

seemed to me, could add value, interest, or completeness to the present revised edition. Its preparation has been a pleasant task, scattered lightly over the years that have elapsed since the first edition of this work was published, and that have been passed, like the rest of my life, almost entirely among my own books. That I shall ever recur to this task again, for the purpose of further changes or additions, is not at all probable. My accumulated years forbid any such anticipation; and therefore, with whatever of regret I may part from what has entered into the happiness of so considerable a portion of my life, I feel that I now part from it for the last time. *Extremum hoc munus habeto.*

PARK STREET, BOSTON, February, 1863.

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION.

IN the year eighteen hundred and eighteen I travelled through a large part of Spain, and spent several months in Madrid. My object was to increase a very imperfect knowledge of the language and literature of the country, and to purchase Spanish books, always so rare in the great book-marts of the rest of Europe. In some respects, the time of my visit was favorable to the purposes for which I made it; in others, it was not. Such books as I wanted were then, it is true, less valued in Spain than they are now, but it was chiefly because the country was in a depressed and unnatural state; and, if its men of letters were more than commonly at leisure to gratify the curiosity of a stranger, their number had been materially diminished by political persecution, and intercourse with them was difficult because they had so little connection with each other, and were so much shut out from the world around them.

It was, in fact, one of the darkest periods of the reign of Ferdinand the Seventh, when the desponding seemed to think that the eclipse was not only total, but "beyond all hope of day." The absolute power of the monarch had been as yet nowhere publicly questioned; and his government, which had revived the Inquisition and was not wanting in its spirit, had, from the first, silenced the press, and, wherever its influence extended, now threatened the extinction of all generous culture. Hardly four years had

elapsed since the old order of things had been restored at Madrid, and already most of the leading men of letters, whose home was naturally in the capital, were in prison or in exile. Melendez Valdes, the first Spanish poet of the age, had just died in misery on the unfriendly soil of France. Quintana, in many respects the heir to his honors, was confined in the fortress of Pamplona. Martinez de la Rosa, who has since been one of the leaders of the nation as well as of its literature, was shut up in Peñon on the coast of Barbary. Moratin was languishing in Paris, while his comedies were applauded to the very echo by his enemies at home. Don Angel de Saavedra, now the Duke de Rivas, who, like the old nobles of the proudest days of the monarchy, has distinguished himself alike in arms, in letters, and in the civil government and foreign diplomacy of his country, was living retired on the estates of his great house in Andalusia. Others of less mark and note shared a fate as rigorous; and, if Clemencin, Navarrete, and Marina were permitted still to linger in the capital from which their friends had been driven, their footsteps were watched and their lives were unquiet.

Among the men of letters whom I earliest knew in Madrid was Don José Antonio Conde, a retired, gentle, modest scholar, rarely occupied with events of a later date than the times of the Spanish Arabs, whose history he afterwards illustrated. But, far as his character and studies removed him from political turbulence, he had already tasted the bitterness of a political exile; and now, in the honorable poverty to which he had been reduced, he not unwillingly consented to pass several hours of each day with me, and direct my studies in the literature of his country. In this I was very fortunate. We read together the early Castilian poetry, of which he knew more than he did of the most recent, and to which his thoughts

and tastes were much nearer akin. He assisted me, too, in collecting the books I needed;—never an easy task where bookselling, in the sense elsewhere given to the word, was unknown, and where the Inquisition and the confessional had often made what was most desirable most rare. But Don José knew the lurking-places where such books and their owners were to be sought; and to him I am indebted for the foundation of a collection in Spanish literature, which, without help like his, I should have failed to make. I owe him, therefore, much; and, though the grave has long since closed over my friend and his persecutors, it is still a pleasure to me to acknowledge obligations which I have never ceased to feel.

Many circumstances, since the period of my visit to Spain, have favored my successive attempts to increase the Spanish library I then began. The residence in Madrid of my friend, the late Mr. Alexander Hill Everett, who ably represented his country for several years at the court of Spain; and the subsequent residence there, in the same high position, of my friend Mr. Washington Irving, equally honored on both sides of the Atlantic, but especially cherished by Spaniards for the enduring monument he has erected to the history of their early adventures, and for the charming fictions, whose scene he has laid in their romantic country;—these fortunate circumstances naturally opened to me whatever facilities for collecting books could be afforded by the kindness of persons in places so distinguished, or by their desire to spread among their countrymen at home a literature they knew so well and loved so much.

But to two other persons, not unconnected with these statesmen and men of letters, it is no less my duty and my pleasure to make known my obligations. The first of them is Mr. O. Rich, formerly a Consul of the United States

in Spain; the same bibliographer to whom Mr. Irving and Mr. Prescott have avowed similar obligations, and to whose personal regard I owe hardly less than I do to his extraordinary knowledge of rare and curious books, and his extraordinary success in collecting them. The other is Don Pascual de Gayangos, Professor of Arabic in the University of Madrid, — certainly in his peculiar department among the most eminent scholars now living, and one to whose familiarity with whatever regards the literature of his own country the frequent references in my notes bear a testimony not to be mistaken. With the former of these gentlemen I have been in constant communication for many years, and have received from him valuable contributions of books and manuscripts collected in Spain, England, and France for my library. With the latter, to whom I am not less largely indebted, I first became personally acquainted when I passed in Europe the period between 1835 and 1838, seeking to know scholars such as he is, and consulting, not only the principal public libraries of the Continent, but such rich private collections as those of Lord Holland in England, of M. Ternaux-Compans in France, and of the venerated and much-loved Tieck in Germany; all of which were made accessible to me by the frank kindness of their owners.

The natural result of such a long-continued interest in Spanish literature, and of so many pleasant inducements to study it, has been — I speak in a spirit of extenuation and self-defence — *a book*. In the interval between my two residences in Europe I delivered lectures upon its principal topics to successive classes in Harvard College; and, on my return home from the second, I endeavored to arrange these lectures for publication. But when I had already employed much labor and time on them, I found — or thought I found — that the tone of discussion which I had adopted for my

academical audiences was not suited to the purposes of a regular history. Destroying, therefore, what I had written, I began afresh my never unwelcome task, and so have prepared the present work, as little connected with all I had previously done as it, perhaps, can be, and yet cover so much of the same ground.

In correcting my manuscript for the press I have enjoyed the counsels of two of my more intimate friends; of Mr. Francis C. Gray, a scholar who should permit the world to profit more than it does by the large resources of his accurate and tasteful learning, and of Mr. William H. Prescott, the historian of both hemispheres, whose name will not be forgotten in either, but whose honors will always be dearest to those who have best known the discouragements under which they have been won, and the modesty and gentleness with which they are worn. To these faithful friends, whose unchanging regard has entered into the happiness of all the active years of my life, I make my affectionate acknowledgments, as I now part from a work in which they have always taken an interest, and which, wherever it goes, will carry on its pages the silent proofs of their kindness and taste.

PARK STREET, BOSTON, December, 1849.

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