founded on an affectation which can never be successful; and which, in this particular instance, from the unwise accumulation and involution of the stories in its fable, from the conceited metaphysics with which it is disfigured, and from the poor poetry profusely scattered through it, is more than usually unfortunate. Perhaps no one of the many pastoral tales produced in Spain in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries fails so much in the tone it should maintain. Yet there are traces both of Cervantes's experience in life, and of his talent, in different parts of it. Some of the tales, like that of Sileno, in the second and third books, are interesting; others, like Timbrio's capture by the Moors, in the fifth book, remind us of his own adventures and sufferings; while yet one, at least, that of Rosaura and Grisaldo, in the fourth book, is quite emancipated from pastoral conceits and fancies.

*100 In all * we have passages marked with his rich and flowing style, though never, perhaps, with what is most peculiar to his genius. The inartificial texture of the whole, and the confusion of Christianity and mythology, almost inevitable in such a work, are its most obvious defects; though nothing, perhaps, is more incongruous than the representation of that sturdy old soldier and formal statesman, Diego de Mendoza, as a lately deceased shepherd.[24]

as a compliment to Figueroa, etc. See *post*, Chap. XXXIII. note 8.

[24] The chief actors in the Galatea visit the tomb of Mendoza, in the sixth book, under the guidance of a wise and gentle Christian priest; and when there, Calliope strangely appears to them and pronounces a tedious poetical eulogium on a vast number of the contemporary Spanish poets, most of whom are now forgotten. The Galatea was abridged by Florian, at the end of the eighteenth century, and reproduced, with an appropriate conclusion, in a prose pastoral, which, in the days when Gessner was so popular, was frequently reprinted. In this form it is by no means without grace. Certainly the attempt of Florian is more successful than a similar one made by Don Candido Maria de Trigueros, who followed and used him in Los Enamorados o Galatea, ec., Madrid, 1798.

But, when speaking thus slightingly of the Galatea, we ought to remember that, though it extends to two volumes, it is unfinished, and that passages which now seem out of proportion or unintelligible might have their meaning, and might be found appropriate, if the second part, which Cervantes had perhaps written, and which he continued to talk of publishing till a few days before his death,[25] had ever appeared. And certainly, as we make up our judgment on its merits, we are bound to bear in mind his own touching words, when he represents it as found by the barber and curate in Don Quixote's library.[26] "'But what book is the next one?' said the curate. 'The Galatea of Miguel de Cervantes,' replied the barber. 'This Cervantes,' said the curate, 'has been a great friend of mine these many years; and I know that he is more skilled in sorrows than in verse. His book is not without happiness in the invention; it proposes something, but finishes nothing. So we must wait for the second part, which he promises; for perhaps he will then obtain the favor that is now denied him; and, in the mean time, my good gossip, keep it locked up at home.'"

If the story be true that he wrote the Galatea to win * the favor of his lady, his success may *101 have been the reason why he was less interested to finish it; for, almost immediately after the appearance of the first part, he was married, December 12, 1584, to a lady of a good family in Esquivias, a village near Madrid.[27] The pecuniary arrangements

[25] In the Dedication to "Persiles y Sigismunda," 1616, April 19, only four days before his death.

[26] Parte Primera, cap. 6.

[27] He alludes, I think, but twice in all his works to Esquivias; and both times it is to praise its wines. The first is in the "Cueva de Salamanca" (Comedias. 1749, Tom. II. p. 313), and the last is in the Prólogo to "Persiles y Sigismunda," though in the latter he speaks also of its "ilustres linages."

consequent on the marriage, which have been published,[28] show that both parties were poor; and the Galatea intimates that Cervantes had a formidable Portuguese rival, who was, at one time, nearly successful in winning his bride.[29] But, whether the course of his love ran smooth before marriage or not, his wedded life, for above thirty years, seems to have been happy; and his widow, at her death, desired to be buried by his side.

In order to support his family, he probably lived much at Madrid, where we know he was familiar with several contemporary poets, such as Juan Rufo, Pedro de Padilla, and others, whom, with his inherent good-nature, he praises constantly in his later works, and often unreasonably. From the same motive, too, and perhaps partly in consequence of these intimacies, he now undertook to gain some portion of his subsistence by authorship, turning away from the life of adventure to which he had earlier been attracted.

His first efforts in this way were for the stage, which naturally presented strong inducements for one who was early fond of dramatic representations, and who was now in serious want of such immediate profit as the theatre sometimes yields. The drama, however, in the time of Cervantes, was rude and unformed. He tells us, as we have already noticed, that he had witnessed its beginnings in the time of Lope de
*102 Rueda and *Naharro,[30] which must have been before he went to Italy, and when, from his description of its dresses and apparatus, we plainly see

[28] See the end of Pellicer's Life of Cervantes, prefixed to his edition of Don Quixote (Tom. I. p. ccv). There seems to have been an earlier connection between the family of Cervantes and that of his bride; for the lady's mother had been named executrix of his father's will, who died while Cervantes himself was a slave in Algiers.

[29] At the end of the sixth book.

[30] Prólogo al Lector, prefixed to his eight plays and eight Entremeses, Madrid, 1615, 4to.

that the theatre was not so well understood and managed as it is now by strolling companies and in puppet-shows. From this humble condition, which the efforts made by Bermudez and Argensola, Virues, La Cueva, and their contemporaries, had not much ameliorated, Cervantes undertook to raise it; and he succeeded so far that, thirty years afterwards, he thought his success of sufficient consequence frankly to boast of it.[31]

But it is curious to see the methods he deemed it expedient to adopt for such a purpose. He reduced, he says, the number of acts from five to three; but this is a slight matter, and, though he does not seem to be aware of the fact, it had been done long before by Avendaño. He claims to have introduced phantasms of the imagination, or allegorical personages, like War, Disease, and Famine; but, besides that Juan de la Cueva had already done this, it was, at best, nothing more in either of them than reviving the forms of the old religious shows. And, finally, though this is not one of the grounds on which he himself places his dramatic merits, he seems to have endeavored in his plays, as in his other works, to turn his personal travels and sufferings to account, and thus, unconsciously, became an imitator of some of those who were among the earliest inventors of such representations in modern Europe.

But, with a genius like that of Cervantes, even changes or attempts as crude as these were not without results. He wrote, as he tells us with characteristic carelessness, twenty or thirty pieces which were received with applause; — a number greater than can be with certainty attributed to any preceding Spanish author, and a success before quite unknown. None of

[31] Adjunta al Parnaso, first printed in 1614; and the Prólogo last cited.

these pieces were printed at the time, but he has given us the names of nine of them, two of which
*103 were discovered *in 1782, and printed, for the first time, in 1784.[32] The rest, it is to be feared, are irrecoverably lost; and among them is "La Confusa," which, long after Lope de Vega had given its final character to the proper national drama, Cervantes fondly declared was still one of the very best of the class to which it belonged;[33] a judgment which the present age might perhaps confirm, if the proportions and finish of the drama he preferred were equal to the strength and originality of the two that have been rescued.

The first of these is "El Trato de Argel," or, as he elsewhere calls it, "Los Tratos de Argel," which may be translated Life, or Manners, in Algiers. It is a drama, slight in its plot, and so imperfect in its dialogue, that, in these respects, it is little better than some of the old eclogues on which the earlier theatre was founded. His purpose, indeed, seems to have been simply to set before a Spanish audience such a picture of the sufferings of the Christian captives at Algiers as his own experience would justify, and such as might well awaken sympathy in a country which had furnished a deplorable number of the victims. He, therefore, is little careful to construct a regular plot, if, after all, he were aware that such a plot was important; but instead of it he gives us a stiff and unnatural love-story, which he thought good enough to be used again, both in one of his later plays and in one of his tales;[34] and then trusts the main success of the piece to its episodical sketches.

[32] They are in the same volume with the "Viage al Parnaso," Madrid, 1784, 8vo.

[33] Adjunta al Parnaso, p. 139, ed. 1784.

[34] In the "Baños de Argel," and the "Amante Liberal."

Of these sketches, several are striking. First, we have a scene between Cervantes himself and two of his fellow-captives, in which they are jeered at as slaves and Christians by the Moors, and in which they give an account of the martyrdom in Algiers of a Spanish priest, which was subsequently used by Lope de Vega in one of his dramas, and which was founded in fact. Next, we have the attempt of Pedro Alvarez to escape to Oran, which is, no doubt, taken from the similar attempt of Cervantes, and has all the spirit of a drawing from life. *And, in dif- *104 ferent places, we have two or three painful scenes of the public sale of slaves, and especially of little children, which he must often have witnessed, and which again Lope de Vega thought worth borrowing, when he had risen, as Cervantes calls it, to the monarchy of the scene.[35] The whole play is divided into five *jornadas*, or acts, and written in octaves, *redondillas*, *terza rima*, blank verse, and almost all the other measures known to Spanish poetry; while among the persons of the drama are strangely scattered, as prominent actors, Necessity, Opportunity, a Lion, and a Demon.

[35] The "Esclavos en Argel" of Lope is found in his Comedias, Tom. XXV., (Çaragoça, 1647, 4to, pp. 231–260,) and shows that he borrowed much too freely from the play of Cervantes, which, it should be remembered, had not then been printed, so that he must have used a manuscript. The scenes of the sale of the Christian children, (pp. 249, 250,) and the scenes between the same children after one of them had become a Mohammedan, (pp. 259, 260,) as they stand in Lope, are taken from the corresponding scenes in Cervantes (pp. 316–323, and 364–366, ed. 1784). Much of the story, and passages in other parts of the play, are also borrowed. The martyrdom of the Valencian priest, which is merely described by Cervantes, (pp. 298–305,) is made a principal dramatic point in the third *jornada* of Lope's play, where the execution occurs, in the most revolting form, on the stage (p. 263). The truth is, that this execution really occurred at Algiers in 1577, while Cervantes was there, and that he first used it and then Lope copied from him. A full account of it may be found in Haedo, (Topografia, ff. 179 a to 183 a,) and is one of the most curious illustrations extant of the relations subsisting between the Spaniards and their hated enemies. The borrowings of Lope from the play of Cervantes are, however, more plain elsewhere in his "Esclavos de Argel" than in the case of this shocking martyrdom.

Yet, notwithstanding the unhappy confusion and carelessness all this implies, there are passages in the Trato de Argel which are highly poetical. Aurelio, the hero, — who is a Christian captive affianced to another captive named Sylvia, — is loved by Zara, a Moorish lady, whose confidante, Fatima, makes a wild incantation, in order to obtain means to secure the gratification of her mistress's love; the result of which is that a demon rises and places in her power Necessity and Opportunity. These two immaterial agencies are then sent by her upon the stage, and — invisible to Aurelio himself, but seen by the spectators — tempt him with evil thoughts to yield to the seductions of the fair unbeliever.[36] When they are gone, he thus expresses, in soliloquy, his feelings at the idea of having nearly yielded: —

* 105 * Aurelio, whither goest thou? Where, O where,
Now tend thine erring steps? Who guides thee on
Is, then, thy fear of God so small that thus,
To satisfy mad fantasy's desires,
Thou rushest headlong? Can light and easy
Opportunity, with loose solicitation,
Persuade thee thus, and overcome thy soul,
Yielding thee up to love a prisoner?
Is this the lofty thought and firm resolve
In which thou once wast rooted, to resist
Offence and sin, although in torments sharp
Thy days should end and earthly martyrdom?
So soon hast thou offended, to the winds
Thy true and loving hopes cast forth,
And yielded up thy soul to low desire?
Away with such wild thoughts, of basest birth
And basest lineage sprung! Such witchery
Of foul, unworthy love shall by a love

[36] Cervantes, no doubt, valued himself upon these immaterial agencies; and, after his time, they became common on the Spanish stage. Calderon, in his "Gran Príncipe de Fez," (Comedias, Madrid, 1760, 4to, Tom. III. p. 389,) thus explains two, whom he introduces, in words that may be applied to those of Cervantes: —

Representando los dos
De su buen Genio y mal Genio
Exteriormente la lid,
Que arde interior en su pecho.

His good and evil genius bodied forth,
To show, as if it were in open fight,
The hot encounter hidden in his heart.

All pure be broke! A Christian soul is mine,
And as a Christian's shall my life be marked; —
Nor gifts, nor promises, nor cunning art,
Shall from the God I serve my spirit turn,
Although the path I trace lead on to death! [37]

The conception of this passage, and of the scene preceding it, is certainly not dramatic, though it is one of those on which, from the introduction of spiritual agencies, Cervantes valued himself. But neither is it without stirring poetry. Like the rest of the piece, it is a mixture of personal feelings and fancies, struggling with an ignorance of the proper principles of the drama, and with the rude elements of the theatre in its author's time. He calls the whole a *Comedia;* but it is neither a comedy nor a tragedy. Like the old Mysteries, it is rather an attempt to exhibit, in living show, a series of unconnected incidents; for it has no properly constructed plot, and, as he honestly confesses afterwards, it comes to no proper conclusion.[38]

The other play of Cervantes, that has reached us from * this period of his life, is founded on * 106 the tragical fate of Numantia, which having resisted the Roman arms fourteen years,[39] was reduced by famine; the Roman forces consisting of eighty thousand men, and the Numantian of less than four thousand, not one of whom was found alive when the

[37] Aurelio, donde vas? para dó mueves
El vagaroso paso? Quien te guia?
Con tan poco temor de Dios te atreves
A contentar tu loca fantasia? etc.
Jornada V.

[38] Y aquí da este trato fin,
Que *no lo tiene* el de Argel,

is the jest with which he ends his other play on the same subject, printed thirty years after the representation of this one. Clemencin (Notas á D. Quixote, III. 253, 254) says Cervantes did not print this play because he did not deem it worthy of him. But the inference is not a fair one, for Cervantes did not print his Numancia, and yet he certainly thought well of it. D. Quixote, II. 48.

[39] Cervantes makes Scipio say of the siege, on his arrival, —

Diez y seis años son y mas pasados.

The true length of the contest with Numantia was, however, fourteen years; and the length of the last siege fourteen months.

conquerors entered the city.[40] Cervantes probably chose this subject in consequence of the patriotic recollections it awakened, and still continues to awaken, in the minds of his countrymen; and, for the same reason, he filled his drama chiefly with the public and private horrors consequent on the self-devotion of the Numantians.

It is divided into four *jornadas*, and, like the Trato de Argel, is written in a great variety of measures; the ancient *redondilla* being preferred for the more active portions. Its *dramatis personæ* are no fewer than forty in number; and among them are Spain and the River Duero, a Dead Body, War, Sickness, Famine, and Fame; the last personage speaking the Prologue. The action opens with Scipio's arrival. He at once reproaches the Roman army, that, in so long a time, they had not conquered so small a body of Spaniards, — as Cervantes always patriotically calls the Numantians, — and then announces that they must now be subdued by Famine. Spain enters as a fair matron, and aware of what awaits her devoted city, invokes the Duero in two poetical octaves,[41] which the river answers in person, accompanied by three
*107 *of his tributary streams, but gives no hope to Numantia, except that the Goths, the Constable of Bourbon, and the Duke of Alva, shall one

[40] It is well to read, with the "Numancia" of Cervantes, the account of Florus, (Epit. II. 18,) and especially that in Mariana, (Lib. III. c. 6–10,) the latter being the proud Spanish version of it.

[41] Duero gentil, que con torcidas vueltas,
Humedeces gran parte de mi seno,
Ans en tus aguas siempre veas envueltas
Arenas de oro qual el Tajo ameno,
Y ansi las ninfas fugitivas sueltas,
De que est el verde prado y bosque lleno,
Vengan humildes á tus aguas claras,
Y en prestarte favor no sean avaras,
Que prestes á mis asperos lamentos
Atento oido o que á escucharlos vengas,
Y aunque dexes un rato tus contentos,
Suplicote que en nada te detengas:
Si tú con tus continos crecimientos
Destos fieros Romanos no te vengas,
Cerrado veo ya qualquier camino
A la salud del pueblo Numantino.
Jorn. I. Sc. 2.

It should be added that these two octaves occur at the end of a somewhat tedious soliloquy of nine or ten others, all of which are really octave stanzas, though not printed as such.

day avenge its fate on the Romans. This ends the first act.

The other three divisions are filled with the horrors of the siege endured by the unhappy Numantians; the anticipations of their defeat; their sacrifices and prayers to avert it; the unhallowed incantations by which a dead body is raised to predict the future; and the cruel sufferings to old and young, to the loved and lovely, and even to the innocence of childhood, through which the stern fate of the city is accomplished. The whole ends with the voluntary immolation of those who remained alive among the starving inhabitants, and the death of a youth who holds up the keys of the gates, and then, in presence of the Roman general, throws himself headlong from one of the towers of the city; its last self-devoted victim.

In such a story there is no plot, and no proper development of anything like a dramatic action. But the romance of real life has rarely been exhibited on the stage in such bloody extremity; and still more rarely, when thus exhibited, has there been so much of poetical effect produced by individual incidents. In a scene of the second act, Marquino, a magician, after several vain attempts to compel a spirit to re-enter the body it had just left on the battle-field, in order to obtain from it a revelation of the coming fate of the city, bursts forth indignantly, and says: —

Rebellious spirit! Back again and fill
The form which, but a few short hours ago,
Thyself left tenantless.

To which the spirit, re-entering the body, replies: —

Restrain the fury of thy cruel power!
Enough, Marquino! O, enough of pain
I suffer in those regions dark, below,

Without the added torments of thy spell!
Thou art deluded if thou deem'st indeed
That aught of earthly pleasure can repay
Such brief return to this most wretched world,
Where, when I barely seem to live again,
*108 * With urgent speed life harshly shrinks away.
Nay, rather dost thou bring a shuddering pain;
Since, on the instant, all-prevailing death
Triumphant reigns anew, subduing life and soul;
Thus yielding twice the victory to my foe,
Who now, with others of his grisly crew,
Obedient to thy will, and stung with rage,
Awaits the moment when shall be fulfilled
The knowledge thou requirest at my hand;
The knowledge of Numantia's awful fate.[42]

There is nothing of so much dignity in the incantations of Marlowe's "Faustus," which belong to the contemporary period of the English stage; nor does even Shakespeare demand from us a sympathy so strange with the mortal head reluctantly rising to answer Macbeth's guilty question, as Cervantes makes us feel for this suffering spirit, recalled to life only to endure a second time the pangs of dissolution.

The scenes of private and domestic affliction arising from the pressure of famine are sometimes introduced with unexpected effect, especially one between a mother and her child, and the following between Morandro, a lover, and his mistress, Lira, whom he now sees wasted by hunger, and mourning over the universal desolation. She turns from him to conceal her sufferings, and he says, tenderly, —

Nay, Lira, haste not, haste not thus away;
But let me feel an instant's space the joy

[42] *Marquino.*
Alma rebelde, vuelve al aposento
Que pocas horas ha desocupaste.
El Cuerpo.
Cese la furia del rigor violento
Tuyo. Marquino, baste, triste, baste,
La que yo paso en la region escura,
Sin que tú crezcas mas mi desventura.
Engañaste, si piensas que recibo
Contento de volver á esta penosa,
Mísera y corta vida, que ahora vivo,
Que ya me va faltando presurosa:
Antes, me causas un dolor esquivo,
Pues otra vez la muerte rigurosa
Triunfará de mi vida y de mi alma;
Mi enemigo tendrá doblada palma,
El cual, con otros del escuro bando
De los que son sugetos á aguardarte,
Está con rabia en torno, aquí esperando
A que acabe, Marquino, de informarte
Del lamentable fin, del mal nefando,
Que de Numancia puedo asegurarte.
Jorn. II. Sc. 2.

Which life can give even here, amidst grim death.
Let but mine eyes an instant's space behold
Thy beauty, and, amidst such bitter woes,
Be gladdened! O my gentle Lira! — thou,
That dwell'st forever in such harmony
* Amidst the thoughts that throng my fantasy, *109
That suffering grows glorious for thy sake; —
What ails thee, love? On what are bent thy thoughts,
Chief honor of mine own?
Lira. I think, how fast
All happiness is gliding both from thee
And me; and that, before this cruel war
Can find a close, my life must find one too.
Morandro. What say'st thou, love?
Lira. That hunger so prevails
Within me, that it soon must triumph quite,
And break my life's thin thread. What wedded love
Canst thou expect from me in such extremity, —
Looking for death perchance in one short hour?
With famine died my brother yesterday;
With famine sank my mother; and if still
I struggle on, 't is but my youth that bears
Me up against such rigors horrible.
But sustenance is now so many days
Withheld, that all my weakened powers
Contend in vain.
Morandro. O Lira! dry thy tears,
And let but mine bemoan thy bitter griefs!
For though fierce famine press thee merciless,
Of famine, while I live, thou shalt not die.
Fosse deep and wall of strength shall be o'erleaped,
And death confronted, and yet warded off!
The bread the bloody Roman eats to-day
Shall from his lips be torn and placed in thine; —
My arms shall hew a passage for thy life; —
For death is naught when I behold thee thus.
Food thou shalt have, in spite of Roman power,
If but these hands are such as once they were.
Lira. Thou speak'st, Morandro, with a loving heart; —
But food thus bought with peril to thy life
Would lose its savor. All that thou couldst snatch
In such an onset must be small indeed,
And rather cost thy life than rescue mine.
Enjoy, then, love, thy fresh and glowing youth!
Thy life imports the city more than mine;
Thou canst defend it from this cruel foe,
Whilst I, a maiden, weak and faint at heart,
Am worthless all. So, gentle love, dismiss this thought;

I taste no food bought at such deadly price.
And though a few short, wretched days thou couldst
Protect this life, still famine, at the last,
Must end us all.

* 110 * *Morandro.* In vain thou strivest, love,
To hinder me the way my will alike
And destiny invite and draw me on.
Pray rather, therefore, to the gods above,
That they return me home, laden with spoils,
Thy sufferings and mine to mitigate.

Lira. Morandro, gentle friend, O, go not forth!
For here before me gleams a hostile sword,
Red with thy blood! O, venture, venture not
Such fierce extremity, light of my life!
For if the sally be with dangers thick,
More dread is the return.[43]

[43] *Morandro.*
No vayas tan de corrida,
Lira, déxame gozar
Del bien que me puede dar
En la muerte alegre vida:
Dexa, que miren mis ojos
Un rato tu hermosura,
Pues tanto mi desventura
Se entretiene en mis enojos.
O dulce Lira, que suenas
Contino en mi fantasia
Con tan suave harmonia
Que vuelve en gloria mis penas!
Que tienes? Que estás pensando,
Gloria de mi pensamiento?

Lira.
Pienso como mi contento
Y el tuyo se va acabando,
Y no será su homicida
El cerco de nuestra tierra,
Que primero que la guerra
Se me acabará la vida.

Morandro.
Que dices, bien de mi alma?

Lira.
Que me tiene tal la hambre,
Que de mi vital estambre
Llevará presto la palma.
Que tálamo has de esperar
De quien está en tal extremo,
Que te aseguro que temo
Antes de una hora espirar?
Mi hermano ayer espiró
De la hambre fatigado,
Y mi madre ya ha acabado
Que la hambre la acabó.
Y si la hambre y su fuerza
No ha rendido mi salud,
Es porque la juventud
Contra su rigor se esfuerza.
Pero como ha tantos dias
Que no le hago defensa,
No pueden contra su ofensa
Las débiles fuerzas mias.

Morandro.
Enjuga, Lira, los ojos,
Dexa que los tristes mios
Se vuelvan corrientes rios
Nacidos de tus enojos;
Y aunque la hambre ofendida
Te tenga tan sin compas,
De hambre no morirás
Mientras yo tuviere vida.
Yo me ofrezco de saltar
El foso y el muro fuerte,
Y entrar por la misma muerte
Para la tuya escusar.
El pan que el Romano toca,
Sin que el temor me destruya,
Lo quitaré de la suya
Para ponerlo en tu boca.
Con mi brazo haré carrera
A tu vida y á mi muerte,
Porque mas me mata el verte,
Señora, de esa manera.
Yo te traeré de comer
A pesar de los Romanos,
Si ya son estas mis manos
Las mismas que solian ser.

Lira.
Hablas como enamorado,
Morandro, pero no es justo,
Que ya tome gusto el gusto
Con tu peligro comprado.
Poco podrá sustentarme
Qualquier robo que harás,
Aunque mas cierto hallaras
El perderte que ganarme.
Goza de tu mocedad
En fresca edad y crecida,
Que mas importa tu vida
Que la mia, á la ciudad.
Tu podrás bien defendella,
De la enemiga asechanza,
Que no la flaca pujanza
Desta tan triste doncella.
Ansí que, mi dulce amor,
Despide ese pensamiento,
Que yo no quiero sustento
Ganado con tu sudor.
Que aunque puedes alargar
Mi muerte por algun dia,
Esta hambre que porfia
En fin nos ha de acabar.

Morandro.
En vano trabajas, Lira,
De impidirme este camino,
Do mi voluntad y signo
Allá me convida y tira.

* He persists, and, accompanied by a faithful * 111
friend, penetrates into the Roman camp and
obtains bread. In the contest he is wounded; but
still, forcing his way back to the city, by the mere
energy of despair, he gives to Lira the food he has
won, wet with his own blood, and then falls dead at
her feet.

A very high authority in dramatic criticism speaks of the Numancia as if it were not merely one of the more distinguished efforts of the early Spanish theatre, but one of the most striking exhibitions of modern poetry.[44] It is not probable that this opinion will prevail. Yet the whole piece has the merit of great originality, and, in several of its parts, succeeds in awakening strong emotions; so that, notwithstanding the want of dramatic skill and adaptation, it may still be cited as a proof of its author's high poetical talent, and, in the actual condition of the Spanish stage when he wrote, as a bold and noble effort to raise it.

Tú rogarás entre tanto
A los Dioses, que me vuelvan
Con despojos que resuelvan
Tu miseria y mi quebranto.

Lira.
Morandro, mi dulce amigo,
No vayas, que se me antoja,
Que de tu sangre veo roxa
La espada del enemigo
No hagas esta jornada,
Morandro, bien de mi vida,
Que si es mala la salida,
Es muy peor la tornada.

Jorn. III. Sc. 1.

There is, in this scene, a tone of gentle, broken-hearted self-devotion on the part of Lira, awakening a fierce despair in her lover, that seems to me very true to nature. The last words of Lira, in the passage translated, have, I think, much beauty in the original.

[44] A. W. von Schlegel, Vorlesungen über dramatische Kunst und Literatur, Heidelberg, 1811, Tom. II. Abt. ii. p. 345. Cervantes speaks more modestly of it himself; but still couples it with well-considered plays of Lope de Vega, Gaspar de Avila, and Francisco Tarrega. Don Quixote, Parte I. c. 48.

There is a very curious contract between Cervantes and Rodrigo de Osorio an "Autor de Comedias," dated at Seville, 5 September, 1592, in which Cervantes engages to write six plays, for each of which he is to receive fifty ducats, provided it should be "una de las mejores comedias que se han representado en España"; otherwise nothing. Whether these plays were ever written, or whether, if they were written, they were the six mentioned in the "Adjunta al Parnaso" in 1614, we shall probably never know. (Nuevos Documentos, Sevilla, 1864, pp. 26–29.) The period referred to — 1592 — was apparently the one when he was much occupied and vexed with collecting provisions for the government in Andalusia, and with other poor labors of a similar sort.