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* CHAPTER V.

ALFONSO THE ELEVENTH. — TREATISE ON HUNTING. — POETICAL CHRONICLE. — BENEFICIARY OF UBEDA. — ARCHPRIEST OF HITA; HIS LIFE, WORKS, AND CHARACTER. — RABBI DON SANTOB. — THE DOCTRINA CHRISTIANA. — A REVELATION. — THE DANÇA GENERAL. — POEM ON JOSEPH. — ATALA; HIS RIMADO DE PALACIO. — CHARACTERISTICS OF SPANISH LITERATURE THUS FAR.

THE reign of Alfonso the Eleventh was full of troubles, and the unhappy monarch himself died at last of the plague, while he was besieging Gibraltar, in 1350. Still, that letters were not forgotten in it we know, not only from the example of Don John Manuel, already cited, but from several others which should not be passed over.

The first is a prose treatise on Hunting, in three books, written under the king's direction by his Chief-huntsmen, who were then among the principal persons of the court. It consists of little more than an account of the sort of hounds to be used, their diseases and training, with a description of the different places where game was abundant, and where sport for the royal amusement was to be had. It is of small consequence in itself, but was published by Argote de Molina, in the time of Philip the Second, with a pleasant addition by the editor, containing curious stories of lion-hunts and bull-fights, fitting it to the taste of his own age. In style, the original work is as good as the somewhat similar treatise of Don Enrique de Villena, on the Art of Carving, written a hundred years later;

and, from the nature of the subject, it is somewhat more interesting.¹

* The next literary monument attributed to * 70 this reign would be important, if we had the whole of it. It is a chronicle, in the ballad style, of events which happened in the time of Alfonso the Eleventh, and commonly passes under his name. It was found, hidden in a mass of Arabic manuscripts, by Diego de Mendoza, who attributed it, with little ceremony, to "a secretary of the king"; and it was first publicly made known by Argote de Molina, who thought it written by some poet contemporary with the history he relates. But only thirty-four stanzas of it are now known to exist; and these, though admitted by Sanchez to be probably anterior to the fifteenth century, are shown by him not to be the work of the king, and seem, in fact, to be less ancient in style and language than that critic supposes them to be.² They * are in very flowing Cas- * 71

¹ Libro de la Monteria, que mando escribir, etc., el Rey Don Alfonso de Castilla y de Leon, ultimo deste nombre, aerecentado por Argote de Molina, Sevilla, 1582, folio, 91 leaves, — the text not correct, as Pellicer says (note to Don Quixote, Parte II. c. 24). The Discurso of Argote de Molina, that follows, and fills 21 leaves more, is illustrated with curious woodcuts, and ends with a description of the palace of the Pardo, and an eclogue in octave stanzas, by Gomez de Tapia of Granada, on the birth of the Infanta Doña Isabel, daughter of Philip II.

² This old rhymed chronicle was found by the historian Diego de Mendoza among his Arabic manuscripts in Granada, and was sent by him, with a letter dated December 1, 1573, to Zurita, the annalist of Aragon, intimating that Argote de Molina would be interested in it. He says truly, that "it is well worth reading, to see with what simplicity and propriety men wrote poetical histories in the olden times";

adding, that "it is one of those books called in Spain *Gestes*," and that it seems to him curious and valuable, because he thinks it was written by a secretary of Alfonso XI., and because it differs in several points from the received accounts of that monarch's reign. (Dormer, *Progresos de la Historia de Aragon, Zaragoza, 1680, fol., p. 502.*) The thirty-four stanzas of this chronicle that we now possess were first published by Argote de Molina, in his very curious "*Nobleza del Andaluzia*" (Sevilla, 1588, f. 198), and were taken from him by Sanchez (*Poesias Anteriores, Tom. I. pp. 171-177*). Argote de Molina says, "I copy them on account of their curiosity as specimens of the language and poetry of that age, and because they are the best and most fluent of anything for a long time written in Spain." The truth is, they are so facile, and have so few archaisms in them, that I cannot believe they were written earlier than the ballads of the fifteenth century, which they so much

tilian, and their tone is as spirited as that of most of the old ballads.

resemble. The following account of a victory, which I once thought was that of Salado, gained in 1340, and described in the "Crónica de Alfonso XI." (1551, fol., cap. 254), but which I now think must have been some victory gained before 1330, is the best part of what has been published:—

Los Moros fueron fuyendo
Maldiziendo su ventura;
El Maestro los siguiendo
Por los puertos de Segura.

E feriendo e derribando
E prendiendo a las manos,
E Sanctiago llamando,
Escudo de los Christianos.

En alcance los llevaron
A poder de escudo y lança,
E al castillo se tornaron
E entraron por la matanza.

E muchos Moros fallaron
Espedacados jacer;
El nombre de Dios loaron,
Que les mostró gran plazer.

The Moors fled on, with headlong speed
Cursing still their bitter fate;
The Master followed, breathing blood,
Through old Segura's open gate;

And struck and slew, as on he sped,
And grappled still his flying foes;
While still to heaven his battle-shout,
St James! St. James! triumphant rose.

Nor ceased the victory's work at last,
That bowed them to the shield and spear,—
Till to the castle's wall they turned,
And entered through the slaughter there;—

Till there they saw, to havoc hewn,
Their Moorish foemen prostrate laid;
Then gave their grateful praise to God,
Who thus vouchsafed his gracious aid.

It is a misfortune that so much of this poem is lost.

So far appeared in the earlier editions of this work. Since that time the poem in question has been published at Madrid by the government, in a beautiful octavo volume, under the editorship of Don Florencio Janer, 1863, entitled "Poema de Alonso el Onceno." The manuscript from which it has been taken, and which is the only one known to exist, is the same that belonged to Diego de Mendoza in 1573, as already noticed; but it is in a very bad condition. It is imperfect both at the beginning and at the end; and although twenty-four hundred and fifty-six stan-

zas are numbered in the printed copy, some of them do not appear at all, and many more lack a few lines or words. Perhaps it originally covered the whole life of Alfonso; but, as it reaches us, it begins with a broken stanza in the year 1312, when he came upon the throne, and ends with another imperfect stanza in 1344, when he entered Algeciras triumphantly, about six years before his death.

I find no sufficient reason to think that it was the work of a contemporary, though it is claimed to be such by the editor. It contains internal evidence in stanzas 674, 2021, 2022, 2271, and elsewhere, that it was publicly read or recited. Like the Poem of the Cid, the Poem of Fernan Gonzalez, and other similar *Gestes*, it is often thrown into a dramatic form, so as to awaken a more lively interest in the audience, and therefore, like all such poems, it is, to a certain extent, a work of invention; for, although the editor claims these frequent dialogues as proof that the work itself is by a contemporary, who listened to them,—"conservandonos muy a menudo las conversaciones y los secretos de castellanos y moros" (p. 342),—yet this is no more credible than it is that Dante had been in hell, or Walter Scott in the councils of Richard the Lion-Hearted.

Regarded as a work of amusement, partly historical and partly fictitious, it has not much merit. The author seems, from stanza 1841, to have been Diego Yañez, and, as the editor remarks, perhaps the same Diego Yañez who is very slightly, and only once, mentioned in the prose Chronicle, Chap. XXI. But whoever he may have been, he was a very commonplace, fluent rhymist. The gods did not make him poetical. In the Escorial MS. his *Geste* is written as if it were absolutely all prose, and it is no great injustice to the work to read it as such. It is less ample and trustworthy than the Chronicle; but it occasionally contains facts that the Chronicle does not record. Among them are some that are curious; such as the complaint of the commons (st. 72, 999); the advice of the king's tutor (st. 111–152), which is not unlike that of the Jew of Carrion to Don Pedro; the

Two other poems, written during the reign of one of the Alfonsos, as their author declares,—and therefore almost certainly during that of Alfonso the Eleventh, who was the last of his name,—are also now known in print only by a few stanzas, and by the office of their writer, who styles himself "a Beneficiary of Ubeda." The first, which consists, in the manuscript, of above a thousand lines in the manner of Berceo, is a life of Saint Ildefonso; the last is on the subject of Saint Mary Magdalen. Both would probably detain us little, even if they had been published entire.³

We turn, therefore, without further delay, to Juan Ruiz, commonly called the Archpriest of Hita; a poet who is known to have lived at the same period, and whose works, both from their character and amount, deserve especial notice. Their date can be ascertained with a good degree of exactness. In one of the three early manuscripts in which they are extant, some of the poems are fixed at the year 1330, and some, by the two others, at 1343. Their author, who seems to have been born at Alcalá de Henares, lived much at

quasi acknowledgment of the Pope at Avignon (st. 627, 1006, 1076, 1892, 1930, and elsewhere), although it is also plain (st. 641) that the other Pope at Rome was not ignored; besides which we have several notices of the Duke of Lancaster, who meddled much in the affairs of Spain of that period, and many more of Don John Manuel, who was necessarily in a large part of them. Full historical notes would be very desirable, but the editor has given us few, and none at all after stanza 1173, although nearly thirteen hundred stanzas follow, and among them an account of the long siege of Algesiras (st. 2009–2456), which is the most important event in the poem, and the one most amply described, and in the course of which we have several allusions to the use of cannon by the Moors (see st. 2145, 2149, 2350, etc., and, also, the

Chronicle, Cap. 273), all curious, and all needing illustration.

As to the thirty-four stanzas originally published by Argote de Molina, it should be noted that they are not found to have been consecutive,—six occurring at st. 28–33, and the rest at st. 704–731, with somewhat different readings. The fight described is at Siles or Silos, and occurred in 1338, according to the Chronicle, Chap. CCI.

³ Slight extracts from the Beneficiado de Ubeda are in Sanchez, Poesias Anteriores, Tom. I. pp. 116–118. The first stanza, which is like the beginning of several of Berceo's poems, is as follows:—

Si me ayudare Christo è la Virgen sagrada,
Querria componer una faccion rimada,
De un confesor que fizo vida honrada,
Que nacl en Toledo, en esa Cibdat nombrada

Guadalaxara and Hita, places only five leagues apart, and was imprisoned by order of the Archbishop of Toledo between 1337 and 1350; from all which it may be inferred that his principal residence was Castile, and that he flourished in the reign of Alfonso the Eleventh; that is, in the time of Don John Manuel, and a very little later.⁴

* 72 * His works consist of nearly seven thousand verses; and although, in general, they are written in the four-line stanza of Berceo, we find occasionally a variety of measure, tone, and spirit, before unknown in Castilian poetry; the number of their metrical forms, some of which are taken from the Provençal, being reckoned not less than sixteen.⁵ The poems, as they have come to us, open with a prayer to God, composed apparently at the time of the Archpriest's imprisonment; when, as one of the manuscripts sets forth, most of his works were written.⁶ Next comes a curious prose prologue, explaining the moral purpose of the whole collection, or rather endeavoring to conceal the immoral tendency of the greater part of it. And then, after somewhat more of prefatory matter, follow, in quick succession, the poems themselves, very miscellaneous in their subjects, but ingeniously connected. The entire mass, when taken together, fills a volume of respectable size.⁷

It is a series of stories, that seem to be sketches of

⁴ See, for his life, Sanchez, Tom. I. pp. 100-106, and Tom. IV. pp. ii-vi; and, for an excellent criticism of his works, one in the Wiener Jahrbücher der Literatur, 1832, Band LVIII. pp. 220-255. It is by Ferdinand Wolf, and he boldly compares the Archpriest to Cervantes. See also Dozy's important "Recherches," 1849, Tom. I. p. 386.

⁵ Sanchez, Tom. IV. p. x.

⁶ Ibid., p. 283.

⁷ The immoral tendency of many of the poems is a point that not only embarrasses the editor of the Archpriest (see p. xvii and the notes on pp. 76, 97, 102, etc.), but somewhat disturbs the Archpriest himself. (See stanzas 7, 866, etc.) The case, however, is too plain to be covered up; and the editor only partly avoids trouble by quietly leaving out long passages, as from st. 441 to 464, etc.

real events in the Archpriest's own life; sometimes mingled with fictions and allegories, that may, after all, be only veils for other facts; and sometimes speaking out plainly, and announcing themselves as parts of his personal history.⁸ In the foreground of this busy scene figures the very equivocal character of his female messenger, the chief agent in his love affairs, whom he boldly calls *Trota-conventos*, because the messages she carries are so often to or from monasteries and nunneries.⁹ The first * lady-love to * 73 whom the poet sends her is, he says, well taught, — *mucho-letrada*, — and her story is illustrated by the fables of the Sick Lion visited by the other Animals, and of the Mountain bringing forth a Mouse. All, however, is unavailing. The lady refuses to favor his suit; and he consoles himself, as well as he may, with the saying of Solomon, that all is vanity and vexation of spirit.¹⁰

In the next of his adventures, a false friend deceives him and carries off his lady. But still he is not discouraged.¹¹ He feels himself to be drawn on by his

⁸ St. 61-68.

⁹ There is some little obscurity about this important personage (st. 71, 671, and elsewhere); but she was named Urraca (st. 1550), and belonged to the class of persons technically called *Alcahuetas*, or "Go-betweens"; a class which, from the seclusion of women in Spain, and perhaps from the influence of Moorish society and manners, figures largely in the early literature of the country, and sometimes in the later. The *Partidas* (Part VII. Tit. 22) devotes two laws to them; and the "Tragicomedia of Celestina," who is herself once called *Trota-conventos* (end of Act II.), is their chief monument. Of their activity in the days of the Archpriest a whimsical proof is given in the extraordinary number of odious and ridiculous names and epithets accumulated on them in st. 898-902.

In this connection it may be noted that Alonso Martinez de Toledo, a

chaplain of John II., wrote, in the fifteenth century, a book, "De los vicios de las malas mujeres y compliaciones de los hombres." Mendez (Typographia, pp. 304-306) gives an account of an edition of 1499, and says there are others of 1518, 1529, and 1547. It commonly passes under an indecent name, and its grossness probably caused it to be so hunted down, that copies of it are excessively rare. I have seen only those in the Imperial Library of Vienna, which are of 1529 and 1547. Although in prose, it is, in some respects, akin to the work of the Archpriest of Hita, but in more to the Celestina. A full account of it may be found in the *Blätter für literarische Unterhaltung*, 1850, No. 234.

¹⁰ St. 72, etc., 88, etc., 95, etc.

¹¹ When the affair is over, he says, quaintly, "*El comió la vianda, è a mi fiso rumiar.*"

fate, like the son of a Moorish king, whose history he then relates; and, after some astrological ruminations, declares himself to be born under the star of Venus, and inevitably subject to her control. Another failure follows; and then Love comes in person to visit him, and counsels him in a series of fables, which are told with great ease and spirit. The poet answers gravely. He is offended with Don Amor for his falsehood, charges him with being guilty, either by implication or directly, of all the seven deadly sins, and fortifies each of his positions with an appropriate apologue.¹²

The Archpriest now goes to Doña Venus, who, though he knew *Ovid*, is represented as the wife of Don Amor; and, taking counsel of her, is successful. But the story he relates is evidently a fiction, though it may be accommodated to the facts of the poet's own case. It is borrowed from a dialogue or play, written before the year 1300, by Pamphylus Maurianus or Maurilianus, and long attributed to Ovid; but *74 the Castilian poet has successfully *given to what he adopted the coloring of his own national manners. All this portion, which fills above a thousand lines, is somewhat free in its tone; and the Archpriest, alarmed at himself, turns suddenly round and adds a series of severe moral warnings and teachings to the sex, which he as suddenly breaks off, and, without any assigned reason, goes to the mountains near Segovia. But the month in which he makes his journey is March; the season is rough, and several of his adventures are anything but agreeable. Still he preserves the same light and thoughtless air; and this part of his history is mingled with spirited pastoral songs in the Provençal

¹² St. 119, 142, etc., 171, etc., 203, etc. Such discoursing as this last passage affords on the seven deadly sins is common

in the French Fabliaux, and the English reader finds a striking specimen of it in the "Person's Tale" of Chaucer.

manner, called "Cántigas de Serrana," as the preceding portions had been mingled with fables, which he calls "Enxiemplos," or stories.¹³

A shrine, much frequented by the devout, is near that part of the Sierra where his journeyings lay; and he makes a pilgrimage to it, which he illustrates with sacred hymns, just as he had before illustrated his love adventures with apologues and songs. But Lent approaches, and he hurries home. He is hardly arrived, however, when he receives a summons in form from Doña Quaresma (Madame Lent) to attend her in arms, with all her other archpriests and clergy, in order to make a foray, like a foray into the territory of the Moors, against Don Carnaval and his adherents. One of these allegorical battles, which were in great favor with the Trouveurs and other metre-mongers of the Middle Ages, then follows, in which figure Don Tocino (Mr. Bacon) and Doña Cecina (Mrs. Hung-Beef), with other similar personages. The result, of course, since it is now the season of Lent, is the defeat and imprisonment of Don Carnaval; but when that season closes, the allegorical prisoner necessarily escapes, and, *raising anew such followers as Mr. Lunch *75 and Mr. Breakfast, again takes the field, and is again triumphant.¹⁴

¹³ St. 557-559, with 419 and 548. Pamphylus de Amore, F. A. Ebert, Bibliographisches Lexicon, Leipzig, 1830, 4to, Tom. II. p. 297. P. Leyseri Hist. Poet. Medii Ævi, Halæ, 1721, 8vo, p. 2071. Sanchez, Tom. IV. pp. xxiii, xxiv. The story of Pamphylus in the Archpriest's version is in stanzas 555-865. The story of the Archpriest's own journey is in stanzas 924-1017. The *Serranas* in this portion are, I think, imitations of the *Pastorelas* or *Pastorelles* of the Troubadours. (Raynouard, Troubadours, Tom. II. pp. 229, etc.) If such poems occurred frequently

in the Northern French literature of the period, I should think the Archpriest had found his models there, since it is there he generally resorts. The *Cántiga de Serrana*, st. 996, beginning "Cerca la Tablada," is very droll. It is one of those about which Argote de Molina made a mistake, attributing them to the time of St. Ferdinand. See *post*, Chap. VI. n. 13.

¹⁴ St. 1017-1040. The "Bataille des Vins," by D'Andeli, may be cited (Barbazan, ed. Méon, Tom. I. p. 152), but the "Bataille de Karesme et de Charnage" (*Ibid.*, Tom. IV. p. 80) is

Don Carnaval now unites himself to Don Amor, and both appear in state as emperors. Don Amor is received with especial jubilee; clergy and laity, friars, nuns, and *jongleurs*, going out in wild procession to meet and welcome him.¹⁵ But the honor of formally receiving his Majesty, though claimed by all, and foremost by the nuns, is granted only to the poet. To the poet, too, Don Amor relates his adventures of the preceding winter at Seville and Toledo, and then leaves him to go in search of others. Meanwhile, the Archpriest, with the assistance of his cunning agent *Trota-conventos*, begins a new series of love intrigues, even more freely mingled with fables than the first, and ends them only by the death of *Trota-conventos* herself, with whose epitaph the more carefully connected portion of the Archpriest's works is brought to a conclusion. The volume contains, however, besides this portion, several smaller poems, on subjects as widely different as the "Christian's Armor" and the "Praise of Little Women," some of which seem related to the main series, though none of them have any apparent connection with each other.¹⁶

The tone of the Archpriest's poetry is very various.

In general, a satirical spirit prevails in it, not unmingled with a quiet humor. This spirit often extends into the gravest portions; and how fearless he was when he indulged himself in it, a passage on the influence of money and corruption at the court of Rome leaves no doubt.¹⁷ Other parts, like the

more in point. There are others on other subjects. For the marvellously savory personages in the Archpriest's battle, see stanzas 1080, 1169, 1170, etc.

¹⁵ St. 1184, etc., 1199-1229. It is not quite easy to see how the Archpriest ventured some things in the last passage. Parts of the procession come singing the most solemn hymns of the

Church, or parodies of them, applied to Don Amor, like the *Benedictus qui venit*. It seems downright blasphemy against what was then thought most sacred.

¹⁶ Stanzas 1221, 1229, etc., 1277, etc., 1289, 1491, 1492, etc., 1550, etc., 1553-1681.

¹⁷ Stanzas 464, etc. As in many other passages, the Archpriest is here upon

verses on *Death, are solemn, and even some- * 76 times tender; while yet others, like the hymns to the Madonna, breathe the purest spirit of Catholic devotion; so that, perhaps, it would not be easy, in the whole body of Spanish literature, to find a volume showing a greater variety in its subjects, or in the modes of managing and exhibiting them.¹⁸

The happiest success of the Archpriest of Hita is to be found in the many tales and apologues which he has scattered on all sides to illustrate the adventures that constitute a framework for his poetry, like that of the "Conde Lucanor" or the "Canterbury Tales." Most of them are familiar to us, being taken from the old storehouses of Æsop and Phædrus, or rather from the versions of these fabulists common in the earliest Northern French poetry.¹⁹ Among the more fortunate of his very free imitations is the fable of the Frogs who asked for a King from Jupiter, that of the Dog who lost by his Greediness the Meat he carried in his Mouth, and that of the Hares who took Courage when they saw the Frogs were more timid than themselves.²⁰ A few of them have a truth, a simplicity, and even a grace, which have rarely been surpassed in the same

ground already occupied by the Northern French poets. See the "Usurer's Pater-Noster," and "Credo," in Barbazan, *Fabliaux*, Tom. IV. pp. 99 and 106.

¹⁸ Stanzas 1494, etc., 1609, etc.

¹⁹ The Archpriest says of the fable of the Mountain that brought forth a Mouse, that it "was composed by Isopete." Now, there were at least two collections of fables in French in the thirteenth century that passed under the name of *Ysope*, and are published in Robert, "Fables Inédites" (Paris, 1825, 2 Tom. 8vo); and as Marie de France, who lived at the court of Henry III. of England, then the resort of the Northern French poets, alludes to them

in the Prologue to her own *Fables*, they are probably as early as 1240. (See *Poésies de Marie de France*, ed. Roquefort, Paris, 1820, 8vo, Tom. II. p. 61, and the admirable discussions in *De la Rue sur les Bardes, les Jongleurs et les Trouvères*, Caen, 1834, 8vo, Tom. I. pp. 198-202, and Tom. III. pp. 47-101.) To one or both of these *Isopets* the Archpriest went for a part of his fables, — perhaps for all of them. Don Juan Manuel, his contemporary, probably did the same, and sometimes took the same fables; e. g. *Conde Lucanor*, Capp. 43, 26, and 49, which are the fables of the Archpriest, stanzas 1386, 1411, and 1428.

²⁰ Stanzas 189, 206, 1419.