

And, finally, half a century later, the happiest work of the greatest genius Spain has produced bears witness on every page to the prevalence of an absolute fanaticism for books of chivalry, and becomes at once the seal of their vast popularity, and the monument of their fate.

## \* CHAPTER XIII. \* 228

FOURTH CLASS.—DRAMA.—EXTINCTION OF THE GREEK AND ROMAN THEATRES.—RELIGIOUS ORIGIN OF THE MODERN DRAMA.—EARLIEST NOTICE OF IT IN SPAIN.—HINTS OF IT IN THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY.—MARQUIS OF VILLENA.—CONSTABLE DE LUNA.—MINGO REVULGO.—RODRIGO COTA.—THE CELESTINA.—FIRST ACT.—THE REMAINDER.—ITS STORY.—CHARACTER, AND EFFECTS ON SPANISH LITERATURE.

THE DRAMA.—The ancient theatre of the Greeks and Romans was continued under some of its grosser and more popular forms at Constantinople, in Italy, and in many other parts of the falling and fallen empire, far into the Middle Ages. But, under whatever disguise it appeared, it was essentially heathenish; for, from first to last, it was mythological, both in tone and in substance. As such, of course, it was rebuked and opposed by the Christian Church, which, favored by the confusion and ignorance of the times, succeeded in overthrowing it, though not without a long contest, and not until its degradation and impurity had rendered it worthy of its fate, and of the anathemas pronounced against it by Tertullian and Saint Augustin.<sup>1</sup>

A love for theatrical exhibitions, however, survived the extinction of these poor remains of the classical drama; and the priesthood, careful neither to make itself needlessly odious, nor to neglect any suitable method of increasing its own influence, seems early to have been willing to provide a substitute for the popular amusement it had destroyed. At any rate, a

<sup>1</sup> A Spanish Bishop of Barcelona, in the seventh century, was deposed for merely permitting plays with allusions to heathen mythology to be acted in his diocese. (Mariana, Hist., Lib. VI. c. 3.)

substitute soon appeared; and, coming as it did  
 \* 229 out of the ceremonies and commemorations \* of  
 the religion of the times, its appearance was  
 natural and easy. The greater festivals of the Church  
 had for centuries been celebrated with whatever of  
 pomp the rude luxury of ages so troubled could afford,  
 and they now everywhere, from London to Rome,  
 added a dramatic element to their former attractions.  
 Thus, the manger at Bethlehem, with the worship of  
 the shepherds and Magi, was, at a very early period,  
 solemnly exhibited every year by a visible show before  
 the altars of the churches at Christmas, as were the  
 tragical events of the last days of the Saviour's life  
 during Lent, and at the approach of Easter.<sup>2</sup>

Gross abuses, dishonoring alike the priesthood and  
 religion, were, no doubt, afterwards mingled with these  
 representations, both while they were given in dumb  
 show, and when, by the addition of dialogue, they be-  
 came what were called Mysteries; but, in many parts  
 of Europe, the representations themselves, down to a  
 comparatively late period, were found so well suited to  
 the spirit of the times, that different Popes granted  
 especial indulgences to the persons who frequented  
 them, and they were in fact used openly and success-  
 fully, not only as means of amusement, but for the  
 religious edification of an ignorant multitude. In  
 England such shows prevailed for above four hundred  
 years,—a longer period than can be assigned to the  
 English national drama, as we now recognize it; while  
 in Italy and other countries still under the influence

<sup>2</sup> The proofs of this are to be seen in the learned and well-considered "Origines du Théâtre moderne, par M. Edéstand du Ménil" (Paris, 1849, 8vo). Mr. Wright, however, had already given evidence of the same

thing, in his "Early Mysteries and other Latin poems of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries" (London, 1838, 8vo), relying in part on documents used subsequently by M. Du Ménil.

of the See of Rome, they have, in some of their forms, been continued, for the edification and amusement of the populace, quite down to our own times.<sup>3</sup>

\* That all traces of the ancient Roman \* 230  
 theatre, except the architectural remains which  
 still bear witness to its splendor,<sup>4</sup> disappeared from  
 Spain in consequence of the occupation of the country  
 by the Arabs, whose national spirit rejected the drama  
 altogether, cannot be reasonably doubted. But the  
 time when the more modern representations were  
 begun on religious subjects, and under ecclesiastical  
 patronage, can no longer be determined. It must,  
 however, have been very early; for, in the middle of  
 the thirteenth century, such performances were not  
 only known, but had been so long practised, that they  
 had already taken various forms, and become disgraced  
 by various abuses. This is apparent from the code of  
 Alfonso the Tenth, which was prepared about 1260;  
 and in which, after forbidding the clergy certain gross  
 indulgences, the law goes on to say: "Neither ought  
 they to be makers of buffoon plays,<sup>5</sup> that people may  
 come to see them; and if other men make them,

<sup>3</sup> Onésime le Roy, *Etudes sur les Mystères*, Paris, 1837, 8vo, Chap. I. De la Rue, *Essai sur les Bardes, les Jongleurs, etc.*, Caen, 1834, 8vo, Vol. I. p. 159. Spence's *Anecdotes*, ed. Singer, London, 1820, 8vo, p. 397. The exhibition still annually made, in the church of Ara Coeli, on the Capitol at Rome, of the manger and the scene of the Nativity, is, like many similar exhibitions elsewhere, of the same class. M. Du Ménil, in his "Origines," (pp. 390-409), publishes a Pastoral on the birth of Christ, printed in 1805, which he says he had seen represented in his youth, and of which at least two other editions are extant. It is in various measures and rhymed, and it needed above twenty performers besides the "Troupes de

Bergers et Bergères"; but it has no poetical value.

<sup>4</sup> Remains of Roman theatres are found at Seville (Triana), Tarragona, Murviedro (Saguntum), Merida, etc.

<sup>5</sup> *Juegos por Escarnio* is the phrase in the original. It is obscure; but I have followed the intimation of Martinez de la Rosa, who is a good authority, and who considers it to mean short satirical compositions, from which arose, perhaps, afterwards, *Entremeses* and *Saynetes*. (Isabel de Solís, Madrid, 1837, 12mo, Tom. I. p. 225, note 13.) *Escarnido*, in Don Quixote (Parte II. c. xxi), is used in the sense of "trifled with." *Escarnio* and *escarnido* occur in the Poema de Alexandro (St. 1748, 1749) in the sense of "contemptuous treatment."

clergymen should not come to see them, for such men do many things low and unsuitable. Nor, moreover, should such things be done in the churches; but rather we say that they should be cast out in dishonor, without punishment to those engaged in them. For the church of God was made for prayer, and not for buffoonery; as our Lord Jesus Christ declared in the Gospel, that his house was called the House of Prayer, and ought not to be made a den of thieves. But exhibitions there be, that clergymen may make, such as that of the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ, which shows how the angel came to the shepherds and how he told them Jesus Christ was born, and, moreover, of his appearance when the Three Kings came to worship him, and of his resurrection, which shows how

\* 231 he was crucified \* and rose the third day.

Such things as these, which move men to do well, may the clergy make, as well as to the end that men may have in remembrance that such things did truly happen. But this must they do decently, and in devotion, and in the great cities where there is an archbishop or bishop, and under their authority, or that of others by them deputed, and not in villages, nor in small places, nor to gain money thereby."<sup>6</sup>

But though these earliest religious representations in Spain, whether pantomimic or in dialogue, were thus given, not only by churchmen, but by others, certainly before the middle of the thirteenth century, and probably much sooner, and though they were continued for several centuries afterwards, still no fragment of them and no distinct account of them now remain to us. Nor is anything properly dramatic found even amongst the secular poetry of Spain, till

<sup>6</sup> Partida I, Tit. VI. Ley 34, ed. de la Academia.

the latter part of the fifteenth century, though it may have existed somewhat earlier, as we may infer from a passage in the Marquis of Santillana's letter to the Constable of Portugal;<sup>7</sup> from the notice of a moral play by Don Enrique de Villena, now lost, which is said to have been represented in 1414, before Ferdinand of Aragon;<sup>8</sup> and from the hint left by the careful old chronicler of the Constable de Luna concerning the *Entremeses*<sup>9</sup> or Interludes, which were sometimes arranged \* by that proud favorite a little \* 232 later in the same century. These indications, however, are very slight and uncertain.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>7</sup> He says that his grandfather, Pedro Gonzalez de Mendoza, who lived in the time of Peter the Cruel, wrote scenic poems in the manner of Plautus and Terence, in couplets like *Serranas*. Sanchez, *Poesias Anteriores*, Tom. I. p. 17.

<sup>8</sup> Velazquez, *Origenes de la Poesia Castellana*, Málaga, 1754, 4to, p. 95. I think it not unlikely that Zurita refers to this play of Villena, when he says (*Anales*, Libro XII., Año 1414) that at the coronation of Ferdinand there were "grandes juegos y *entremeses*." Otherwise we must suppose there were several different dramatic entertainments, which is possible, but not probable. But Wolf (*Blätter für literarische Unterhaltung*, 1848, No. 322) has made it doubtful whether this *entremes* was written by Villena, and how much there was dramatic in its character.

<sup>9</sup> "He had a great deal of inventive faculty, and was much given to making inventions and *entremeses* for festivals, etc. (*Crónica del Condestable Don Alvaro de Luna*, ed. Flores, Madrid, 1784, 4to, Título 68.) It is not to be supposed that these were like the gay farces that have since passed under the same name, but there can be little doubt that they were poetical and were exhibited. The Constable was executed in 1453. Earlier they were religious in their character; that is, religious exhibitions, in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, had *entremeses* in them, and, indeed, had them in the great days of the Spanish drama, as we shall see

when we come to the days of Lope de Vega and Calderon.

<sup>10</sup> I am not unaware that attempts have been made to give the Spanish theatre a different origin from the one I have assigned to it. 1. The marriage of Doña Endrina and Don Melon has been cited for this purpose in the French translation of "*Celestina*" by De Lavigne (Paris, 12mo, 1841, pp. v, vi). But their adventures, taken from Pamphylus Maurianus, already noticed (Ch. V.), constitute, in fact, a mere story, arranged about 1335, by the Archpriest of Hita, out of an old Latin dialogue (Sanchez, Tom. IV. stanz. 550-865), but differing in nothing important from the other tales of the Archpriest, and quite insusceptible of dramatic representation. (See Preface of Sanchez to the same volume, pp. xxiii, etc.) 2. The "*Danza General de la Muerte*," already noticed as written about 1350 (Castro, *Biblioteca Española*, Tom. I. pp. 200, etc.), has been cited by L. F. Moratin (*Obras*, ed. de la Academia, Madrid, 1830, 8vo, Tom. I. p. 112) as the earliest specimen of Spanish dramatic literature. But it is unquestionably not a drama, but a didactic poem, which it would have been quite absurd to attempt to exhibit. 3. The "*Comedieta de Ponza*," on the great naval battle fought near the island of Ponza, in 1435, and written by the Marquis of Santillana, who died in 1458, has been referred to as a drama by Martinez de la Rosa (*Obras Literarias*, Paris, 1827, 12mo, Tom. II. pp.

A nearer approach to the spirit of the drama, and particularly to the form which the secular drama first took in Spain, is to be found in the poetical dialogue called "The Couplets of Mingo Revulgo"; a satire thrown into the shape of an eclogue, and given in the free and spirited language of the lower classes of the people, on the deplorable state of public affairs, as they existed in the latter part of the weak reign of Henry the Fourth. It seems to have been written about the year 1472.<sup>11</sup> The interlocutors are two shepherds; one of whom, called Mingo Revulgo, — a name corrupted from Domingo Vulgus, — represents the common people; and the other, called Gil Arribato, or Gil the Elevated, represents the higher classes, and speaks with the authority of a prophet, who, while complaining of the ruinous condition of the state, yet lays no small portion of the blame on the

\* 233 \* common people, for having, as he says, by their weakness and guilt, brought upon themselves so dissolute and careless a shepherd. It opens with the shouts of Arribato, who sees Revulgo at a distance, on a Sunday morning, ill dressed, and with a dispirited air:—

Hollo, Revulgo! Mingo, ho!  
Mingo Revulgo! Ho, hollo!

518, etc.), who assigns it to about 1436. But it is, in truth, merely an allegorical poem thrown into the form of a dialogue, and written in *coplas de arte mayor*. I shall notice it hereafter. And, finally, 4. Blas de Nasarre, in his *Prólogo* to the plays of Cervantes (Madrid, 1749, 4to, Vol. I.), says there was a *comedia* acted before Ferdinand and Isabella in 1469, at the house of the Count de Ureña, in honor of their wedding. But we have only Blas de Nasarre's *dictum* for this, and he is not a good authority; besides which, he adds that the author of the *comedia* in question was John de la Enzina, who,

we know, was not born earlier than the year before the event referred to. The moment of the somewhat secret marriage of these illustrious persons was, moreover, so full of anxiety, that it is not at all likely *any* show or mummery accompanied it. See Prescott's Ferdinand and Isabella, Part I. c. 3.

<sup>11</sup> "Coplas de Mingo Revulgo," often printed, in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, with the beautiful Coplas of Manrique. The editions I use are those of 1588, 1632, and the one at the end of the "Crónica de Enrique IV." (Madrid, 1787, 4to, ed. de la Academia), with the commentary of Pulgar.

Why, where 's your cloak of blue so bright?  
Is it not Sunday's proper wear?  
And where 's your jacket red and tight  
And such a brow why do you bear,  
And come abroad, this dawning mild,  
With all your hair in elf-locks wild?  
Pray, are you broken down with care?<sup>12</sup>

Revulgo replies that the state of the flock, governed by so unfit a shepherd, is the cause of his squalid condition; and then, under this allegory, they urge a coarse, but efficient, satire against the measures of the government; against the base, cowardly character of the king, and his scandalous passion for his Portuguese mistress; and against the ruinous carelessness and indifference of the people, ending with praises of the contentment found in a middle condition of life. The whole dialogue consists of only thirty-two stanzas, of nine lines each; but it produced a great effect at the time, was often printed in the next century, and was twice elucidated by a grave commentary.<sup>13</sup>

Its author wisely concealed his name, and has never been absolutely ascertained.<sup>14</sup> The earlier edi-

<sup>12</sup> A Mingo Revulgo, Mingo!  
A Mingo Revulgo, hao!  
Que es de tu sayo de blao?  
No le vistes en Domingo?  
Que es de tu jubon bermejo?  
Por que traes tal sobrecejo?  
Andas esta madrugada  
La cabeza desgrenada:  
No te llotras de buen rejo?

Copla I.

<sup>13</sup> Velazquez (Origenes, p. 52) treats Mingo Revulgo as a satire against King John and his court. But it applies much more naturally and truly to the time of Henry IV., and has, indeed, generally been considered as directed against that unhappy monarch. Copla the Sixth seems plainly to allude to his passion for Doña Guiomar de Castro.

<sup>14</sup> The Coplas of Mingo Revulgo were very early attributed to John de Mena, the most famous poet of the time (N. Antonio, Bib. Nov., Tom. I. p. 387); but, unhappily for this conjecture, Mena was of the opposite party in politics.

Mariana, who found Revulgo of consequence enough to be mentioned when discussing the troubles of Henry IV., declares (Historia, Lib. XXIII. c. 17, Tom. II. p. 475) the Coplas to have been written by Hernando del Pulgar, the chronicler; but no reason is given for this opinion, except the fact that Pulgar wrote a commentary on them, making their allegory more intelligible than it would have been likely to be made by anybody not quite familiar with the thoughts and purposes of the author. See the dedication of this commentary to Count Haro, with the *Prólogo*, and Sarmiento, Poesía Española, Madrid, 1775, 4to, § 872. But, whoever wrote Mingo Revulgo, there is no doubt it was an important and a popular poem in its day.

Sarmiento, besides what he says of Mingo Revulgo, in his "Poesía Española," wrote a letter about it to a friend in 1756, which was published, or re-

\* 234 tions generally \* suppose him to have been Rodrigo Cota the elder, of Toledo, to whom also is attributed "A Dialogue between Love and an Old Man," which dates from the same period, and is no less spirited, and even more dramatic. It opens with a representation of an old man retired into a poor hut, which stands in the midst of a neglected and decayed garden. Suddenly Love appears before him, and he exclaims, "My door is shut; what do you want? Where did you enter? Tell me how, robber-like, you leaped the walls of my garden. Age and reason had freed me from you; leave, therefore, my heart, retired into its poor corner, to think only of the past." He goes on giving a sad account of his own condition, and a still more sad description of Love; to which Love replies, with great coolness, "Your discourse shows that you have not been well acquainted with me." A discussion follows, in which Love, of course, gains the advantage. The old man is promised that his garden shall be restored, and his youth renewed; but, when he has surrendered at discretion, he is only treated with the gayest ridicule by his conqueror, for thinking that at his age he can again make himself attractive in the ways of love. The whole is in a light tone, and managed with a good deal of ingenuity; but, though susceptible, like other poetical eclogues, of being represented, it is not certain that it ever was. It is, however, as well as the Couplets of Revulgo, so much like the pastorals which

printed, with the title, "Meco-Moro-Agudo," ec. (Madrid, 1795, 18mo, pp. 20); the object of it being to show that *Meco-Moro-Agudo*, in Mingo Revulgo, means the Spanish Mohametans of the time of Henry IV.; — *Tartamudo*, the Spanish Jews; and *Christobal Mexia*, the Spanish Christians.

A spirited imitation of Mingo Revulgo, satirizing abuses in the reign of Ferdinand and Isabella, is mentioned by Pidal, in the notes to his essay prefixed to Baena, and an extract from it is given; but the whole poem has not been published. (Cancionero de Baena, 1851, pp. lxxiv, lxxv.)

we know were publicly exhibited as dramas a few years later, that \* we may reasonably \* 235 suppose it had some influence in preparing the way for them.<sup>15</sup>

The next contribution to the foundations of the Spanish theatre is the "Celestina," a dramatic story, contemporary with the poems just noticed, and probably, in part, the work of the same hands. It is a prose composition, in twenty-one acts, or parts, originally called "The Comedy of Calisto and Melibœa"; and though, from its length, and, indeed, from its very structure, it can never have been represented, its dramatic spirit and movement have left traces that are not to be mistaken<sup>16</sup> of their influence on the national drama ever since.

The first act, which is much the longest, was probably written by Rodrigo Cota, of Toledo, and in that case we may safely assume that it was produced about 1480.<sup>17</sup> It opens in the environs of a city,

<sup>15</sup> The "Diálogo entre el Amor y un Viejo" was first printed, I believe, in the "Cancionero General" of 1511, but it is found with the Coplas de Manrique, 1588 and 1632. See, also, N. Antonio, Bib. Nov., Tom. II. pp. 263, 264, for notices of Cota. The fact of this old Dialogue having an effect on the coming drama may be inferred, not only from the obvious resemblance between the two, but from a passage in Juan de la Enzina's Eclogue, beginning "Vamonos, Gil, al aldea," which plainly alludes to the opening of Cota's Dialogue, and, indeed, to the whole of it. The passage in Enzina is the concluding *Villancico*, which begins, —

Ninguno cierre las puertas;  
Si Amor viniere a llamar,  
Que no le ha aprovechar.

Let no man shut his doors:  
If Love should come to call,  
'T will do no good at all.

I have a copy of the "Diálogo" printed in 1785, with MS. notes by Thomas

de Yriarte, the poet, correcting the text, which much needs it.

<sup>16</sup> They are called *actos* in the original; but neither *act* nor *scene* is a proper name for the parts of which the *Celestina* is composed; since it occasionally mingles up, in the most confused manner, and in the *same* act, conversations that necessarily happened at the *same* moment in *different* places. Thus, in the fourteenth act, we have conversations held partly between Calisto and Melibœa inside her father's garden, and partly between Calisto's servants, who are outside of it; all given as a consecutive dialogue, without any notice of the change of place.

<sup>17</sup> Rojas, the author of all but the first act of the *Celestina*, says, in a prefatory letter to a friend, that the first act was supposed by some to have been the work of Juan de Mena, and by others to have been the work of Rodrigo Cota. The absurdity of the first conjecture was noticed long ago by Nicolas Antonio, and has been ad-