

of the kingdom of Valencia, wrote a letter to Calderon in 1680, asking for a list of his dramas, by which, as a friend and admirer, he might venture to make a collection of them for himself. The reply of the poet, complaining bitterly of the conduct of the booksellers, which had made such a request necessary, is accompanied by a list of one hundred and eleven full-length dramas and seventy sacramental *autos*, which he claims as his own.²⁴ This catalogue constitutes the proper basis for a knowledge of Calderon's dramatic works, down to the present day. All the plays mentioned in

it have not, indeed, been found. Nine are not * 358 in the editions of Vera * Tassis, in 1682, of Apontes, in 1760, or of Hartzenbusch, in 1850; but, on the other hand, a few not in Calderon's list have been added to theirs upon what has seemed sufficient authority; so that we have now seventy-three sacramental *autos*, with their introductory *loas*,²⁵ and one hundred and eight *comedias*, or — including plays partly his — one hundred and twenty-two, on which his reputation as a dramatic poet is at present to rest.²⁶

²⁴ This correspondence, so honorable to Calderon, as well as to the head of the family of Columbus, who signs himself proudly, *El Almirante Duque*, — as Columbus himself had required his descendants always to sign themselves, (Navarrete, Tom. II. p. 229,) — is to be found in the "Obelisco," and again in Huerta, "Teatro Hespáñol," (Madrid, 1785, 12mo, Parte II. Tom. III.) and, with additions by Vera Tassis, *Comedias de Calderon*, Tom. I., 1685, and Tom. V., 1694. The complaints of Calderon about the booksellers are very bitter, as well they might be; for in 1676, in his Preface to his *autos*, he says that their frauds took away from the hospitals and other charities — which yet received only a small part of the profits of the theatre — no less than twenty-six thousand ducats annually.

²⁵ All the *loas*, however, are not Calderon's; but it is no longer possible to determine which are not so. "No son todas suyas" is the phrase applied to them in the Prólogo of the edition of 1717.

²⁶ Vera Tassis tells us, indeed, in his Life of Calderon, that Calderon wrote a hundred *saynetes*, or short farces; about a hundred *autos sacramentales*; two hundred *loas*; and more than one hundred and twenty *comedias*. But he collected for his edition (1683-1694) only the *comedias* mentioned in the text, and thirteen more, intended for an additional volume that never was printed. See notices of Calderon, by F. W. V. Schmidt, in the Wiener Jahrbücher der Literatur, Bände XVII., XVIII., and XIX., 1822, to which I am much indebted, and which deserve to be printed separately, and preserved.

In examining this large mass of Calderon's dramatic works, it will be most convenient to take first, and by themselves, those which are quite distinct from the rest, and which alone he thought worthy of his care in publication, — his *autos* or dramas for the Corpus Christi day. Nor are they undeserving of this separate notice. There is little in the dramatic literature of any nation more characteristic of the people that produced it than this department of the Spanish theatre; and, among the many poets who devoted themselves to it, none had such success as Calderon.

Of the early character and condition of the *autos*, and their connection with the Church, we have already spoken, when noticing Juan de la Enzina, Gil Vicente, Lope de Vega, and Valdivielso. They * were, from the twelfth and thirteenth cen- * 359 turies, among the favorite amusements of the mass of the people; but with the period at which we are now arrived, they had gradually risen to be of great importance. That they were spread through the whole country, even into the small villages, we may see in the Travels of Agustin Roxas,²⁷ who played them everywhere, and in the Second Part of Don Quixote, where the mad knight is represented as

The above wish, expressed in the first edition of this work, in 1849, has been more than fulfilled by the following publication: "Die Schauspiele Calderon's dargestellt und erläutert von Fried. Wilh. Val. Schmidt aus gedruckten und ungedruckten Papieren des Verfassers zusammengesetzt, ergänzt und herausgegeben von Leopold Schmidt," Elberfeld, 1857, 8vo, pp. 543. The editor is the son of the author, and seems to inherit his father's taste and learning, giving us a work of more value to those who wish to make a critical study of Calderon, than any other extant. But it should be observed, that this important work is almost entirely confined

to a careful examination of the one hundred and eight *comedias* in the editions of Vera Tassis and Apontes; to a slight inquiry into the one hundred and six plays falsely attributed to Calderon, of which Vera Tassis gives the titles in his Verdadera quinta Parte, 1694; to a notice of a few of Calderon's *autos*; and to such other casual investigations as these different subjects suggest. It is carefully edited, with a few judicious notes and additions by the son, made in the conscientious spirit of the father.

²⁷ Roxas, *Viage Entretenido*, 1614, ff. 51, 52, and many other places.

meeting a car that was carrying the actors for the Festival of the Sacrament from one hamlet to another.²⁸ This, it will be remembered, was all before 1615. During the next thirty years, and especially during the last portion of Calderon's life, the number and consequence of the *autos* were much increased, and they were represented with great luxury and at great expense in the streets of all the larger cities;—so important were they deemed to the influence of the clergy, and so attractive had they become to all classes of society,—to the noble and the cultivated no less than to the multitude.²⁹

In 1655, when they were at the height of their success, Aarsens de Somerdyck, an accomplished Dutch traveller, gives us an account of them as he witnessed their exhibition at Madrid.³⁰ In the forenoon of the festival, he says, a procession occurred such as we have seen was usual in the time of Lope de Vega, where the king and court appeared, without distinction of rank, preceded by two fantastic figures of giants, and sometimes by the grotesque form of the *Tarasca*,—one of which, we are told, in a pleasant story of Santos, passing by night from a place where it had been exhibited the preceding day to one where it was to be exhibited the day following, so alarmed a body of muleteers who accidentally met it, that they roused up the country, as if a real monster were come

²⁸ Don Quixote, ed. Pellicer, Parte II. c. 11, with the notes.

²⁹ In 1640 and 1641, and probably in other years, there were four *autos* represented in the streets of Madrid, during the festival of the Corpus Christi; and in the last-mentioned year we are told that the giants and the *tarasca* had new dresses in good taste. Schack, *Nachträge*, 1854, pp. 72, 73.

³⁰ Voyage d'Espagne, Cologne, 1667, 18mo, Chap. XVIII., which is very cu-

rious, with Barbier, *Dictionnaire d'Anonymes*, Paris, 1824, 8vo, No. 19, 281. The *auto* which the Dutch traveller saw was, no doubt, one of Calderon's; since Calderon then, and for a long time before and after, furnished the *autos* for the city of Madrid. Madame d'Aulnoy describes the same gorgeous procession as she saw it in 1679, (*Voyage*, ed. 1693, Tom. III. pp. 52-55,) with the impertinent *auto*, as she calls it, that was performed that year.

among them to lay waste the land.³¹ These misshapen figures and all this strange procession, with music of hautboys, tambourines, and castanets, with banners and with religious shows, followed the sacrament through the streets for some hours, and then returned to the principal church, and were dismissed.

In the afternoon they assembled again and performed the *autos*, on that and many successive days, before the houses of the great officers of state, where the audience stood either in the balconies and windows that would command a view of the exhibition, or else in the streets. The giants and the *Tarasca*s were there to make sport for the multitude; the music came, that all might dance who chose; torches were added to give effect to the scene, though the performance was only by daylight; and the king and the royal family enjoyed the exhibition, sitting in state under a magnificent canopy in front of the stage prepared for it at least once near the palace.

As soon as the principal personages were seated, the *loa* was spoken or sung; then came a farcical *entremes*; afterwards the *auto* itself; and finally, something by way of conclusion that would contribute to the general amusement, like music or dancing. And this was continued, in different parts of the city, daily for a month, during which the theatres were shut and the regular actors were employed in the streets, in the service of the Church.³²

³¹ La Verdad en el Potro, Madrid, 1686, 12mo, pp. 291, 292. The Dutch traveller had heard the same story, but tells it less well. (*Voyage*, p. 121.) The *Tarasca* was no doubt excessively ugly. Montalvan (*Comedias*, Madrid, 4to, 1638, f. 13) alludes to it for its monstrous deformity.

So does Ovando, describing a procession in Malaga, in 1655:—

Hecha una sierpe sali;
Una figura tremenda;—

Mas de figuras *tarascas*
No hay duda que son feas.

Ocios de Castalia, 1663, f. 89.

On the same occasion and on the same authority, we learn that gypsy girls, dancing with tambourines, formed a part of the show,—a strange addition to a Christian festival.

³² C. Pellicer, *Origen de las Comedias*, 1804, Tom. I. p. 258.

Of the entertainments of this sort which Calderon furnished for Madrid, Toledo, and Seville, he has left, as has been said, no less than seventy-three. They are all allegorical, and all, by the music and show * 361 with which they * abounded, are nearer to operas than any other class of dramas then known in Spain; some of them reminding us, by their religious extravagance, of the treatment of the gods in the plays of Aristophanes, and others, by their spirit and richness, of the poetical masques of Ben Jonson. They are upon a great variety of subjects, and show, by their structure, that elaborate and costly machinery must have been used in their representation. That they are a most remarkable exhibition of the spirit of the Catholic religion, on its poetical side, can no more be doubted than the fact that they often produced a devout effect on the multitudes that thronged to witness their performance.

Including the *loa* that accompanied each, the *autos* of Calderon are nearly or quite as long as the full-length plays which he wrote for the secular theatre. Some of them indicate their subjects by their titles, like "The First and Second Isaac," "God's Vineyard," and "Ruth's Gleanings." Others, like "The True God Pan" and "The First Flower of Carmel," give no such intimations. All are crowded with shadowy personages, such as Sin, Death, Mohammedanism, Judaism, Justice, Mercy, and Charity; and the uniform purpose and end of all is to set forth and glorify the doctrine of the Real Presence in the Eucharist. The great Enemy of man, of course, fills a large space in them,—Quevedo says too large, adding, that, at last, he had grown to be quite a presuming and vainglorious personage, coming on the stage

dressed finely, and talking as if the theatre were altogether his own.³³

There is necessarily a good deal of sameness in the structure of dramas like these; but it is wonderful with what ingenuity Calderon has varied his allegories, sometimes mingling them with the national history, as in the case of the two *autos* on Saint Ferdinand; oftener with incidents and stories from Scripture, like "The Brazen Serpent" and "The Captivity of the Ark"; and always, where he could, seizing any popular occasion to produce an effect, as he did after the completion of the Escorial * and of the Buen Retiro, and * 362 after the marriage of the Infanta María Teresa; each of which events contributed materials for a separate *auto*. Almost all of them have passages of striking lyrical poetry, as well as gorgeous descriptive passages; and a few, of which "Devotion to the Mass" is the chief, make a free use of the old ballads.

One of the most characteristic of the collection, and one that has great poetical merit in separate portions, is "The Divine Orpheus."³⁴ It opens with the entrance of a huge black car, in the shape of a boat, which is drawn along the street toward the stage where the *auto* is to be acted, and contains the Prince of Darkness, set forth as a pirate, and Envy, as his steersman; both supposed to be thus navigating through a portion of chaos.³⁵ They hear, at a distance, sweet music which

³³ Quevedo, Obras, 1791, Tom. I. p. 386.

³⁴ It is in the fourth volume of the edition printed at Madrid in 1759, and in the single volume published in 1690.

³⁵ Such dramatic representations and such cars were occasionally a part of other great solemnities besides those of the *Corpus Christi*, which were the greatest of all. Thus, at Huesca, in 1657, after the birth of Don Felipe Prospero, a son of Philip IV., who died

young, among the rejoicings of the city was a grand dramatic entertainment, in which a vast car appeared, that opened into six parts and discovered the newborn prince kneeling before the *Custodia* that contained the wafer of the sacrament,— "Thus," says the contemporary account of these shows, "thus intimating that the Princes of the august House of Austria are born divinely taught to worship the most holy sacrament." *Relacion de las Fiestas que la*

proceeds from another car, advancing from the opposite quarter in the form of a celestial globe, covered with the signs of the planets and constellations, and containing Orpheus, who represents allegorically the Creator of all things. This is followed by a third car, setting forth the terrestrial globe, within which are the Seven Days of the Week, and Human Nature, all asleep. These cars open, so that the personages they contain can come upon the stage and retire back again, as if behind the scenes, at their pleasure;—the machines themselves constituting, in this as in all such representations, an important part of the scenic arrangements of the exhibition, and, in the popular estimation, not unfrequently the most important part.³⁶

* 363 * On their arrival at the stage, the Divine Orpheus, with lyrical poetry and music, begins the work of creation, using always language borrowed from Scripture; and at the suitable moment, as he advances, each Day presents itself, roused from its ancient sleep and clothed with symbols indicating the nature of the work that has been accomplished; after which, Human Nature is, in the same way, summoned forth, and appears in the form of a beautiful woman, who is the Eurydice of the fable. Pleasure dwells with her in Paradise; and, in her exuberant happiness, she sings a hymn in honor of her Creator, founded on the hundred and thirty-sixth Psalm, the poetical effect of which is diminished by an unbecoming scene of allegorical gallantry that immediately follows between the Divine Orpheus himself and Human Nature.³⁷

Ciudad de Huesca, ec., ha hecho al Nacimiento del Principe nuestro Señor D. Felipe Prospero. 4to. s. a. pp. 33-37. It may be worth notice, that there is a finely engraved head of Prince Prospero, as a child, in an edition of Rebollo's "Selva Militar y Política,"

which was dedicated to the royal babe in 1661, when he was about three years old.

³⁶ Such a representation was often called "fiesta de los carros."

³⁷ The autos being founded on a doctrine of the Church, their use of Scrip-

The temptation and fall succeed; and then the graceful Days, which had before always accompanied Human Nature and scattered gladness in her path, disappear one by one, and leave her to her trials and her sins. She is overwhelmed with remorse, and, endeavoring to escape from the consequences of her guilt, is conveyed by the bark of Lethe to the realms of the Prince of Darkness, who, from his first appearance on the scene, has been laboring, with his coadjutor, Envy, for this very triumph. But his triumph is short. The Divine Orpheus, who has, for some time, represented the character of our Saviour, comes upon the stage, weeping over the fall, and sings a song of love and grief to the accompaniment of a harp made partly in the form of a cross; after which, rousing himself in his omnipotence, he enters the realms of darkness, amidst thunders and earthquakes; overcomes all opposition; rescues Human Nature from perdition; places her, with the seven redeemed Days of the Week, on a fourth car, in the form of a ship, so ornamented as to represent the Christian Church and the mystery of the Eucharist; and then, as the gorgeous machine sweeps away, the exhibition ends with the shouts of the actors in * the drama, accompanied by the an- * 364 swering shouts of the devout spectators on their knees wishing the good ship a good voyage and a happy arrival at her destined port.³⁸

ture and of scriptural allusions is, of course, abundant. Perhaps the most striking instance of this is in Calderon's "Cena de Baltasar," in Tom. II., 1759.

³⁸ Allegorical ships were not uncommon in religious exhibitions. We have noticed two such already in Lope's early drama entitled "The Soul's Voyage." (See ante, Chap. XV.) Another, floating on a sea of silver before the Chapel of the Sacrament, in the Cathedral of Granada, was exhibited at a festival

there in November, 1635,—got up in consequence of an outrage which had been offered to the Holy Sacrament four months earlier by a French heretic, and for which it was intended thus to atone,—*desagraviar*;—the Ship of Faith firing broadsides of texts of Scripture at Luther, Wiclif, Calvin, and Ecolampadius, who were swimming about and vainly striving to repeat the outrage. See Descripción de la grandiosa y celebre Fiesta, ec., por D. Pedro de

That these Sacramental Acts produced a great effect, there can be no doubt. Allegory of all kinds, which, from the earliest periods, had been attractive to the Spanish people, still continued so to an extraordinary degree; and the imposing show of the *autos*, their music, and the fact that they were represented in seasons of solemn leisure, at the expense of the government, and with the sanction of the Church, gave them claims on the popular favor which were enjoyed by no other form of popular amusement. They were written and acted everywhere throughout the country, and by all classes of people, because they were everywhere demanded. How humble were some of their exhibitions in the villages and hamlets may be seen from Roxas, who gives an account of an *auto* on the story of Cain, in which two actors performed all the parts;³⁹ and from Lope de Vega⁴⁰ and Cervantes,⁴¹ who speak of *autos* being written by barbers and acted by shepherds. On the other hand, we know that in Madrid no expense was spared to add to their solemnity and effect, and that everywhere they had the countenance and support of the public authorities. Nor has their influence even yet entirely ceased. In 1765, Charles the Third forbade their public representation; but the popular will and the habits of five centuries could not be immediately broken down by a royal decree.

* 365 *Autos*, * therefore, or dramatic religious farces resembling them, are still heard in some of the remote villages of the country; while, in the former

Araujo Salgado, Granada, 1635, 4to, ff. 12-15. The well-known *Narren-Schiff* of Sebastian Brandt, familiar in all languages, and in every form that the press could give it, from its first appearance, about 1480, down to comparatively recent times, belongs to the same class of fictions, and no doubt

gave birth to many of them, — perhaps to this one at Granada.

³⁹ *Viage*, 1614, ff. 35-37.

⁴⁰ Lope de Vega, *Comedias*, Tom. IX., Barcelona, 1618, f. 133, *El Animal de Ungria*.

⁴¹ *Don Quixote*, Parte I. c. xii.

dependencies of Spain, exhibitions of the same class and nature, if not precisely of the same form, have never been interfered with.⁴²

Of full-length religious plays and plays of saints Calderon wrote, in all, thirteen or fourteen. This was, no doubt, necessary to his success; for at one time during his career, such plays were much demanded. The death of Queen Isabella, in 1644, and of Balthasar, the heir-apparent, in 1646, caused a suspension of public representations on the theatres, and revived the question of their lawfulness. New rules were prescribed about the number of actors and their costumes, and an attempt was made even to drive from the theatre all plays in-

⁴² Doblado's *Letters*, 1822, pp. 296, 301, 303-309; Madame Calderon's *Life in Mexico*, London, 1843, *Letters* 38 and 39; and Thompson's *Recollections of Mexico*, New York, 1846, 8vo, chap. 11. How much the *autos* were valued to the last, even by respectable ecclesiastics, may be inferred from the grave admiration bestowed on them by Martin Panzano, chaplain to the Spanish embassy at Turin, in his Latin treatise, "*De Hispanorum Literatura*," (Mantua, 1759, folio,) intended as a defence of his country's literary claims, in which, speaking of the *autos* of Calderon, only a few years before they were forbidden, he says they were dramas, "in quibus neque in inveniendis acumen, nec in disponendo ratio, neque in ornando aut venustas, aut nitor, aut majestas desiderantur." — p. lxxv.

Even in Germany, genuine "miracle-plays" have not wholly disappeared, as we have seen they had not in France in 1805. (See *ante*, Period I. Chap. XIII. note 3.) Thus, once in ten years, if not oftener, at Oberammergau, in Bavaria, a "*Passions-schauspiel*," beginning with the entrance of the Saviour into Jerusalem, and ending with his resurrection, is acted in fulfilment of a vow made there during a pestilence in 1633. I have the eighth edition of the poetical parts of this singular play, printed at Munich in 1850, and an ac-

count of the representation of it, which occurred thirteen times in the course of that year, published at Leipzig in 1851, by Eduard Devrient, 4to, pp. 43, with plates to illustrate it just as it appeared, acted in the open air, and another volume of documents about it by M. Van Deutinger, München, 1851. The whole leaves no doubt that this extraordinary exhibition, at which six thousand persons are sometimes present, is made in the religious spirit of the Middle Ages; all the people in the village where it occurs taking part in the show, or in the preparations for it. The principal drama is broken into scenes by twenty-eight *tableaux*, in pantomime, of events from the Old Testament, and is among the most wild and strange relics of the Theatre of the Middle Ages that have come down to our times. The wonder is that it has reached us, not embalmed as a literary curiosity, but as a living interest of living men, educated in a wholly different state of the world from the one that originally produced it, and to which alone it seems fitted. Pecuniary profit, however, is, no doubt, one of the main-springs of its continued success. It forms a large interest in an English novel entitled "*Quits*," written by an English lady married in Bavaria, who must have witnessed it in order to have described it so well.