

by a prediction that he should destroy, with his own dagger, what he most loved in the world, and that Mariamne should be sacrificed to the most formidable of monsters. At the same time we are informed, that the tetrarch, in the excess of his passion for his fair and lovely wife, aspires to nothing less than the mastery of the world, — then in dispute between Antony and Octavius Cæsar, — and that he covets this empire only to be able to lay it at her feet. To obtain his end, he partly joins his fortunes to those of Antony, and fails. Octavius, discovering his purpose, summons him to Egypt to render an account of his government. But among the plunder which, after the defeat of Antony, fell into the hands of his rival, is a portrait of Mariamne, with which the Roman becomes so enamored, though falsely advised that the original is dead, that, when Herod arrives in Egypt, he finds the picture of his wife multiplied on all sides, and Octavius full of love and despair.

Herod's jealousy is now equal to his unmeasured affection; and, finding that Octavius is about to move towards Jerusalem, he gives himself up to its terrible power. In his blind fear and grief, he sends an old and trusty friend, with written orders to destroy Mariamne in case of his own death, but adds passionately, —

Let her not know the mandate comes from *me*  
That bids her die. Let her not — while she cries  
To Heaven for vengeance — name *me* as she falls.

\* 385 \* His faithful follower would remonstrate, but Herod interrupts him: —

Be silent. You are right; —  
But still I cannot listen to your words; —

and then goes off in despair, exclaiming, —

O mighty spheres above! O sun! O moon  
And stars! O clouds, with hail and sharp frost charged!

Is there no fiery thunderbolt in store  
For such a wretch as I? O mighty Jove!  
For what canst thou thy vengeance still reserve,  
If now it strike not?<sup>27</sup>

But Mariamne obtains secretly a knowledge of his purpose; and, when he arrives in the neighborhood of Jerusalem, gracefully and successfully begs his life of Octavius, who is well pleased to do a favor to the fair original of the portrait he had ignorantly loved, and is magnanimous enough not to destroy a rival, who had yet by treason forfeited all right to his forbearance.

As soon, however, as Mariamne has secured the promise of her husband's safety, she retires with him to the most private part of her palace, and there, in her grieved and outraged love, upbraids him with his design upon her life; announcing, at the same time, her resolution to shut herself up from that moment, with her women, in widowed solitude and perpetual mourning. But the same night Octavius gains access to her retirement, in order to protect her from the violence of her husband, which he, too, had discovered. She refuses, however, to admit to *him* that her husband can have any design against her life; and defends both her lord and herself with heroic love. She then escapes, pursued by Octavius, and at the same instant her husband enters. He follows them, and a conflict ensues instantly. The lights are extinguished, and in the confusion Mariamne falls under a blow \* from \* 386 her husband's hand, intended for his rival; thus fulfilling the prophecy at the opening of the play, that

<sup>27</sup> Calla,  
Que sé, que tienes razon,  
Pero no puedo escucharla.  
Esferas altas,  
Cielo, sol, luna y estrellas,

Nubes, granizos, y escarchas,  
No hay un rayo para un triste?  
Pues si ahora no los gastas,  
Para quando, para quando  
Son, Jupiter, tus venganzas?  
Jorn. II.

she should perish by his dagger and by the most formidable of monsters, which is now interpreted to be Jealousy.

The result, though foreseen, is artfully brought about at last, and produces a great shock on the spectator, and even on the reader. Indeed, it does not seem as if this fierce and relentless passion could be carried, on the stage, to a more terrible extremity. Othello's jealousy — with which it is most readily compared — is of a lower kind, and appeals to grosser fears. But that of Herod is admitted, from the beginning, to be without any foundation, except the dread that his wife, after his death, should be possessed by a rival, whom, before his death, she could never have seen; — a transcendental jealousy to which he is yet willing to sacrifice her innocent life.

Still, different as are the two dramas, there are several points of accidental coincidence between them. Thus, we have, in the Spanish play, a night scene, in which her women undress Mariamne, and, while her thoughts are full of forebodings of her fate, sing to her those lines of Escrava which are among the choice snatches of old poetry found in the earliest of the General Cancioneros: —

Come, Death, but gently come and still; —  
All sound of thine approach restrain,  
Lest joy of thee my heart should fill,  
And turn it back to life again; <sup>28</sup> —

beautiful words, which remind us of the scene immediately preceding the death of Desdemona, when she

<sup>28</sup> Ven, muerte, tan escondida,  
Que no te sienta venir,  
Porque el placer del morir  
No me vuelva á dar la vida.

Jorn. III.

See, also, Calderon's "Manos Blancas no ofenden," Jorn. II., where he has it

again; and Cancionero General, 1573, f. 185. Lope de Vega made a gloss on it, (Obras, Tom. XIII. p. 256,) and Cervantes repeats it (Don Quixote, Parte II. c. 38); — so much was it admired. See, also, Malaspina's "Fuerza de la Verdad," Jorn. I.

is undressing and talks with Emilia, singing, at the same time, the old song of "Willow, Willow."

Again, we are reminded of the defence of Othello by Desdemona down to the instant of her death, in the answer \* of Mariamne to Octavius, when he \* 387 urges her to escape with him from the violence of her husband: —

My lips were dumb, when I beheld thy form;  
And now I hear thy words, my breath returns  
Only to tell thee, 't is some traitor foul  
And perjured that has dared to fill thy mind  
With this abhorred conceit. For, Sire, my husband  
Is my husband; and if he slay me,  
I am guiltless, which, in the flight you urge,  
I could not be. I dwell in safety here,  
And you are ill informed about my griefs;  
Or, if you are not, and the dagger's point  
Should seek my life, I die not through my fault,  
But through my star's malignant potency,  
Preferring in my heart a guiltless death  
Before a life held up to vulgar scorn.  
If, therefore, you vouchsafe me any grace,  
Let me presume the greatest grace would be  
That you should straightway leave me. <sup>29</sup>

Other passages might be adduced; but, though striking, they do not enter into the essential interest of the drama. This consists in the exhibition of the heroic character of Herod, broken down by a cruel jealousy, over which the beautiful innocence of his wife triumphs only at the moment of her death; while above them both the fatal dagger, like the unrelenting destiny of the ancient Greek tragedy, hangs suspended, seen only

<sup>29</sup> El labio mudo  
Quedó al veros, y al oïros  
Su aliento le restituyo,  
Animada para solo  
Deciros, que algun perjuero  
Alevé, y traydor, en tanto  
Malquisto concepto os puso.  
Mi esposo es mi esposo; y quando  
Me mate algun error suyo,  
No me matará mi error,  
Y lo seré si dél huyo  
Yo estoy segura, y vos mal  
Informado en mis disgustos;

Y quando no lo estuviera,  
Matandome un puñal duro,  
Mi error no me diera muerte,  
Sino mi fatal influxo;  
Con que viene á importar menos  
Morir inocente, juzgo,  
Que vivir culpada á vista  
De las malicias del vulgo.  
Y assi, si alguna fineza  
He de deberos, presumo,  
Que la mayor es bolveros.

Jorn. III.

by the spectators, who witness the unavailing struggles of its victims to escape from a fate in which, with every effort, they become more and more involved.<sup>30</sup>

Other dramas of Calderon rely for their success on a high sense of loyalty, with little or no admixture of love \* or jealousy. The most prominent of these is "The Firm-hearted Prince."<sup>31</sup> Its plot is founded on the expedition against the Moors in Africa by the Portuguese Infante Don Ferdinand, in 1437, which ended with the total defeat of the invaders before Tangier, and the captivity of the prince himself, who died in a miserable bondage in 1443;— his very bones resting for many years among the misbelievers, till they were at last brought home to Lisbon and buried with reverence, as those of a saint and martyr. This story Calderon found in the old and beautiful Portuguese chronicles of Joam Alvares and Ruy de Pina; but he makes the sufferings of the prince voluntary, thus adding to Ferdinand's character the self-devotion of Regulus, and so fitting it to be the subject of a deep tragedy, founded on the honor of a Christian patriot.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>30</sup> Mariana announces it at the outset:—

Par ley de nuestros hados  
Vivimos a desdichas destinados.

<sup>31</sup> "El Príncipe Constante," Comedias, Tom. III. It is translated into German by A. W. Schlegel, and has been much admired as an acting play in the theatres of Berlin, Vienna, Weimar, etc.

<sup>32</sup> Coleção de Livros Ineditos de Hist. Port., Lisboa, folio, Tom. I., 1790, pp. 290-294; an excellent work, published by the Portuguese Academy, and edited by the learned Correa da Serra, formerly Minister of Portugal to the United States. The story of Don Ferdinand is also told in Mariana, Historia (Tom. II. p. 345). But the principal resource of Calderon was, no doubt, a life of the Infante, by his faithful friend and fol-

lower, Joam Alvares, first printed in 1527, of which an abstract, with long passages from the original, may be found in the "Leben des standhaften Prinzen," Berlin, 1827, 8vo;— a curious and interesting book. To these may be added, for the illustration of the Príncipe Constante, a tract by J. Schulze, entitled "Ueber den standhaften Prinzen," printed at Weimar, 1811, 12mo, at a time when Schlegel's translation of that drama, brought out under the auspices of Goethe, was in the midst of its success on the Weimar stage; the part of Don Ferdinand being acted with great power by Wolf. Schulze is quite extravagant in his estimate of the poetical worth of the Príncipe Constante, placing it by the side of the "Divina Commedia"; but he discusses skillfully its merits as an acting drama, and ex-

The first scene is one of lyrical beauty, in the gardens of the king of Fez, whose daughter is introduced as enamored of Muley Hassan, her father's principal general. Immediately afterwards, Hassan enters and announces the approach of a Christian armament, commanded by the two Portuguese Infantes. He is despatched to prevent their landing, but fails, and is himself taken prisoner by Don Ferdinand in person. A long dialogue follows between the captive and his conqueror, entirely formed by an unfortunate amplification of a beautiful ballad of Góngora, \* which is made to explain the attachment of \* 389 the Moorish general to the king's daughter, and the probability — if he continues in captivity — that she will be compelled to marry the Prince of Morocco. The Portuguese Infante, with chivalrous generosity, gives up his prisoner without ransom, but has hardly done so, before he is attacked by a large army under the Prince of Morocco, and made prisoner himself.

From this moment begins that trial of Don Ferdinand's patience and fortitude which gives its title to the drama. At first, indeed, the king treats him generously, thinking to exchange him for Ceuta, an important fortress recently won by the Portuguese, and their earliest foothold in Africa. But this constitutes the great obstacle. The king of Portugal, who had died of grief on receiving the news of his brother's captivity, had, it is true, left an injunction in his will that Ceuta should be surrendered and the prince ransomed. But when Henry, one of his brothers, appears on the stage, and announces that he has come to fulfil this solemn command, Ferdinand suddenly interrupts

plains, in part, its historical elements. The lyrical portions of the Príncipe Constante were set to music by the German genius, Mendelssohn Bartholdy.

him in the offer, and reveals at once the whole of his character: —

Cease, Henry, cease! — no farther shalt thou go; —  
 For words like these should not alone be deemed  
 Unworthy of a prince of Portugal, —  
 A Master of the Order of the Cross, —  
 But of the meanest serf that sits beneath  
 The throne, or the barbarian hind whose eyes  
 Have never seen the light of Christian faith.  
 No doubt, my brother — who is now with God —  
 May in his will have placed the words you bring,  
 But never with a thought they should be read  
 And carried through to absolute fulfilment;  
 But only to set forth his strong desire,  
 That, by all means which peace or war can urge,  
 My life should be enfranchised. For when he says,  
 "Surrender Ceuta," he but means to say,  
 "Work miracles to bring my brother home."  
 But that a Catholic and faithful king  
 Should yield to Moorish and to heathen hands  
 A city his own blood had dearly bought,  
 When, with no weapon save a shield and sword,  
 He raised his country's standard on its walls, —  
 It cannot be! — It cannot be!<sup>33</sup>

\* 390 \* On this resolute decision, for which the old chronicle gives no authority, the remainder of the drama rests; its deep enthusiasm being set forth in a single word of the Infante, in reply to the renewed question of the Moorish king, "And why not give up

<sup>33</sup> No prosigas; — cessa,  
 Cessa, Enrique, porque son  
 Palabras indignas essas,  
 No de un Portugués Infante,  
 De un Maestro, que professa  
 De Christo la Religion,  
 Pero aun de un hombre lo fueran  
 Vil, de un barbaro sin luz  
 De la Fé de Christo eterna  
 Mi hermano, que está en el Cielo,  
 Si en su testamento dexa  
 Essa clausula, no es  
 Para que se cumpla, y lea,  
 Sino para mostrar solo,  
 Que mi libertad desea,  
 Y essa se busque por otros  
 Medios, y otras conveniencias,  
 O apacibles, ó crueles;  
 Porque decir: Dese á Ceuta,  
 Es decir: Hasta esso haced  
 Prodigiosas diligencias;  
 Que un Rey Católico, y justo  
 Como fuera, como fuera

Possible entregar a un Moro  
 Una ciudad que le cuesta  
 Su sangre, pues fué el primero  
 Que con sola una rodela,  
 Y una espada, enarbolo  
 Las Quinas en sus almenas?  
 Jorn. II.

When we read the *Príncipe Constante*, we seldom remember that this Don Henry, who is one of its important personages, is the highly cultivated prince who did so much to promote discoveries in India. See *ante*, Vol. I. p. 186. Damian de Goes says that the Prince lived a bachelor in order to devote himself to astronomy, — "propter sola astrorum studia celebs vixit." Fides, Religio, Moresque Æthiopum, Lovanii, 1540, 4to, f. 4. It should be

Ceuta?" to which Ferdinand firmly and simply answers, —

Because it is not mine to give.  
 A Christian city, — it belongs to God.

In consequence of this final determination, he is reduced to the condition of a common slave; and it is not one of the least moving incidents of the drama, that he finds the other Portuguese captives among whom he is sent to work, and who do not recognize him, promising freedom to themselves from the effort they know his noble nature will make on their behalf, when the exchange which they consider so reasonable shall have restored him to his country.

At this point, however, comes in the operation of the Moorish general's gratitude. He offers Don Ferdinand the means of escape; but the king, detecting the connection between them, binds his general to an honorable fidelity by making him the prince's only keeper. This leads Don Ferdinand to a new sacrifice of himself. He not only advises his generous friend to preserve his loyalty, but assures him, that, even should foreign means of escape be offered him, he will not take advantage of them, if, by doing so, his friend's honor would be endangered. In the mean time, the sufferings of the unhappy prince are \* increased by \* 391 cruel treatment and unreasonable labor, till his strength is broken down. Still he does not yield. Ceuta remains in his eyes a consecrated place, over which religion prevents him from exercising the control by which his freedom might be restored. The Moorish general and the king's daughter, on the other

remembered, however, that this Infante, Don Henry, sometimes called "the Navigator" from the expeditions he sent to India, though he did not accompany them, was the head of the expedition against Tangier, although his brother Ferdinand was associated with him in the command.

side, intercede for mercy in vain. The king is inflexible, and Don Ferdinand dies, at length, of mortification, misery, and want; but with a mind unshaken, and with an heroic constancy that sustains our interest in his fate to the last extremity. Just after his death, a Portuguese army, destined to rescue him, arrives. In a night scene of great dramatic effect, he appears at their head, clad in the habiliments of the religious and military order in which he had desired to be buried, and, with a torch in his hand, beckons them on to victory. They obey the supernatural summons, entire success follows, and the marvellous conclusion of the whole, by which his consecrated remains are saved from Moorish contamination, is in full keeping with the romantic pathos and high-wrought enthusiasm of the scenes that lead to it.

## \* CHAPTER XXIV.

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CALDERON, CONTINUED. — COMEDIAS DE CAPA Y ESPADA. — FIRST OF ALL MY LADY. — FAIRY LADY. — THE SCARF AND THE FLOWER, AND OTHERS. — HIS DISREGARD OF HISTORY. — ORIGIN OF THE EXTRAVAGANT IDEAS OF HONOR AND DOMESTIC RIGHTS IN THE SPANISH DRAMA. — ATTACKS ON CALDERON. — HIS ALLUSIONS TO PASSING EVENTS. — HIS BRILLIANT STYLE. — HIS LONG AUTHORITY ON THE STAGE. — AND THE CHARACTER OF HIS POETICAL AND IDEALIZED DRAMA.

WE must now turn to some of Calderon's plays which are more characteristic of his times, if not of his peculiar genius,— his *comedias de capa y espada*. He has left us many of this class, and not a few of them seem to have been the work of his early, but ripe manhood, when his faculties were in all their strength, as well as in all their freshness. Nearly or quite thirty can be enumerated, and still more may be added, if we take into the account those which, with varying characteristics, yet belong to this particular division rather than to any other. Among the more prominent are two, entitled "It is Worse than it was" and "It is Better than it was," which, probably, were translated by Lord Bristol in his lost plays, "Worse and Worse" and "Better and Better";<sup>1</sup> — "The Pretended Astrologer," which Dryden used in his "Mock Astrologer";<sup>2</sup> — "Beware of

<sup>1</sup> "It is Better than it was" and "Worse and Worse." "These two comedies," says Downes, (Roscius Anglicanus, London, 1789, 8vo, p. 36.) "were made out of Spanish by the Earl of Bristol." There can be little doubt that Calderon was the source here referred to, and that the plays used were "Mejor esta que Estaba,"

and "Peor esta que Estaba." "Elvira, or the Worse not always True," also by Lord Bristol, printed in 1677, and in the twelfth volume of Dodsley's collection, is from Calderon's "No Siempre lo Peor es Cierto." But such instances are rare in the old English drama, compared with the French.

<sup>2</sup> Dryden took, as he admits, "An