

In some of the early copies, this drama, so characteristic of the age to which it belongs, is attributed to Luis de Belmonte, and in some of them to Antonio de Coello, called erroneously *Luis de Coello* in the "Catalogo" of Huerta. Later, it is declared, though on what authority we are not told, to have been written by Francisco Damian de Cornejo, a Franciscan monk. All this, however, is uncertain, although Belmonte is more likely to have been its author than either of the others. But we know, that, for a long time after it appeared, it used to be acted as a devout work, favorable to the interests of the Franciscans, who then possessed great influence in Spain. In the latter part of the eighteenth century, however, this state of things was partly changed, and its public performance, for some reason or other, was forbidden. About 1800, it \* 341 \* reappeared on the stage, and was again acted, with great profit, all over the country, — the Franciscan monks lending the needful monastic dresses for an exhibition they thought so honorable to their order. But in 1804 it was put anew under the ban of the Inquisition, and so remained until after the political revolution of 1820, which gave absolute liberty to the theatre.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>24</sup> C. Pellicer, *Origen*, Tom. I. p. 184, note; *Suplemento al Indice*, etc., 1805; and an excellent article by Louis de Vieil Castel, in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, July 15, 1840. To these should be added the pleasant description given by Blanco White, in his admirable "Doblado's Letters," (1822, pp. 163–169,) of a representation he himself witnessed of the "Diablo Predicador," in the court-yard of a poor inn, where a cow-house served for the theatre, or rather the stage, and the spectators, who paid less than twopence apiece for their places, sat in the open air, under a bright starry sky.

My friend, Mr. J. R. Chorley, has

drawn my attention to the fact, that a poor play by Francisco de Malaspina, entitled "La Fuerza de la Verdad," is nearly identical in its subject with the "Diablo Predicador." It is in the *Comedias Escogidas*, Tom. XIV., 1661, f. 182, and at the opening, the Devil puts his case with more force and ingenuity, I think, than he does in the "Diablo Predicador." In two MSS. of the last, it is attributed to Francisco de Villegas, but the common opinion that it was written by Belmonte is the more likely one. Schack's *Nachträge*, 1854, p. 62.

Belmonte was born about 1587; was in the "Certámenes" for San Isidro at

The school of Lope,<sup>25</sup> to which all the writers we have just enumerated, and many more, belonged, was not received with an absolutely universal applause. Men of learning, from time to time, refused to be reconciled to it; and severe or captious critics found in its gross irregularities and extravagances abundant opportunity for the exercise of a spirit of complaint. Alonso Lopez, commonly called El Pinciano, in his "Art of Poetry founded on the Doctrines of the Ancients," — a modest treatise, which he printed as early as 1596, — shows plainly, in his discussions on the nature of tragedy and comedy, that he was far from consenting to the forms of the drama then beginning to prevail on the theatre. The Argensolas, who, about ten years earlier, had attempted to introduce another and more classical type, would, of course, be even less satisfied with the tendency of things in their time; and one of them, Bartolomé, speaks his opinion very openly in his didactic satires. Others joined them, among whom were Artieda, in a poetical epistle to the Marquis of Cuellar; \* Villegas, the sweet \* 342 lyrical poet, in his seventh elegy; and Christóval de Mesa, in different passages of his minor poems, and in the Preface to his ill-constructed tragedy of "Pompey." If to these we add a scientific discussion on the True Structure of Tragedy and Comedy, in the third and fourth of the Poetical Tables of Cascales, and

Madrid in 1620 and 1622, and seems to have been alive in 1649. In the address to the reader, preceding the drama on the Marquis of Cañete, which it took nine poets to make so dull, (see *post*, Chap. XXVII. note 14,) he says of himself, "Estando yo en Lima el año de 605"; — so that he was in Peru when he was young, and ought to have known better than to assist in doing honor to such a man as he would illustrate.

<sup>25</sup> For the school of Lope, see Biblioteca de Autores Españoles, (Tom. XLIII. and XLV., 1857 and 1858,) where Don Ramon de Mesonero Romanos has made a collection of fifty-nine plays to illustrate it. The Catalogue of Authors, with alphabetical lists of their known plays following their names, is in Vol. XLIV., and is particularly valuable.

a harsh account of the whole popular Spanish stage, by Suarez de Figueroa, in which little is noticed but its follies, we shall have, if not everything that was said on the subject by the scholars of the time, at least everything that needs now to be remembered. The whole is of less consequence than the frank admissions of Lope de Vega, in his "New Art of the Drama."<sup>26</sup>

The opposition of the Church, more formidable than that of the scholars of the time, was, in some respects, better founded, since many of the plays of this period were indecent, and more of them immoral. The ecclesiastical influence, as we have seen, had, therefore, been early directed against the theatre, partly on this account and partly because the secular drama had superseded those representations in the churches which had so long been among the means used by the priesthood to sustain their power with the mass of the people. On these grounds, in fact, the plays of Torres Naharro were suppressed in 1545, and a petition was sent, in 1548, by the Cortes, to Charles the Fifth, against the printing and publishing of all indecent farces.<sup>27</sup>

\* 343 For a \* long time, however, little was done

<sup>26</sup> El Pinciano, *Filosofía Antigua Poética*, Madrid, 1596, 4to, p. 381, etc.; Andres Rey de Artieda, *Discursos*, etc. de Artemidoro, Caragoça, 1605, 4to, f. 87; C. de Mesa, *Rimas*, Madrid, 1611, 12mo, ff. 94, 145, 218, and his *Pompeyo*, Madrid, 1618, 12mo, with its *Dedicatoria*; Cascales, *Tablas Poéticas*, Murcia, 1616, 4to, Parte II.; C. S. de Figueroa, *Pasagero*, Madrid, 1617, 12mo, *Alivio tercero*; Est. M. de Villegas, *Eróticas*, Najera, 1617, 4to, *Segunda Parte*, f. 27; Los Argensolas, *Rimas*, Zaragoza, 1634, 4to, p. 447. I have arranged them according to their dates, because, in this case, the order of time is important, and because it should be noticed that all come within the period of Lope's success as a dramatist.

Gayangos, in his translation of this *History*, (Tom. II. pp. 558-560,) gives an account of an attack, in 1617, on Lope as a dramatist, by a certain Pedro Torres de Ramila, and of answers to it by Julio Columbario (a pseudonyme for Francisco Lopez de Aguilar) and Alfonso Sanchez;—all in Latin, and all, apparently, in the bitterest spirit of Spanish literary controversy. But Lope suffered little personally in this way. His popularity was overwhelming. After his death, he was oftener attacked, e. g. by Antonio Lopez de Vega, (see *post*, Chap. XXIX.) who did it, very ungratefully, in his *Heraclito y Democrito*, (1641, pp. 176, sqq.) for Lope had been kind to him earlier.

<sup>27</sup> D. Quixote, ed. Clemencin, Tom. III. p. 402, note.

but to suspend dramatic representations in seasons of court mourning, and on other occasions of public sorrow or trouble;—this being, perhaps, thought by the clergy an exercise of their influence that would, in the course of events, lead to more important concessions.

But as the theatre rose into importance with the popularity of Lope de Vega, the discussions on its character and consequences grew graver. Even just before that time, in 1587, Philip the Second consulted some of the leading theologians of the kingdom, and was urged to suppress altogether the acted drama; but, after much deliberation, he followed the milder opinion of Alonso de Mendoza, a professor at Salamanca, and determined still to tolerate it, but to subject it constantly to a careful and even strict supervision. In 1597, the same Philip, more monk than king, ordered, according to the custom of the time, the public representations at Madrid to be suspended, in consequence of the death of his daughter, the Duchess of Savoy. But Philip was now old and infirm. The opposers of the theatre, among whom was Lupercio de Argensola, gathered around him.<sup>28</sup> The discussion was renewed with increased earnestness, and in 1598, not long before he breathed his last in the Escorial, with his dying eyes fastened on its high altar, he forbade theatrical representations altogether. No attack, however, on the theatre and its actors was so grave and pungent as that of Mariana in his *De Rege*, 1599, repeated and reinforced in his *De Spectaculis*, ten years later. The wonder is that it produced so little effect, coming as it did, in its first form, during the dark period immediately following the death of the king.

<sup>28</sup> Pellicer, *Bib. de Traductores*, Tom. I. p. 11.

Little, in truth, was really effected by this struggle on the part of the Church, except that the dramatic poets were compelled to discover ingenious modes for evading the authority exercised against them, and that the character of the actors was degraded by it. To drive the drama from ground where it was so well entrenched behind the general favor of the people was \* 344 impossible. The \* city of Madrid, already the acknowledged capital of the country, begged that the theatres might again be opened; giving, as one reason for their request, that many religious plays were performed, by some of which both actors and spectators had been so moved to penitence as to hasten directly from the theatre to enter religious houses;<sup>29</sup> and as another reason, that the rent paid by the companies of actors to the hospitals of Madrid was important to the very existence of those great and beneficent charities.<sup>30</sup>

Moved by such arguments, Philip the Third, in 1600, when the theatres had been shut hardly two years, summoned a council of ecclesiastics and four of the principal secular authorities of the kingdom, and laid the whole subject before them. Under their advice, — which still condemned in the strongest manner the theatres as they had heretofore existed in Spain, — he

<sup>29</sup> As a set-off to this alleged religious effect of the *comedias de santos*, we have, in the Address that opens the "Tratado de las Comedias," (1618,) by Bisbe y Vidal, an account of a young girl who was permitted to see the representation of the "Conversion of Mary Magdalen" several times, as an act of devotion, and ended her visits to the theatre by falling in love with the actor that personated the Saviour, and running off with him, or rather following him to Madrid.

<sup>30</sup> The account, however, was sometimes the other way. Bisbe y Vidal

(f. 98) says that the hospitals made such efforts to sustain the theatres, in order to get an income from them afterwards, that they themselves were sometimes impoverished by the speculations they ventured to make; and adds, that in his time (c. 1618) there was a person alive, who, as a magistrate of Valencia, had been the means of such losses to the hospital of that city, through its investments and advances for the theatre that he had entered a religious house, and given his whole fortune to the hospital, to make up for the injury he had done it.

permitted them to be opened anew; diminishing, however, the number of actors, forbidding all immorality in the plays, and allowing representations only on Sundays and three other days in the week, which were required to be Church festivals, if such festivals should occur. This decision has, on the whole, been hardly yet disturbed, and the theatre in Spain, with occasional alterations and additions of privilege, has continued to rest safely on its foundations ever since; — closed, indeed, sometimes, in seasons of public mourning, as it was three months on the death of Philip the Third, and again in 1665, by the bigotry of the queen regent, but never \* interrupted for any long \* 345 period, and never again called to contend for its existence.

The truth is, that, from the beginning of the seventeenth century, the popular Spanish drama was too strong to be subjected either to classical criticism or to ecclesiastical control. In the "Amusing Journey" of Roxas, an actor who travelled over much of the country in 1602, visiting Seville, Granada, Toledo, Valladolid, and many other places, we find plays acted everywhere, even in the smallest villages, and the drama, in all its forms and arrangements, accommodated to the public taste far beyond any other popular amusement.<sup>31</sup> In 1632, Montalvan — the best authority on such a subject — gives us the names of a crowd of writers for Castile alone; and three years later, Fabio Franchi, an Italian, who had lived in Spain, published a eulogy on Lope, which enumerates nearly

<sup>31</sup> Roxas (1602) gives an amusing account of the nicknames and resources of eight different kinds of strolling companies of actors, beginning with the *bululu*, which boasted of but one person, and going up to the full *compañia*,

which was required to have seventeen. (Viage, Madrid, 1614, 12mo, ff. 51-53.) These nicknames and distinctions were long known in Spain. Four of them occur in "Estebanillo Gonzalez," 1646, c. 6.

thirty of the same dramatists, and shows anew how completely the country was imbued with their influence. There can, therefore, be no doubt, that, at the time of his death, Lope's name was the great poetical name that filled the whole breadth of the land with its glory, and that the forms of the drama originated by him were established, beyond the reach of successful opposition, as the national and popular forms of the drama for all Spain.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>32</sup> On the whole subject of the contest between the Church and the theatre, and the success of Lope and his school, see C. Pellicer, *Origen*, Tom. I. pp. 118-122, and 142-157; *Don Quixote*, ed. J. A. Pellicer, Parte II. c. 11, note; Roxas, *Viage*, 1614, *passim* (f. 66, implying that he wrote in 1602); Montalvan, *Para Todos*, 1661, p. 543; Lope de Vega, *Obras Sueltas*, Tom. XXI. p. 66; and many other parts of Vols. XX. and XXI.;—all showing the triumph of Lope and his school. A letter of Francisco Cascales to Lope de Vega, published in 1634, in defence of plays and their representation, is the third in the second decade of his Epistles;

but it goes on the untenable ground, that the plays then represented were liable to no objection on the score of morals. Ricardo del Turia—probably a pseudonym for Luis Ferrer y Cardona, governor of Valencia, to whom, in my copy of the "Comedias de Poesas de Valencia," 1609, that volume is dedicated—takes, on the contrary, in his Preface to the second volume, 1616, the theatre as it really existed, and defends it not without learning and acuteness. He died in 1641. Barrera, however, maintains that Pedro Juan de Toledo was the person disguised under the name of Ricardo de Turia.

## \* CHAPTER XXII.

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CALDERON.—HIS LIFE AND VARIOUS WORKS.—DRAMAS FALSELY ATTRIBUTED TO HIM.—HIS SACRAMENTAL AUTOS.—HOW REPRESENTED.—THEIR CHARACTER.—THE DIVINE ORPHEUS.—GREAT POPULARITY OF SUCH EXHIBITIONS.—HIS FULL-LENGTH RELIGIOUS PLAYS.—PURGATORY OF SAINT PATRICK.—DEVOTION TO THE CROSS.—WONDER-WORKING MAGICIAN.—OTHER SIMILAR PLAYS.

TURNING from Lope de Vega and his school, we come now to his great successor and rival, Pedro Calderon de la Barca, who, if he invented no new form of the drama, was yet so eminently a poet in the national temper, and had a success so brilliant, that he must necessarily fill a large space in all inquiries concerning the history of the Spanish theatre.

He was born at Madrid, on the 17th of January, 1600;<sup>1</sup> and one of his friends claims kindred for him with nearly all the old kings of the different Spanish monarchies, and even with most of the crowned heads of his time, throughout Europe.<sup>2</sup> This is \* ab- \* 347

<sup>1</sup> There has been some discussion, and a general error, about the date of Calderon's birth; but in a rare book, entitled "Obelisco Fúnebre," published in his honor, by his friend Gaspar Augustin de Lara, (Madrid, 1684, 4to.) and written immediately after Calderon's death, it is distinctly stated, on the authority of Calderon himself, that he was born January 17, 1600. This settles all doubts. The certificate of baptism given in Baena, "Hijos de Madrid," Tom. IV. p. 228, only says that he was baptized February 14, 1600; but why that ceremony, contrary to custom, was so long delayed, or why a person in the position of Vera Tassis y Villaroel, who, like Lara, was a friend of Calderon, should have placed

the poet's birth on January 1st, we cannot now even conjecture.

<sup>2</sup> See the learned genealogical introduction to the "Obelisco Fúnebre," just cited. The name of *Calderon*, as its author tells us, came into the family in the thirteenth century, when one of its number, being prematurely born, was supposed to be dead, but was ascertained to be alive by being unceremoniously thrown into a caldron—*calderon*—of warm water. As he proved to be a great man, and was much favored by St. Ferdinand and Alfonso the Wise, his nickname became a name of honor, and five *calderons* were, from that time, borne in the family arms. The additional surname of *Barca* came in later, with an estate—*solar*—of