

a conclusion so abrupt and unsatisfactory, that it seems as if its author could hardly have originally foreseen it.

But though, with the exception of what relates to the apocryphal Spanish adventurers, the series of historical events in that brilliant crusade is followed down with some regard to the truth of fact, still we are so much confused by the visions and allegorical personages mingled in the narrative, and by the manifold episodes and love-adventures which interrupt it, that it is all but impossible to read any considerable portion consecutively and with attention. Lope's easy and graceful versification is, indeed, to be found here, as it is in nearly all his poetry; but even on the holy ground of chivalry, at Cyprus, Ptolemais, and Tyre, his narrative has much less movement and life than we might claim from its subject, and almost everywhere else it is languid and heavy. Of plan, proportions, or a skilful adaptation of the several parts so as to form an epic whole, there is no thought; and yet Lope intimates that his poem was written with care * 175 some time before it was published,⁵² * and he dedicates it to his king, in a tone indicating that he thought it by no means unworthy the royal favor.

⁵² See the Prólogo. The whole poem is in *Obras Sueltas*, Tom. XIV. and XV. He always liked it. Before it was published, he says, in a letter to the Duke of Sessa, dated September 3, 1605, when he thought he might print it very soon: "I wrote it in my best years, and with a different purpose

from that of other works written in my youth, when the passions have more power." Schack, *Nachträge*, 1854, p. 33. Note that the Duke's name is sometimes spelled with a double *s* as it is here, and sometimes with a single one, — Sesa.

* CHAPTER XIV. * 176

LOPE DE VEGA, CONTINUED. — HIS RELATIONS WITH THE CHURCH. — HIS PASTORES DE BELEN. — HIS RELIGIOUS POEMS. — HIS CONNECTION WITH THE FESTIVALS AT THE BEATIFICATION AND CANONIZATION OF SAN ISIDRO. — TOMÉ DE BURGUILLOS. — LA GATOMACHIA. — AN AUTO DE FÉ. — TRIUNFOS DIVINOS. — POEM ON MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS. — LAUREL DE APOLO. — DOROTEA. — HIS OLD AGE AND DEATH.

JUST at the time the *Jerusalem* was published, Lope began to wear the livery of his Church. Indeed, it is on the title-page of this very poem that he, for the first time, announces himself as a "Familiar of the Holy Inquisition." Proofs of the change in his life are soon apparent in his works. In 1612, he published "The Shepherds of Bethlehem," a long pastoral in prose and verse, divided into five books. It contains the sacred history, according to the more popular traditions of the author's Church, from the birth of Mary, the Saviour's mother, to the arrival of the holy family in Egypt, — all supposed to be related or enacted by shepherds in the neighborhood of Bethlehem, at the time the events occurred.

Like the other prose pastorals written at the same period, it is full of incongruities. Some of the poems, in particular, are as inappropriate and in as bad taste as can well be conceived; and why three or four poetical contests for prizes, and several common Spanish games, are introduced at all, it is not easy to imagine, since they are permitted by the conditions of no possible poetical theory for such fictions. But it must be confessed, on the other hand, that there runs through the whole an air of amenity and gentleness well suited

to its subject and purpose. Several stories from *177 the Old Testament are gracefully * told, and translations from the Psalms and other parts of the Jewish Scriptures are brought in with a happy effect. Some of the original poetry, too, is to be placed among the best of Lope's minor compositions;—such as the following imaginative little song, which is supposed to have been sung in a palm-grove, by the Madonna, to her sleeping child, and is as full of the tenderest feelings of Catholic devotion as one of Murillo's pictures on the same subject:—

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,—
O, hush, then, and keep
Your branches all still,—
My babe is asleep!

Cold blasts wheel about him,—
A rigorous 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!¹

¹ Pues andais en las palmas,
Angeles santos,
Que se duerme mi niño,
Tened los ramos.

Palmas de Belen,
Que mueven ayrados
Los furiosos vientos,
Que suenan tanto,

* The whole work is dedicated with great * 178 tenderness, in a few simple words, to Carlos, the little son that died before he was seven years old, and of whom Lope always speaks so lovingly. But it breaks off abruptly, and was never finished;—why, it is not easy to tell, for it was well received, and was printed four times in as many years.

In 1612, the year of the publication of this pastoral, Lope printed a few religious ballads and some "Thoughts in Prose," which he pretended were translated from the Latin of Gabriel Padocepo, an imperfect anagram of his own name; and in 1614, there appeared a volume containing, first, a collection of his short sacred poems, to which were afterwards added four solemn and striking poetical Soliloquies, composed while he knelt before a cross on the day he was received into the Society of Penitents; then two contemplative discourses, written at the request of his brethren of the same society; and finally, a short spiritual Romancero, or ballad-book, and a "Via Crucis," or meditations on the passage of the Saviour from the judgment-seat of Pilate to the hill of Calvary.²

Many of these poems are full of a deep and solemn devotion;³ others are strangely coarse and free;⁴ and a few are merely whimsical and trifling.⁵ Some of the more religious of the ballads are still sung about the

No le hagais ruido,
Corred mas passo;
Que se duerme mi niño,
Tened los ramos.

Angeles divinos,
Que vais volando,
Que se duerme mi niño,
Tened los ramos.

Obras Sueltas, Tom. XVI. p. 332.

El niño divino,
Que está cansado
De llorar en la tierra:
Por su descanso,
Sosegar quiere un poco
Del tierno llanto;
Que se duerme mi niño,
Tened los ramos.

² Obras, Tom. XIII., etc.
³ For instance, the sonnet beginning,
"Yo dormiré en el polvo." Obras,
Tom. XIII. p. 186.

⁴ Such as "Gertrudis siendo Dios tan amoroso." Obras, Tom. XIII. p. 223.

⁵ Some of them are very flat;—see the sonnet, "Quando en tu alcazar de Sion." Obras, Tom. XIII. p. 225.

Rigurosos hielos
Le estan cercando,
Ya veis que no tengo
Con que guardarlo:

streets of Madrid by blind beggars;— a testimony to the devout feelings which, occasionally at least, glowed in their author's heart, that is not to be mistaken. These poems, however, with an account of the martyrdom of a considerable number of Christians at Japan, in 1614, which was printed four years * 179 later,⁶ were all the miscellaneous works * published by Lope between 1612 and 1620;— the rest of his time during this period having apparently been filled with his brilliant successes in the drama, both secular and sacred.

But in 1620 and 1622, he had an opportunity to exhibit himself to the mass of the people, as well as to the court, at Madrid, in a character which, being both religious and dramatic, was admirably suited to his powers and pretensions. It was the double occasion of the beatification and the canonization of Saint Isidore, in whose honor, above twenty years earlier, Lope had made one of his most successful efforts for popularity,— a long interval, but one during which the claims of the Saint had been by no means overlooked. On the contrary, the king, from the time of his restoration to health, had been constantly soliciting the honors of the Church for a personage to whose miraculous interposition he believed himself to owe it. At last they were granted, and the 19th of May, 1620, was appointed for celebrating the beatification of the pious "Ploughman of Madrid."

Such occasions were now often seized in the principal cities of Spain, as a means alike of exhibiting the talents of their poets, and amusing and interesting the multitude;— the Church gladly contributing its authority to substitute, as far as possible, a sort of poeti-

⁶ Triunfo de la Fé en los Reynos del Japon. Obras, Tom. XVII.

cal tournament, held under its own management, for the chivalrous tournaments which had for centuries exercised so great and so irreligious an influence throughout Europe. At any rate, these literary contests, in which honors and prizes of various kinds were offered, were called "Poetical Joustings," and early became favorite entertainments with the mass of the people. We have already noticed such festivals, as early as the end of the fifteenth century; and besides the prize which, as we have seen, Cervantes gained at Saragossa in May, 1595,⁷ Lope gained one at Toledo, in June, 1608;⁸ and in September, 1614, he was the judge at a poetical festival in honor of the * beatification of Saint Theresa, at Madrid, * 180 where the rich tones of his voice and his graceful style of reading were much admired.⁹

The occasion of the beatification of the Saint who presided over the fortunes of Madrid was, however, one of more solemn importance than either of these had been. All classes of the inhabitants of that "Heroic Town," as it is still called, took an interest in it;

⁷ See *ante*, Vol. I. p. 305, and Vol. II. p. 114.

⁸ The successful poem, a jesting ballad of very small merit, is in the *Obras Sueltas*, Tom. XXI. pp. 171-177.

⁹ An account of some of the poetical joustings of this period is to be found in Navarrete, "Vida de Cervantes," § 162, with the notes, p. 486, and in the Spanish translation of this History, Tom. III. pp. 527-529. I have seen many of them and read a few. They have almost no value. A good illustration of the mode in which they were conducted is to be found in the "Justa Poética," in honor of Our Lady of the Pillar at Saragossa, collected by Juan Bautista Felices de Cáceres, (Caragoca, 1629, 4to,) in which Joseph de Valdivielso and Vargas Machuca figured. Such joustings became so frequent at last, and so poor, as to be subjects of

ridicule. In the "Caballero Descortes" of Salas Barbadillo, (Madrid, 1621, 12mo, f. 99, etc.) there is a *certámen* in honor of the recovery of a lost hat;— merely a light caricature. In another of his satirical works, (*La Estafeta del Dios Momo*, 1627,) which is a collection of letters in ridicule of extravagances and extravagant people, Barbadillo speaks, in Epistola XVII., of a shoemaker who set up to have a *certámen*, and offered prizes for it. Sometimes, however, they were very devout. One on the canonization of San Pedro de Alcántara in 1670 is eminently such, consisting mainly of sixteen sermons appended to the poetical honors of the occasion. It was prepared by Antonio de Huerta and makes four hundred and forty-five pages, under the title of *Triunfos Gloriosos*, &c. There could hardly be a more dull book.

for it was believed to concern the well-being of all.¹⁰ The Church of Saint Andrew, in which reposed the body of the worthy Ploughman, was ornamented with unwonted splendor. The merchants of the city completely encased its altars with plain, but pure silver. The goldsmiths enshrined the form of the Saint, which five centuries had not wasted away, in a sarcophagus of the same metal, elaborately wrought. Other classes brought other offerings; all marked by the gorgeous wealth that then flowed through the privileged portions of Spanish society, from the mines of Peru and Mexico. In front of the church a showy stage was erected, from which the poems sent in for prizes were read, and over this part of the ceremonies Lope presided.

* 181 * As a sort of prologue, a few satirical petitions were produced, which were intended to excite merriment, and, no doubt, were successful; after which Lope opened the literary proceedings of the festival, by pronouncing a poetical oration of above seven hundred lines in honor of San Isidro. This was followed by reading the subjects for the nine prizes offered by the nine Muses, together with the rules according to which the honors of the occasion were to be adjudged; and then came the poems themselves. Among the competitors were many of the principal men of letters of the time: Zarate, Guillen de Castro,

¹⁰ The details of the festival, with the poems offered on the occasion, were neatly printed at Madrid, in 1620, in a small quarto, ff. 140, and fill about three hundred pages in the eleventh volume of Lope's Works. The number of poetical offerings was great, but much short of what similar contests sometimes produced. Figueroa says in his "Passagero," (Madrid, 1617, 12mo, f. 118,) that, at a *justa* in Madrid a short time before, to honor St. Antonio of

Padua, five thousand poems of different kinds were offered; which, after the best of them had been hung round the church and the cloisters of the monks who originally proposed the prizes, were distributed to other monasteries. The custom extended to America. In 1585, Balbuena carried away a prize in Mexico from three hundred competitors. See his Life, prefixed to the Academy's edition of his "Siglo de Oro," Madrid, 1821, 8vo.

Jauregui, Espinel, Montalvan, Pantaleon, Silveira, the young Calderon, and Lope himself, with the son who bore his name, still a boy. All this, or nearly all of it, was grave, and beseeming the grave occasion. But at the end of the list of those who entered their claims for each prize, there always appeared a sort of masque, who, under the assumed name of Master Burguillos, "seasoned the feast in the most savory manner," it is said, with his amusing verses, caricaturing the whole, like the *gracioso* of the popular theatre, and serving as a kind of interlude after each division of the more regular drama.

Lope took hardly any pains to conceal that this savory part of the festival was entirely his own; so surely had his theatrical instincts indicated to him the merry relief its introduction would give to the stateliness and solemnity of the occasion.¹¹ All the various performances were read by him with much effect, and at the end he gave a light and pleasant account, in the old popular ballad measure, of whatever had been done; after which the judges pronounced the names of the successful competitors. Who they were, we are not told; but the offerings of all — those of the unsuccessful as well as of the successful — were published by him without delay.

* A greater jubilee followed two years after- * 182
wards, when, at the opening of the reign of Philip the Fourth, the negotiations of his grateful predecessor were crowned with a success he did not live

¹¹ "But let the reader note well," says Lope, "that the verses of Master Burguillos must be supposititious; for he did not appear at the contest; and all he wrote is in jest, and made the festival very savory. And as he did not appear for any prize, it was generally believed that he was a character

introduced by Lope himself." Obras, Tom. XI. p. 401. See also p. 598. Rosell (Bib. de Rivadeneira, XXXVIII., Prologo, xvi, note) says that poems attributed to Tomé de Burguillos, but in the autograph of Lope, are in possession of the Marquis de Pidal.

to witness; and San Isidro, with three other devout Spaniards, was admitted by the Head of the Church at Rome to the full glories of sainthood, by a formal canonization. The people of Madrid took little note of the Papal bull, except so far as it concerned their own particular saint and protector. But to him the honors they offered were abundant.¹² The festival they instituted for the occasion lasted nine days. Eight pyramids, above seventy feet high, were arranged in different parts of the city, and nine magnificent altars, a castle, a rich garden, and a temporary theatre. All the houses of the better sort were hung with gorgeous tapestry; religious processions, in which the principal nobility took the meanest places, swept through the streets; and bull-fights, always the most popular of Spanish entertainments, were added, in which above two thousand of those noble animals were sacrificed in amphitheatres or public squares open freely to all.

As a part of the show, a great literary contest or jousting was held on the 19th of May, — exactly two years after that held at the beatification. Again Lope appeared on the stage in front of the same Church of Saint Andrew, and, with similar ceremonies and a similar admixture of the somewhat broad farce of Tomé de Burguillos, most of the leading poets of the time joined in the universal homage. Lope carried away the principal prizes. Others were given to Zarate, Calderon, Montalvan, and Guillen de Castro. Two plays — one on the childhood and the other on the youth of San Isidro, but both expressly ordered from Lope by the city — were acted on open, movable stages, before the king, the court, and the multitude,

¹² The proceedings and poems of this second great festival were printed at once at Madrid, in a quarto volume, 1622, ff. 156, and fill Tom. XII. of the *Obras Sueltas*.

making their author the most prominent figure of a festival which, rightly understood, goes far to explain the spirit of the times and of *the *183 religion on which it all depended. An account of the whole, comprehending the poems offered on the occasion, and his own two plays, was published by Lope before the close of the year.

His success at these two jubilees was, no doubt, very flattering to him. It had been of the most public kind; it had been on a very popular subject; and it had, perhaps, brought him more into the minds and thoughts of the great mass of the people, and into the active interests of the time, than even his success in the theatre. The caricatures of Tomé de Burguillos, in particular, though often rude, seem to have been received with extraordinary favor. Later, therefore, he was induced to write more verses in the same style; and, in 1634, he published a volume, consisting almost wholly of humorous and burlesque poems, under the same disguise. Most of the pieces it contains are sonnets and other short poems; — some very sharp and satirical, and nearly all fluent and happy. But one of them is of considerable length, and should be separately noticed.

It is a mock-heroic, in irregular verse, divided into six *silvas* or cantos, and is called "La Gatomachia," or the Battle of the Cats; being a contest between two cats for the love of a third. Like nearly all the poems of the class to which it belongs, from the "Batrachomyomachia" downwards, it is too long. It contains about twenty-five hundred lines, in various measures. But if it is not the first in the Spanish language in the order of time, it is the first in the order of merit. The last two *silvas*, in particular, are written with great