

without the warrant of many examples on the Spanish stage, he resorted as to rich and ancient monuments, which could still yield to the demands of his age materials such as the age itself could no longer furnish from its own resources.<sup>37</sup>

It would be easy to add the names of not a few other writers for the Spanish stage who were contemporary with Cañizares, and, like him, shared in the common decline of the national drama, or contributed to it. Such were Juan de Vera y Villaroel, Inez de la Cruz, Antonio Tellez de Azevedo, and others yet less distinguished while they lived, and long ago forgotten. But writers like these had no real influence on the character of the theatre to which they attached themselves. This, in its proper outlines, always remained as it was left by Lope de Vega and Calderon, who, by a remarkable concurrence of circumstances, maintained, as far as it was in secular hands, an almost unquestioned control over it, while they lived, and, at their death, had impressed upon it a character which it never lost, till it ceased to exist altogether.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>37</sup> The habit of using too freely the works of their predecessors was common on the Spanish stage from an early period. Cervantes says, in 1617, (*Persiles*, Lib. III. c. 2.) that some companies kept poets expressly to new-vamp old plays; and so many had done it before him, that Cañizares seems to have escaped censure, though nobody, certainly, had gone so far.

Don Ramon Mesonero Romanos has continued the work he began on the school of Lope de Vega (see *ante*, Chap.

XXI., note 25) by publishing in Rivadeneyra's *Biblioteca* (Tom. XLVII. and XLIX., 1858, 1859) two more volumes of it, coming down to Cañizares. The plays, amounting to above sixty, are, as might be expected from the period, of very unequal merit. But we are glad to have them. The literary notices and alphabetical lists that open each volume are, also, valuable for their facts, but ill-written and showing little judgment or taste.

<sup>38</sup> See Appendix (F).

## \* CHAPTER XXVI.

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CHARACTER OF THE SPANISH DRAMA.—THE AUTOR, OR MANAGER.—THE WRITERS FOR THE STAGE.—THE ACTORS, THEIR NUMBER, SUCCESS, AND CONDITION.—PERFORMANCES BY DAYLIGHT.—THE STAGE.—THE COURTYARD, MOSQUETEROS, GRADAS, CAZUELA, AND APOSENTOS.—THE AUDIENCES.—PLAY-BILLS, AND TITLES OF PLAYS.—REPRESENTATIONS, BALLADS, LOAS, JORNADAS, EXTREMESES, SAYNETES, AND DANCES.—BALLADS DANCED AND SUNG.—XACARAS, ZARABANDAS, AND ALEMANAS.—POPULAR CHARACTER OF THE WHOLE.—GREAT NUMBER OF WRITERS AND PLAYS.

THE most prominent, if not the most important, characteristic of the Spanish drama, at the period of its widest success, was its nationality. In all its various forms, including the religious plays, and in all its manifold subsidiary attractions, down to the recitation of old ballads and the exhibition of popular dances, it addressed itself more to the whole people of the country which produced it than any other theatre of modern times. The Church, as we have seen, occasionally interfered, and endeavored to silence or to restrict it. But the drama was too deeply seated in the general favor to be much modified, even by a power that overshadowed nearly everything else in the state; and during the whole of the seventeenth century,—the century which immediately followed the severe legislation of Philip the Second and his attempts to control the character of the stage,—the Spanish drama was really in the hands of the mass of the people, and its writers and actors were such as the popular will required them to be.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Mariana, in his treatise "*De Spectaculis*," Cap. VII., (*Tractatus Septem, Coloniae Agrippinae*, 1609, folio,) earnestly insists that actors of the low and gross character he gives to them should not be permitted to perform in the

At the head of each company of actors was their *Autor*. The name descended from the time of \* 438 Lope de Rueda, \* when the writer of the rude farces then in favor collected about him a body of players to perform what should rather be called his dramatic dialogues than his proper dramas, in the public squares;— a practice soon imitated in France, where Hardy, the “Author,” as he styled himself, of his own company, produced, between 1600 and 1630, about five hundred rude plays and farces, often taken from Lope de Vega, and whatever was most popular at the same period in Spain.<sup>2</sup> But while Hardy was at the height of his success and preparing the way for Corneille, the canon in *Don Quixote* had already recognized in Spain the existence of two kinds of authors, — the authors who wrote and the authors who acted;<sup>3</sup> — a distinction familiar from the time when Lope de Vega appeared, and one that was never afterwards overlooked. At any rate, from that time actors and managers were quite as rarely writers for the stage in Spain as in other countries.<sup>4</sup>

The relations between the dramatic poets and the managers and actors were not more agreeable in Spain than elsewhere. Figueroa, who was familiar with the

churches, or to represent sacred plays anywhere; and that the theatres should be closed on Sundays. But he produced no effect against the popular passion.

<sup>2</sup> For Hardy and his extraordinary career, which was almost entirely founded on the Spanish theatre, see the “Parfaits,” or any other history of the French stage. Corneille, in his “Remarks on *Mélite*,” says that, when he began, he had no guide but a little common sense and the example of Hardy, and a few others no more regular than he was. The example of Hardy led Corneille directly to Spain for materials, and there, as we know, he sought them freely.

<sup>3</sup> *D. Quixote*, Parte I. c. 48. The *Primera dama*, or the actress of first parts, was sometimes called the *Autora*. *Diablo Cojuelo*, Tranco V.

<sup>4</sup> Villegas was one of the last of the authors who were managers. He wrote, we are told, fifty-four plays, and died about 1600. (Roxas, *Viage*, 1614, f. 21.) After this, the next example of any prominence is Claramonte, who was an *autor* when he wrote for the stage, and died about 1622. The managing *autor* was sometimes the object of ridicule in the play his own company performed, as he is in the “*Tres Edades del Mundo*” of Luis Velez de Guevara, where he is the *gracioso*. *Comedias Escogidas*, Tom. XXXVIII., 1672.

subject, says that the writers for the theatre were obliged to flatter the heads of companies, in order to obtain a hearing from the public, and that they were often treated with coarseness and contempt, especially when their plays were read and adapted to the stage in presence of the actors who were to perform them.<sup>5</sup> Solorzano — himself a dramatist — gives similar accounts, and adds the story of a poet, who was not only rudely, but cruelly, abused by \* a com- \* 439 pany of players, to whose humors their *autor* or manager had abandoned him.<sup>6</sup> And even Lope de Vega and Calderon, the master-spirits of the time, complain bitterly of the way in which they were trifled with and defrauded of their rights and reputation, both by the managers and by the booksellers.<sup>7</sup> At the end of the drama, its author therefore sometimes announced his name, and, with more or less of affected humility, claimed the work as his own.<sup>8</sup> But this was not a custom. Almost uniformly, however, when the audience was addressed at all, — and that was seldom neglected at the conclusion of a drama, —

<sup>5</sup> Pasagero, 1617, ff. 112–116.

<sup>6</sup> “*Garduña de Sevilla*,” near the end, and the “*Bachiller Trapaza*,” c. 15. Cervantes, just as he is finishing his “*Coloquio de los Perros*,” tells a story somewhat similar; so that authors were early ill-treated by the actors.

<sup>7</sup> See the Preface and Dedication of the “*Arcadia*,” by Lope, as well as other passages noted in his Life; — the letter of Calderon to the Duke of Veragua; — his Life by Vera Tassis, etc. It should be noted, however, that the price of a play was rising. In Lope’s time, as we have seen, (*ante*, p. 270, note 33,) it was five hundred rials; but in Calderon’s time it was eight hundred, even for the first offered by an author and before its merits were known: —

Sin saber si es buena ó mala,  
Ocho cientos reales cuesta  
La primera vez.

Nadie fie su Secreto, *Jorn. II.*

<sup>8</sup> Thus, Mira de Mescua, at the conclusion of “*The Death of St. Lazarus*,” (*Comedias Escogidas*, Tom. IX., 1657, p. 167,) says: —

Here ends the play  
Whose wondrous tale Mira de Mescua wrote  
To warn the many. Pray forgive our faults.

And Francisco de Leyba finishes his “*Amadis y Niquea*” (*Comedias Escogidas*, Tom. XL., 1675, f. 118) with these words: —

Don Francis Leyba humbly bows himself,  
And at your feet asks, — not a victor shout, —  
But rather pardon for his many faults.

In general, however, as in the “*Mayor Venganza*” of Alvaro Cubillo, and in the “*Caer para levantarse*” of Matos, Caneer, and Moreto, the annunciation is simple, and made, apparently, to protect the rights of the author, which, in the seventeenth century, were so little respected.

it was saluted with the grave and flattering title of "Senate."

Nor does the condition of the actors seem to have been one which could be envied by the poets who wrote for them. Their numbers and influence, indeed, soon became imposing, under the great impulse given to the drama in the beginning of the seventeenth century. When Lope de Vega first appeared as a dramatic writer at Madrid, the only theatres he found were two unsheltered court-yards, which depended on such strolling companies of players as occasionally deemed it for their interest to visit the capital. Before he died, there were, besides the court-yards in Madrid, several theatres of great magnificence in the \* 440 royal palaces, and multitudinous \*bodies of actors, comprehending in all above a thousand persons.<sup>9</sup> And half a century later, at the time of Calderon's death, when the Spanish drama had taken all its attributes, the passion for its representations had spread into every part of the kingdom, until there was hardly a village, we are told, that did not possess some kind of a theatre.<sup>10</sup> Nay, so pervading and uncontrolled was the eagerness for dramatic exhibitions, that, notwithstanding the scandal it excited, secular comedies of a very equivocal complexion were represented by performers from the public theatres in some of the principal monasteries of the kingdom.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Don Quixote, ed. Pellicer, 1797, Tom. IV. p. 110, note. One account says there were three hundred companies of actors in Spain about 1636; but this seems incredible, if it means companies of persons who live by acting. Pantoja, *Sobre Comedias*, Murcia, 1814, 4to, Tom. I. p. 28.

<sup>10</sup> Pellicer, *Origen de las Comedias*, 1804, Tom. I. p. 185.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 226-228. When Philip III. visited Lisbon in 1619, the Jesuits

performed a play before him, partly in Latin and partly in Portuguese, at their College of San Antonio;—an account of which is given in the "Relacion de la Real Tragicomedia con que los Padres de la Compañia de Jesus recibieron á la Magestad Católica," etc., por Juan Sardina Mimoso, etc., Lisboa, 1620, 4to,—its author being, I believe, Antonio de Sousa. Add to this that Mariana (*De Spectaculis*, c. 7) says that the *entremeses* and other exhibitions

Of course, out of so large a body of actors, all struggling for public favor, some became famous. Among the more distinguished were Agustin de Roxas, who wrote the gay travels of a company of comedians; Roque de Figueroa, Melchor de Villalba, and Rios, Lope's favorites; Pinedo, much praised by Tirso de Molina and Cascales; Alonso de Olmedo and Sebastian Prado, who were rivals for public applause in the time of Calderon; Juan Rana, who was the best comic actor during the reigns of Philip the Third and Philip the Fourth, and amused the audiences by his own extemporaneous wit, delighting Lady Fanshawe, when he was nearly eighty years old; the two Morales and Josefa Vaca, wife of the elder of them; Barbara Coronel, the Amazon, who preferred to appear as a man; María de Córdoba, praised by Quevedo and the Count Villamediana; and María Calderon, who, as the mother of \* the second Don John of Austria, \* 441 figured in affairs of state, as well as in those of the stage. These and some others enjoyed, no doubt, that ephemeral, but brilliant, reputation which is generally the best reward of the best of their class; and enjoyed it to as high a degree, perhaps, as any persons that have appeared on the stage in more modern times.<sup>12</sup>

between the acts of the plays, performed in the most holy religious houses, were often of a gross and shameless character,—a statement which occurs partly in the same words, in his treatise "De Rege," Lib. III. c. 16. In his "Juegos Publicos," a translation made by himself from his "De Spectaculis," but differing from that work somewhat, he says (c. 12) that the grossly indecent Zarabandas were sometimes danced in nunneries during the Corpus Christi. In the great and rich convent of San Vicente in Plasencia, plays were annually performed at the Festival of our

Lady of the Rosary. Alonso Fernandez, *Hist. de Plasencia*, Madrid, fol. 1629, p. 112.

But perhaps the most bold and offensive instance of the misuse of a church for dramatic purposes was when the "Casa Confusa," a very free play of the Count de Lemos, now lost, was acted in the church of San Blas at Lerma before Philip III. and his court in 1618, ending with the scandalous and voluptuous dance of the Zarabanda. See Barrera ad verb. *Lemos*, and note 60 to this chapter.

<sup>12</sup> C. Pellicer, *Origen*, Tom. II., pas-

But, regarded as a body, the Spanish actors seem to have been anything but respectable. In general, they were of a low and vulgar cast in society, — so low, that, for this reason, they were at one period forbidden to have women associated with them.<sup>13</sup> The rabble, indeed, sympathized with them, and sometimes, when their conduct called for punishment, protected them by force from the arm of the law; but between 1644 and 1649, when their number in the metropolis had become very great, and they constituted no less than forty companies, full of disorderly persons and vagabonds, their character did more than anything else to endanger the privileges of the drama, which with difficulty evaded the restrictions their riotous lives \* 442 brought upon it.<sup>14</sup> One \* proof of their gross

*sim*, Figueroa, Plaça Universal, 1615, f. 322, b, and Mad. d'Aulnoy, Voyage en Espagne, ed. 1693, Tom. I. p. 97. — Lope's Dedication of Dómine Lucas, in which Villalba acted, — Rios is reported by Roxas to have improved the costumes of the stage, — Pinedo is much praised by Lope as well as Tirso, ex. gr. in Lope's Peregrino en su Patria, Lib. IV., where he says: —

Baltasar de Pinedo tendrá fama  
Pues hace, siendo Principe en su Arte,  
Altos metamorfoseos de su rostro,  
Color, ojos, sentidos, voz, y efectos [afectos?],  
Trasformando la gente.

Pinedo, too, is in Cascales, Tabla III., 1616. One of the best actors of the best period was Sebastian Prado, mentioned above; the same who, as head of a company, went to Paris after the marriage of Louis XIV. with the Spanish Infanta, in 1660, and played there twelve years (Chappuzeau, Théâtre Français, 1674, 12mo, pp. 213, 214); — one of the many proofs of the fashion and spread of Spanish Literature at that time. (C. Pellicer, Tom. I. p. 39.) For Juan Rana, or Arana, see Lady Fanshawe's Memoirs, (London, 1829, 8vo, p. 236,) and for Pedro Morales, see Navarrete, Vida de Cervantes (p. 530). María de Cordova is often mentioned with admiration, especially by

Calderon in the opening of the "Dama Duende," under her known *sobriquet* of *Amarilis*. Other distinguished actors of the seventeenth century are to be found in a note of Clemencin to his edition of D. Quixote, Parte II. c. 11, and throughout the very imperfect work of C. Pellicer, Origen del Teatro, Madrid, 1804.

<sup>13</sup> Alonso, Mozo de Muchos Amos, Parte I., Barcelona, 1625, f. 141. A little earlier, viz. 1618, Bisbe y Vidal speaks of women on the stage frequently taking the parts of men (Tratado de Comedias, f. 50); and from the directions to the players in the "Amadis y Niquea" of Leyba, (Comedias Escogidas, Tom. XL., 1675,) it appears that the part of Amadis was expected to be played always by a woman.

<sup>14</sup> C. Pellicer, Origen, Tom. I. p. 183, Tom. II. p. 29; and Navarro Castellanos, Cartas Apologéticas contra las Comedias, Madrid, 1684, 4to, pp. 256–258. "Take my advice," says Sancho to his master, after their unlucky encounter with the players of the *Auto Sacramental*, — "take my advice, and never pick a quarrel with play-actors: they are privileged people. I have known one of them sent to prison for two murders, and get off scot-free. For mark, your worship, as they are

conduct is to be found in its results. Many of them, filled with compunction at their own shocking excesses, took refuge at last in a religious life, like Prado, who became a devout priest, and Francisca Baltasara, who died a hermit, almost in the odor of sanctity, and was afterwards made the subject of a religious play.<sup>15</sup>

They had, besides, many trials. They were obliged to learn a great number of pieces to satisfy the demands for novelty, which were more exacting on the Spanish stage than any other; their rehearsals were severe and their audiences rude. Cervantes says that their life was as hard as that of the Gypsies;<sup>16</sup> and Roxas, who knew all there was to be known on the subject, says that slaves in Algiers were better off than they were.<sup>17</sup>

To all this we must add, that they were poorly paid, and that their managers were almost always in debt. But, like other forms of vagabond life, its freedom from restraints made it attractive to not a few loose persons, in a country like Spain, where it was difficult to find liberty of any sort. This attraction, however, did not last long. The drama fell in its consequence and popularity as rapidly as it had risen. Long before the end of the century, it ceased to encourage or protect such numbers of idlers as were at one time needed to sus-

gay fellows, full of fun, everybody favors them; everybody defends, helps, and likes them; especially if they belong to the royal and authorized companies, where all or most of them dress as if they were real princes." Don Quixote, Parte II. c. 11, with the note of Clemencin.

<sup>15</sup> C. Pellicer, Origen, Tom. II. p. 53, and elsewhere throughout the volume.

<sup>16</sup> In the tale of the "Licenciado Vidriera."

<sup>17</sup> Roxas, Viage, 1614, f. 138. The necessities of the actors were so pressing, that they were paid their wages every night, as soon as the acting was over.

Un Representante cobra  
Cada noche lo que gana,  
Y el Autor paga, aunque  
No hay dinero en la Caja.

El Mejor Representante, Comedias Escogidas, Tom. XXIX., 1668, p. 199.

The Actor gets his wages every night:  
For the poor Manager must pay him up,  
Although his treasure-chest is clear of coin.

tain its success;<sup>18</sup> and in the reign of Charles the Second it was not easy to collect three companies for the festivities occasioned by his marriage.<sup>19</sup> Half a century earlier, twenty would have striven for the honor.

\* 443 \* During the whole of the successful period of the drama in Spain, its exhibitions took place in the daytime. On the stages of the different palaces, where, when Howell was in Madrid, in 1623,<sup>20</sup> there were regular representations once a week or oftener, it was sometimes otherwise; but the religious plays and *autos*, with all that were intended to be really popular, were represented in broad daylight, — in the winter at two, and in the summer at three, in the afternoon, every day in the week.<sup>21</sup> Till near the middle of the seventeenth century, the scenery and general arrangements of the theatre were probably as good as they were in France when Corneille appeared, or perhaps better; but in the latter part of it, the French stage

<sup>18</sup> "Pondus iners reipublicæ, atque inutile," said Mariana, *De Spectaculis*, c. 9. But the attractions of this libertine and vagabond life — *vida libertina y vagamunda* — are characteristically and truly set forth in the *spurious* Second Part of *Guzman de Alfarache*, Lib. III. cap. 7. Mariana would have all connected with it driven out of the kingdom, — a *totius patriæ finibus exterminarentur quasi pestes certissimæ*. *De Rege*, Lib. II. c. 6.

<sup>19</sup> Hugalde y Parra, *Origen del Teatro*, p. 312.

<sup>20</sup> *Familiar Letters*, London, 1754, 8vo, Book I. Sect. 3, Letter 18. When the Maréchal de Grammont went to Madrid, in 1659, about the Peace of the Pyrenees and the marriage of Louis XIV., he gave a similar account of the plays at the palace. The one he saw was acted by the light of six enormous wax *flambeaux* in silver chandeliers of prodigious size and magnificence. The audience, of course, was small and formal; grave and stiff as possible. See

his letter, October 21, 1659, to his sister, Mad. de Motteville, in her *Mémoires d'Anne d'Autriche*, ed. 1750, Tom. V. pp. 360–362. From 1622 to 1685, plays were constantly acted in some of the palaces before the court; — oftener, I think, on Sundays and Thursdays than on other days. The price paid the actors sounds rather mean for royalty; — two and three hundred rials at first, or from ten to thirteen and a third dollars; — later, more. When the Prince of Wales, afterwards Charles I., was there in 1623, on the madcap expedition with Buckingham, there was especial splendor in the representation of plays before him. Plays were also acted during the progresses or journeys of the King and the Infantes, — once in the Alhambra, and twice on board galleys in the bays of Villafraña and Tarragona, — so great was the passion for the stage in the seventeenth century. Schack, *Nachträge*, 1854, pp. 66–76.

<sup>21</sup> C. Pellicer, *Origen*, Tom. I. p. 220. Aarsens, *Voyage*, 1667, p. 29.

was undoubtedly in advance of that at Madrid, and Madame d'Aulnoy makes herself merry by telling her friends that the Spanish sun was made of oiled paper, and that in the play of "Alcina" she saw the devils quietly climbing ladders out of the infernal regions, to reach their places on the stage.<sup>22</sup> Plays that required more elaborate arrangements and machinery were called *comedias de ruido*, — noisy or showy dramas, — and are treated with little respect by Figueroa and Luis Velez de Guevara, because it was thought unworthy of a poetical spirit to depend for success on means so mechanical.<sup>23</sup>

\* The stage itself, in the two principal the- \* 444  
atres of Madrid, was raised only a little from the ground of the court-yard, where it was erected, and there was no attempt at a separate orchestra, — the musicians coming to the forepart of the scene whenever they were wanted. Immediately in front of the stage were a few benches, which afforded the best places for those who bought single tickets, and behind them was the unencumbered portion of the court-yard, where the common file were obliged to stand in the open air. The crowd there was generally great, and the persons composing it were called, from their standing posture and their rude bearing, *mosqueteros*, or infantry. They constituted the most formidable and disorderly part of the audience, and were the portion that generally determined the success of new

<sup>22</sup> *Relation du Voyage d'Espagne*, par Madame la Comtesse d'Aulnoy, La Haye, 1693, 18mo, Tom. III. p. 21, — the same who wrote beautiful fairy tales. She was there in 1679–80; but Aarsens gives a similar account of things twenty-five years earlier (*Voyage*, 1667, p. 59).

<sup>23</sup> Figueroa, Pasagero, and Guevara, *Diablo Cojuelo*. Information of some

value concerning the Spanish Theatre and its decorations may be found in Luis Lamarca, *Teatro de Valencia*, 1848, pp. 24–29, with the notes at the end. But it should be borne in mind while reading Lamarca, that the theatre at Valencia was probably always inferior in its appointments to either of those at Madrid.