

ballads existed in the earliest times, their very name, *Romances*, may intimate; since it seems to imply that they were, at some period, the only poetry known in the *Romance* language of Spain; and such a period can have been no other than the one immediately following the formation of the language itself. Popular poetry of some sort—and more probably ballad poetry than any other—was sung concerning the achievements of the Cid as early as 1147.¹⁷ A century later than this, but earlier than the prose of the “Fuero Juzgo,” Saint Ferdinand, after the capture of Seville, in 1248, gave allotments or *repartimientos* to two poets who had been with him during the siege, Nicolas *de los Romances*, and Domingo Abad *de los Romances*; the first of whom continued for some time afterwards to inhabit the rescued city, and exercise his vocation as a poet.¹⁸ In the next reign, or between 1252 and 1280, such poets are again mentioned. A princess, disguised as a *joglarena*, or female ballad-singer, is introduced into the poem of “Apollonius,” which is supposed to have been written a little before or after the year 1250;¹⁹ and in

¹⁷ See the barbarous Latin poem printed by Sandoval, at the end of his “Historia de los Reyes de Castilla,” etc. (Pamplona, 1615, fol. f. 193). It is on the taking of Almeria in 1147, and seems to have been written by an eye-witness, or, at any rate, on the authority of persons who had been at the siege, with whom the author had conversed.

¹⁸ The authority for this is sufficient, though the fact itself of a man being named from the sort of poetry he composed is a singular one. It is found in Diego Ortiz de Zuñiga, “Anales Eclesiasticos y Seglares de Sevilla” (Sevilla, 1677, fol., pp. 14, 90, 815, etc.). He took it, he says, from the *original* documents of the *repartimientos*, which he describes minutely as having been used by Argote de Molina (Preface and p. 815), and from documents in the ar-

chives of the Cathedral. The *repartimiento*, or distribution of lands and other spoils in a city, from which, as Mariana tells us, a hundred thousand Moors emigrated or were expelled, was a serious matter, and the documents in relation to it seem to have been ample and exact. (Zuñiga, Preface and pp. 31, 62, 66, etc.) The meaning of the word *Romance* in this place is a more doubtful matter. But, if *any* kind of popular poetry is meant by it, what was it likely to be at so early a period but ballad poetry? The verses, however, which Ortiz de Zuñiga, on the authority of Argote de Molina, attributes (p. 815) to Domingo Abad de los Romances, are not his; they are by the Arcipreste de Hita. (See Sanchez, Tom. IV. p. 166.)

¹⁹ Stanzas 426, 427, 483–495, ed. Paris, 1844, 8vo.

the Code of Laws of Alfonso the *Tenth, prepared about 1260, good knights are commanded to listen to no poetical tales of the ballad-singers, except such as relate to feats of arms.²⁰ In the “General Chronicle,” also, compiled soon afterwards by the same prince, mention is made more than once of poetical gestes or tales; of “what the ballad-singers (*juglares*) sing in their chants, and tell in their tales”; and “of what we hear the ballad-singers tell in their chants”;—implying that the achievements of Bernardo del Carpio and Charlemagne, to which these phrases refer, were as familiar in the popular poetry used in the composition of this fine old chronicle as we know they have been since to the whole Spanish people through the very ballads we still possess.²¹

It seems, therefore, not easy to escape from the conclusion, to which Argote de Molina, the most sagacious of the early Spanish critics, arrived nearly three centuries ago, that “in these old ballads is, in truth, perpetuated the memory of times past, and that they constitute a good part of those ancient Castilian stories used by King Alfonso in his history”;²² a conclusion at which we should arrive, even now, merely by reading with care large portions of the Chronicle itself.²³

²⁰ Partida II. Tit. XXI. Leyes 20, 21. “Neither let the singers (*juglares*) rehearse before them other songs (*cantares*) than those of military gestes, or those that relate feats of arms.” The *juglares*—a word that comes from the Latin *jocularis*—were originally strolling ballad-singers, like the *jongleurs*, but afterwards sunk to be jesters and jugglers. (See Clemencin’s curious note to Don Quixote, Parte II. c. 31.) *Juglares* are also mentioned in the *Chronica del Cid*, c. 228. That the earlier ballad-singers composed their own ballads is not to be doubted; but this, in time, was more or less given up. (Pidal in the *Cancionero de Baena*, Madrid, 1851, 8vo, pp. xvii, xviii, xxi.)

²¹ *Crónica General*, Valladolid, 1604, Parte III. ff. 30, 33, 45. Galindez de Carvajal—a statesman much considered in the times of Ferdinand and Isabella, and of Charles V., and first editor of the *Chronicle of John II.*—deemed the ballads to be of substantial value as materials for Spanish history;—de gran fé para la verdad de las Historias de España. (Luis de Cabrera, *De Historia*, 1611, f. 106.) The testimony is of consequence, considering the person from whom it came, and the time when he lived.

²² *El Conde Lucanor*, 1575. *Discurso de la Poesía Castellana* por Argote de Molina, f. 93. a.

²³ The end of the Second Part of the

One more fact will conclude what we know of their early history. It is, that ballads were found among the poetry of Don John Manuel, the nephew of * 106 Alfonso the Tenth, * which Argote de Molina possessed, and intended to publish, but which is now lost.²⁴ This brings our slight knowledge of the whole subject down to the death of Don John, in 1347. But from this period—the same with that of the Arch-priest of Hita—we almost lose sight, not only of the ballads, but of all genuine Spanish poetry, whose strains seem hardly to have been heard during the horrors of the reign of Peter the Cruel, the contested succession of Henry of Trastámara, and the Portuguese wars of John the First. And even when its echoes come to us again in the weak reign of John the Second, which stretches down to the middle of the fifteenth century, it presents itself with few of the attributes of the old national character.²⁵ It is become of the court, courtly; and therefore, though the old and true-hearted ballads may have lost none of the popular favor, and were certainly preserved by the fidelity of popular tradition, we find no further distinct record of them until the end of this century and the beginning of the one that followed, when the mass of the people, whose feelings they embodied, rose to such a degree of consideration, that their peculiar poetry came into the place to which it was entitled, and which it has maintained ever since. This was in the reigns of Ferdinand and Isabella, and of Charles the Fifth.

General Chronicle, and much of the third, relating to the great heroes of the early Castilian and Leonese history, seem to me to have been indebted to older poetical materials.

²⁴ Discurso, Conde Lucanor, ed. 1575, ff. 92. a, 93. b. The poetry contained in the Cancioneros Generales, from 1511

to 1573, and bearing the name of Don John Manuel, is, as we have already explained, the work of Don John Manuel of Portugal, who died in 1524.

²⁵ The Marquis of Santillana, in his well-known letter (Sanchez, Tom. 1.), speaks of the *Romances e cantares*, but very slightly.

But these few historical notices of ballad poetry are, except those which point to its early origin, too slight to be of much value. Indeed, until after the middle of the sixteenth century, it is difficult to find ballads written by known authors; so that, when we speak of the Old Spanish Ballads, we do not refer to the few whose period can be settled with some accuracy, but to the great mass found in the "*Romanceros Generales*" and elsewhere, whose authors and dates are alike unknown. This mass consists of above a thousand old poems, unequal in length, and still more unequal in *merit, composed between the * 107 period when verse first appeared in Spain and the time when such verse as that of the ballads was thought worthy to be written down; the whole bearing to the mass of the Spanish people, their feelings, passions, and character, the same relations that a single ballad bears to the character of the individual author who produced it.

For a long time, of course, these primitive national ballads existed only in the memories of the common people, from whom they sprang, and were preserved through successive ages and long traditions only by the interests and feelings that originally gave them birth. We cannot, therefore, reasonably hope that we now read any of them exactly as they were first composed and sung, or that there are many to which we can assign a definite age with any good degree of probability. No doubt, we may still possess some which, with little change in their simple thoughts and melody, were among the earliest breathings of that popular enthusiasm which, between the twelfth and the fifteenth centuries, was carrying the Christian Spaniards onward to the emancipation of their country;—

ballads which were heard amidst the valleys of the Sierra Morena, or on the banks of the Turia and the Guadalquivir, with the first tones of the language that has since spread itself through the whole Peninsula. But the idle minstrel, who, in such troubled times, sought a precarious subsistence from cottage to cottage, or the thoughtless soldier, who, when the battle was over, sung its achievements to his guitar at the door of his tent, could not be expected to look beyond the passing moment; so that, if their unskilled verses were preserved at all, they must have been preserved by those who repeated them from memory, changing their tone and language with the changed feelings of the times and events that chanced to recall them. Whatever, then, belongs to this earliest period belongs, at the same time, to the unchronicled popular life and character of which it was a part; and although some of the ballads thus produced may have survived to our own day, many more, undoubtedly, lie buried with the poetical hearts that gave them birth.

* 108 * This, indeed, is the great difficulty in relation to all researches concerning the oldest Spanish ballads. The very excitement of the national spirit that warmed them into life was the result of an age of such violence and suffering, that the ballads it produced failed to command such an interest as would cause them to be written down. Individual poems, like the Poem of the Cid, or the works of individual authors, like those of the Archpriest of Hita or Don John Manuel, were, of course, cared for, and, perhaps, from time to time transcribed. But the popular poetry was neglected. Even when the especial "Cancioneros" — which were collections of whatever verses the person who formed them happened to fancy, or

was able to find²⁶ — began to come in fashion, during the reign of John the Second, the bad taste of the time caused the old national literature to be so entirely overlooked, that hardly a single ballad occurs in either of them.²⁷

The first printed ballads — for to these we now come — are to be sought in the earliest edition of the "Cancioneros Generales," compiled by Fernando del Castillo, and published at Valencia in 1511. Their number, including fragments and imitations, is thirty-seven,²⁸ of which nineteen are by authors whose names are given, and who, like Don John Manuel of Portugal, Cartagena, Juan de la Enzina, and Diego de San Pedro, are known to have flourished in the period between 1450 and 1500, or who, like Lope de Sosa, appear so often in the collections of that age, that they may be fairly assumed to have belonged to it. Of the remainder, several seem * much * 109 more ancient, and are, therefore, more interesting and important.

The first, for instance, called "Count Claros," is the fragment of an old ballad afterwards printed in full. It is inserted in this Cancionero on account of an elaborate gloss made on it in the Provençal manner by

²⁶ *Cancion*, *Canzone*, *Chansos*, in the Romance language, signified originally any kind of poetry, because all poetry, or almost all, was then sung. (Giovanni Galvani, *Poesia dei Trovatori*, Modena, 1829, 8vo, p. 29.) In this way, *Cancionero* in Spanish was long understood to mean simply a collection of poetry, — sometimes all by one author, sometimes by many.

Don P. de Gayangos says, in the translation of this History (Vol. I. 1851, p. 509), that he has found one ballad in the MS. Cancionero called *Stuñiga* or *Estuñiga's*, and three or four in that of Martinez de Burgos. Perhaps there may be others in other

MS. Cancioneros, but not, I think, many.

²⁷ It is a striking fact that no such thing as a collection of ballads can be found in any old manuscript. They were written down, composed, or modified later; dealt with, in short, just as Percy and Scott dealt with English and Scotch ballads.

²⁸ It should, however, be observed that about twenty of the thirty-seven are in the Cancionero of Constantina, to be noticed hereafter (Chap. XXIII.), and that this Cancionero, which is without date, may have been printed a few years earlier, and probably was. But we have no ballads with printed dates earlier than 1511.

Francisco de Leon, as well as on account of an imitation of it by Lope de Sosa, and a gloss upon the imitation by Soria; all of which follow, and leave little doubt that the ballad itself had long been known and admired. The fragment, which alone is worth notice, consists of a dialogue between the Count Claros and his uncle, the Archbishop, on a subject and in a tone which made the name of the Count, as a true lover, pass almost into a proverb.

"It grieves me, Count, it grieves my heart,
That thus they urge thy fate;
Since this fond guilt upon thy part
Was still no crime of state.
For all the errors love can bring
Deserve not mortal pain;
And I have knelt before the king,
To free thee from thy chain.
But he, the king, with angry pride,
Would hear no word I spoke;
'The sentence is pronounced,' he cried;
'Who may its power revoke?'
The Infanta's love you won, he says,
When you her guardian were.
O cousin, less, if you were wise,
For ladies you would care.
For he that labors most for them
Your fate will always prove;
Since death or ruin none escape,
Who trust their dangerous love."
"O uncle, uncle, words like these
A true heart never hears;
For I would rather die to please
Than live and not be theirs."²⁹

²⁹ The whole ballad, with a different reading of the passage here translated, is in the Cancionero de Romances, Saragossa, 1550, 12mo, Parte II. f. 188, beginning "Media noche era por hilo." Often, however, as the adventures of the Count Claros are alluded to in the old Spanish poetry, there is no trace of them in the old chronicles. The fragment in the text begins thus, in the Cancionero General (1535, f. 106. a):—

Pesame de vos, el Conde,
Porque assi os quieren matar
Porque el yerro que hezistes
No fue mucho de culpar;
Que los yerros por amores
Dignos son de perdonar.
Suplique por vos al Rey,
Cos mandasse de librar;
Mas el Rey, con gran enojo,
No me quisiera escuchar, etc.

The beginning of this ballad, in the complete copy from the Saragossa Romancero, shows that it was composed before clocks were known.

* The next is also a fragment, and relates, * 110 with great simplicity, an incident which belongs to the state of society that existed in Spain between the thirteenth and sixteenth centuries, when the two races were much mingled together, and constantly in conflict.

I was the Moorish maid, Morayma,
I was that maiden dark and fair;—
A Christian came, he seemed in sorrow,
Full of falsehood came he there.
Moorish he spoke, — he spoke it well, —
"Open the door, thou Moorish maid,
So shalt thou be by Allah blessed,
So shall I save my forfeit head."
"But how can I, alone and weak,
Unbar, and know not who is there?"
"But I'm the Moor, the Moor Mazote,
The brother of thy mother dear.
A Christian fell beneath my hand,
The Alcalde comes, he comes apace,
And if thou open not the door,
I perish here before thy face."
I rose in haste, I rose in fear,
I seized my cloak, I missed my vest,
And, rushing to the fatal door,
I threw it wide at his behest.³⁰

The next is complete, and, from its early imitations and glosses, it must probably be quite ancient. It begins * "Fonte frida, Fonte frida," and is, * 111 perhaps, itself an imitation of "Rosa fresca, Rosa fresca," another of the early and very graceful lyrical ballads which were always so popular.

³⁰ The forced alliteration of the first lines, and the phraseology of the whole, indicate the rudeness of the very early Castilian:—

Yo mera mora Morayma,
Morilla d'un bel catar;
Christiano vino a mi puerta,
Cuytada, por me enganar.
Hablome en algaravia,
Como aquel que la bien sabe:
"Abra me las puertas, Mora,
Si Ala te guarde de mal!"
"Como te abriré, mezuquina,

Que no se quien tu seras?"
"Yo soy el Moro Macote,
Hermano de la tu madre,
Que un Christiano deyo muerto;
Tras mi venia el alcalde.
Sino me abres tu, mi vida,
Aqui me veras matar."
Quando esto oy, cuytada,
Comenceme a levantar;
Vistierame vn almexia,
No hallando mi brial:
Fuerame para la puerta,
Y abriela de par en par.

Cancionero General, 1535, f. 111. a.

Cooling fountain, cooling fountain,
Cooling fountain, full of love !
Where the little birds all gather,
Thy refreshing power to prove ;
All except the widowed turtle
Full of grief, the turtle-dove.
There the traitor nightingale
All by chance once passed along,
Uttering words of basest falsehood
In his guilty, treacherous song :
" If it please thee, gentle lady,
I thy servant love would be."
" Hence, begone, ungracious traitor,
Base deceiver, hence from me !
I nor rest upon green branches,
Nor amidst the meadow's flowers ;
The very wave my thirst that quenches
Seek I where it turbid pours.
No wedded love my soul shall know,
Lest children's hearts my heart should win ;
No pleasure would I seek for, no !
No consolation feel within ; —
So leave me sad, thou enemy !
Thou foul and base deceiver, go !
For I thy love will never be,
Nor ever, false one, wed thee, no !"

The parallel ballad of "Rosa fresca, Rosa fresca," is no less simple and characteristic; Rosa being the name of the lady-love.

"Rose, fresh and fair, Rose, fresh and fair,
That with love so bright dost glow,
When within my arms I held thee,
I could never serve thee, no !
And now that I would gladly serve thee,
I no more can see thee, no !"

"The fault, my friend, the fault was thine, —
Thy fault alone, and not mine, no !
A message came, — the words you sent, —
Your servant brought it, well you know.

* 112

* And naught of love, or loving bands,
But other words, indeed, he said :
That you, my friend, in Leon's lands
A noble dame had long since wed ; —
A lady fair, as fair could be ;
Her children bright as flowers to see."

"Who told that tale, who spoke those words,
No truth he spoke, my lady, no !
For Castile's lands I never saw,
Of Leon's mountains nothing know,
Save as a little child, I ween,
Too young to know what love should mean."³¹

Several of the other anonymous ballads in this little collection are not less interesting and ancient, among which may be noted those beginning "Decidme vos pensamiento," — "Que por Mayo era por Mayo," — and "Durandarte, Durandarte," — together with parts of those beginning "Triste estaba el caballero," and "Amara yo una Señora."³² Most of the rest, and all whose authors are known, are of less value, and belong to a later period.

* The Cancionero of Castillo, where they * 113 appeared, was enlarged or altered in nine subsequent editions, the last of which was published in 1573; but in all of them this little collection of ballads, as originally printed in the first edition, remained by

³¹ These two ballads are in the Cancionero of 1535, ff. 107 and 108; both evidently very old. The use of *carta* in the last for an unwritten message is one proof of this. I give the originals of both, for their beauty. And first: —

Fonte frida, fonte frida,
Fonte frida, y con amor,
Do todas las avezcas
Van tomar consolacion,
Sino es la tortolica,
Que esta binda y con dolor.
Por ay fue a passar
El traydor del ruyseñor ;
Las palabras que el dezia
Llenas son de traicion ;
" Si tu quisieses, Señora,
Yo seria tu seruidor."
" Vete de ay, enemigo,
Malo, falso, enganador,
Que ni poso en ramo verde
Ni en prado que tenga flor ;
Que si hallo el agua clara,
Turbia la bebia yo :
Que no quiero aver marido,
Porque hijos no haya, no ;
No quiero plazer con ellos,
Ni menos consolacion.
Dejame triste enemigo,
Malo, falso, mal traidor,
Que no quiero ser tu amiga
Ni casar contigo, no."

The other is as follows: —

"Rosa fresca, Rosa fresca,
Tan garrida y con amor ;
Quando yos tuve en mis brazos,
No vos supe servir, no !
Y agora quos serviria,
No vos puedo aver, no !"
" Vuestra fue la culpa, amigo,
Vuestra fue, que mia, no !
Embiastes me una carta,
Con un vuestro seruidor,
Y en lugar de recaudar,
El dixera otra razon :
Querades casado, amigo,
Alla en tierras de Leon ;
Que teneis muger hermosa,
Y hijos como una flor."
" Quien os lo dixo, Señora
No vos dixo verdad, no !
Que yo nunca entre en Castilla,
Ni alla en tierras de Leon,
Si no quando era pequeno,
Que no sabia de amor."

In the Rhymed Chronicle of Fernan Gonzalez (col. 795) written letters or messages by way of distinction are called "Cartas por a. b. e." The *carta* in the ballad was a verbal message.
³² These ballads are in the edition of 1535, on ff. 109, 111, and 113.

itself, unchanged, though in the additions of newer poetry a modern ballad is occasionally inserted.³³ It may, therefore, be doubted whether the General Cancioneros did much to attract attention to the ballad poetry of the country, especially when we bear in mind that they are almost entirely filled with the works of the conceited school of the period that produced them, and were probably little known except among the courtly classes, who placed small value on what was old and national in their poetical literature.³⁴

But, while the Cancioneros were still in course of publication, a separate effort was made in the right direction to preserve the old ballads, and proved successful. In Antwerp and Saragossa, between about 1546 and 1550, there was published by Martin Nucio and Stevan G. de Najera a ballad-book called "Cancionero de Romances" in the first instance, and "Libro de Romances" in the other. In which form it is the oldest has been somewhat disputed; but it was probably published at Antwerp before it appeared at Saragossa. In each case, however, the editor in his Preface excuses the errors into which he may have fallen, on the ground that the memories of those from whom he, in part, at least, gathered them, were often imperfect.³⁵ Here, then, is the oldest of the proper ballad-books, one obviously taken from the traditions of the country. It is, therefore, the most interesting and important of them all. A considerable number of

³³ One of the most spirited of these later ballads, in the edition of 1573, begins thus (f. 373):—

Ay, Dios de mi tierra,
Saques me de aqui!
Ay, que Ynglaterra
Ya no es para mi.

God of my native land,
O, once more set me free!
For here, on England's soil,
There is no place for me.

It was probably written by some homesick follower of Philip II.

³⁴ Salvá (Catalogue, London, 1826, 8vo, No. 60) reckons nine Cancioneros Generales, the principal of which will be noticed hereafter. I believe there is one more, — making ten in all, at least.

³⁵ See Appendix B for an account of the earliest Romances.

the short poems it contains must, however, * be regarded only as fragments of popular * 114 ballads already lost; while, on the contrary, that on the Count Claros is the complete one, of which the Cancionero, published above thirty years earlier, had given only such small portions as its editor had been able to pick up; both striking facts, which show, in opposite ways, that the ballads here collected were obtained, partly at least, as the Preface says they were, from the memories of the people.

As might be anticipated from such an origin, their character and tone are very various. Some are connected with the fictions of chivalry, and the story of Charlemagne; the most remarkable of which are those on Gayferos and Melisendra, on the Marquis of Mantua, and on Count D' Irlos.³⁶ Others, like that of the cross miraculously made for Alfonso the Chaste, and that on the fall of Valencia, belong to the early history of Spain,³⁷ and may well have been among those old Castilian ballads which Argote de Molina says were used in compiling the "General Chronicle." And, finally, we have that deep domestic tragedy of Count Alarcos, which goes back to some period in the national history or traditions of which we have no other early record.³⁸ Few among them, even the shortest

³⁶ Those on Gayferos begin, "Estabase la Condessa," "Vamonos, dixo mi tio," and "Assentado esta Gayferos." The two long ones on the Marquis of Mantua and the Conde d' Irlos begin, "De Mantua salió el Marqués," and "Estabase el Conde d' Irlos."

³⁷ Compare the story of the angels in disguise, who made the miraculous cross for Alfonso, A. D. 794, as told in the ballad, "Reynando el Rey Alfonso," in the Romancero of 1550, with the same story as told in the "Crónica General" (1604, Parte III. f. 29); and compare the ballad "Apretada está Valencia"

(Romancero, 1550) with the "Crónica del Cid," 1593, c. 183, p. 154.

³⁸ It begins, "Retrayida está la Infanta" (Romancero, 1550), and is one of the most tender and beautiful ballads in any language. It can be traced back to a single sheet, published, as Brunet thinks, about 1520, in which, as well as in a sheet mentioned by Wolf (Über eine Sammlung Spanischer Romanzen, Wien, 1850, p. 99), it is attributed to Pedro de Riaño, of whom I have no other notice. There are translations of it in English by Bowring (p. 51), and by Lockhart (Spanish Ballads,

and least perfect, are without interest; as, for instance, the obviously old one in which Virgil figures as * 115 * a person punished for seducing the affections of a king's daughter.³⁹ As specimens, however, of the national tone which prevails in most of the collection, it is better to read such ballads as that upon the rout of Roderic on the eighth day of the battle that surrendered Spain to the Moors,⁴⁰ or that on Garci Perez de Vargas, taken, probably, from the "General Chronicle," and founded on a fact of so much consequence as to be recorded by Mariana, and so popular as to be referred to for its notoriety by Cervantes.⁴¹

The genuine ballad-book thus published was so successful, that, in less than ten years, three editions or recensions of it appeared; that of 1555, commonly called the Cancionero of Antwerp, being the last, the

London, 1823, 4to, p. 202), and in German by Pandin Beauregard, in a small volume, entitled *Spanische Romanzen* (Berlin, 1823, 12mo). It has been at least four times brought into a dramatic form; namely, by Lope de Vega in his "Fuerza Lastimosa," by Guillen de Castro, by Mira de Mescua, and by José J. Milanés, a Cuban poet, whose works were printed in Havana in 1846 (3 vols. 8vo);—the three last giving their dramas simply the name of the ballad,—"Conde Alarcos." The best of them all is, I think, that of Mira de Mescua, which is found in Vol. V. of the "Comedias Escogidas" (1653, 4to); but that of Milanés contains passages of very passionate poetry.

³⁹ "Mandó el Rey prender Virgilio" (Romancero, 1550). It is among the very old ballads, and is full of the loyalty of its time. Virgil, it is well known, was treated in the Middle Ages sometimes as a knight, and sometimes as a wizard.

⁴⁰ Compare the ballads beginning "Las Huestes de Don Rodrigo," and "Después que el Rey Don Rodrigo," with the "Crónica del Rey Don Rodrigo y la Destrucción de España" (Alcalá, 1587, fol., Capp. 238, 254). There

is a stirring translation of the first by Lockhart, in his "Ancient Spanish Ballads" (London, 1823, 4to, p. 5),—a work of genius beyond any of the sort known to me in any language. This pre-eminence of Lockhart may be seen by a comparison of his translation of this very ballad with the translation of it into Italian by Pietro Monti, in his *Romanze Storiche e Moresche*, &c. (Seconda Edizione, Milano, 1855, p. 163). Indeed, the two volumes, comprising not only ballads, but other popular Spanish poetry, must naturally be compared; and, respectable and careful as Monti is, it is not possible to avoid seeing how far he is from the vigor and brilliancy of Lockhart.

⁴¹ Ortiz de Zuñiga (*Anales de Sevilla*, 1677, Appendix, p. 811) gives this ballad, and says it had been printed two hundred years! If this be true, it is, no doubt, the oldest *printed* ballad in the language. But Ortiz is uncritical in such matters, like nearly all of his countrymen. The story of Garci Perez de Vargas is in the "Crónica General," Parte IV., in the "Crónica de Fernando III.," c. 48, etc., and in Mariana, *Historia*, Lib. XIII. c. 7.

amplest, and the best known. Other similar collections followed; particularly one, in nine parts, which, between 1593 and 1597, were separately published at Valencia, Burgos, Toledo, Alcalá, and Madrid; a variety of sources, to which we no doubt owe, not only the preservation of so great a number of old ballads, but much of the richness and diversity we find in their subjects and tone;—all the great divisions of the kingdom, except the southwest, having sent in their long-accumulated wealth to fill this first great treasure-house of the national popular poetry. Like its humbler predecessor, it had great success.

* Large as it was originally, it was still further * 116 increased in four subsequent recensions, that appeared in the course of about fifteen years; the last being that of 1604–1614, in thirteen parts, constituting the great repository called the "Romancero General," from which, and from the smaller and earlier ballad-books, we still draw nearly all that is curious and interesting in the old popular poetry of Spain. The whole number of ballads found in these several volumes is considerably over a thousand.⁴²

But since the appearance of these collections, above two centuries ago, little has been done to increase our stock of old Spanish ballads. Small ballad-books on particular subjects, like those of the Twelve Peers and of the Cid, were, indeed, early selected from the larger ones, and have since been frequently called for by the general favor; but still it should be understood that, from the middle and latter part of the seventeenth century, the true popular ballads, drawn from the hearts and traditions of the common people, were thought little worthy of regard, and remained until

⁴² See Appendix (B), on the Romanceros.

lately floating about among the humble classes that gave them birth. There, however, as if in their native homes, they have always been no less cherished and cultivated than they were at their first appearance, and there the old ballad-books themselves were oftenest found, until they were brought forth anew, to enjoy the favor of all, by Quintana, Grimm, Depping, Wolf, and Duran, who, in this, have but obeyed the feeling of the age in which we live.

The old collections of the sixteenth century, however, are still the only safe and sufficient sources in which to seek the true old ballads. That of 1593–1597 is particularly valuable, as we have already intimated, from the circumstance that its materials were gathered so widely out of different parts of Spain; and if to the multitude of ballads it contains we add those found in the Cancionero of 1511, and in the ballad-book of 1550, we shall have the great * 117 body of the anonymous ancient * Spanish ballads, more near to that popular tradition which was the common source of what is best in them than we can find it anywhere else.

But, from whatever source we may now draw them, we must give up, at once, the hope of arranging them in chronological order. They were originally printed in small volumes, or on separate sheets, as they chanced, from time to time, to be composed or found, — those that were taken from the memories of the blind ballad-singers in the streets by the side of those that were taken from the works of Lope de Vega and Góngora; and just as they were first collected, so they were afterwards heaped together in the General Romanceros, without affixing to them the names of their authors, or attempting to distinguish the ancient

ballads from the recent, or even to group together such as belonged to the same subject. Indeed, they seem to have been published at all merely to furnish amusement to the less cultivated classes at home, or to solace the armies that were fighting the battles of Charles the Fifth and Philip the Second, in Italy, Germany, and Flanders; so that an orderly arrangement of any kind was a matter of small consequence. Nothing remains for us, therefore, but to consider them by their *subjects*; and for this purpose the most convenient distribution will be, first, into such as relate to fictions of chivalry, and especially to Charlemagne and his peers; next, such as regard Spanish history and traditions, with a few relating to classical antiquity; then such as are founded on Moorish adventures; and lastly, such as belong to the private life and manners of the Spaniards themselves. What do not fall naturally under one of these divisions are not, probably, ancient ballads; or, if they are such, are not of consequence enough to be separately noticed.⁴³

⁴³ Wolf thinks they can be arranged, in some degree, according to their age, by a careful examination not merely of their external forms, but of their tone, coloring, and essential character. This idea, as he truly remarks, was first suggested by Huber, in his preface to the Chronicle of the Cid; and it is one, I suppose, which Wolf himself intended to carry out in his excellent "Primavera y Flor de Romances" (Berlin, 2 Tom. 8vo, 1856), of which due notice will be taken hereafter. But it would be difficult, I think, to determine why, on this ground, he has put in a good many, and still more difficult to tell why many are excluded. In truth, such a critical investigation — partly metaphysical, partly psychological, and partly depending on the nicest philology — is in its nature

too uncertain, and in its elements too obscure, to be so carried out in practice as to make by it a reliable chronological series of the multitudinous old ballads. Even Wolf, therefore, has arranged by their *subjects* those he has selected, without attempting to show what are oldest among those which he claims to be old. I prefer, therefore, to take the Romancero of Duran, not only because it is so much more ample, but because it makes each head more complete and satisfactory; giving us, for instance, not merely a few fine ballads on the Cid or Bernardo del Carpio, but enough to afford us a tolerable idea of the lives and adventures of these heroes. I commend, however, the whole article of Wolf to my readers. It is in the German translation of this book, Vol. II. p. 479, sqq.

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