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## \* CHAPTER XXII.

PROSE WRITERS.—JUAN DE LUCENA.—ALFONSO DE LA TORRE.—DIEGO DE ALMELA.—ALONSO ORTIZ.—FERNANDO DEL PULGAR.—DIEGO DE SAN PEDRO.

THE reign of Henry the Fourth was more favorable to the advancement of prose composition than that of John the Second. This we have already seen when speaking of the contemporary chronicles, and of Perez de Guzman and the author of the "Celestina." In other cases we observe its advancement in an inferior degree; but, encumbered as they are with more or less of the bad taste and pedantry of the time, they still deserve notice, because they were so much valued in their own age.

Regarded from this point of view, one of the most prominent prose writers of the century was Juan de Lucena; a personage distinguished both as a private counsellor of John the Second, and as that monarch's foreign ambassador. We know, however, little of his history; and of his works only one remains to us,—if, indeed, he wrote any more. It is a didactic prose dialogue "On a Happy Life," carried on between some of the most eminent persons of the age: the great Marquis of Santillana, Juan de Mena, the poet, Alonso de Cartagena, the bishop and statesman, and Lucena himself, who acts in part as an umpire in the discussion, though the Bishop at last ends it by deciding that true happiness consists in loving and serving God.

The dialogue itself is represented as having passed

chiefly in a hall of the palace, and in presence of several of the nobles of the court; but it was not written till after the death of the Constable, in 1453; that event \* being alluded to in it. It is \* 376 plainly an imitation of the treatise of Boëthius, "On the Consolation of Philosophy," then a favorite classic; but it is more spirited and effective than its model. It is frequently written in a pointed and a dignified style, and parts of it are interesting and striking. Thus, the lament of Santillana over the death of his son is beautiful and touching, and so is the final summing up of the trials and sorrows of this life by the Bishop. In the midst of their discussions, there is a pleasant description of a collation with which they were refreshed by the Marquis, and which recalls, at once, — as it was probably intended to do, — the Greek Symposia and the dialogues that record them. Indeed, the allusions to antiquity with which it abounds, and the citations of ancient authors, which are still more frequent, are almost always apt, and often free from the awkwardness and pedantry which mark most of the didactic prose of the period; so that, taken together, it may be regarded, notwithstanding the use of many strange words, and an occasional indulgence in conceits, as one of the most remarkable literary monuments of the age from which it has come down to us.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> My copy is of the first edition of Camora, Centenera, 1483, folio, twenty-three leaves, double columns, black letter. It begins with these singular words, instead of a title-page: "Aqui comença un tratado en estilo breve, en sentencias no solo largo mas hondo y prolixo, el qual ha nombre Vita Beata, hecho y compuesto por el honrado y muy discreto Juan de Lucena," etc. There are also editions of 1499 and 1541, and, I

believe, yet another of 1501. (Antonio, Bib. Vetus, ed. Bayer, Tom. II. p. 250; and Mendez, Typog., p. 267.) The following short passage—with an allusion to the opening of Juvenal's Tenth Satire, in better taste than is common in similar works of the same period—will well illustrate its style. It is from the remarks of the Bishop, in reply both to the poet and to the man of the world: "Resta, pues, Señor Marques y tu Juan



To this period, also, we must refer the "Vision Delectable," or Delectable Vision, which we are sure was written as early as 1461, and probably earlier.

Its author was Alfonso de la Torre, commonly \* 377 called "The \* Bachelor," who seems to have been a native of the bishopric of Burgos, and who was, from 1437 till the time of his death, a member of the College of Saint Bartholomew at Salamanca; a noble institution, founded in imitation of that established at Bologna by Cardinal Albornoz. It is an allegorical vision, in which the author supposes himself to see the Understanding of Man in the form of an infant, brought into a world full of ignorance and sin, and educated by a succession of such figures as Grammar, Logic, Music, Astrology, Truth, Reason, and Nature. He intended it, he says, to be a compendium of all human knowledge, especially of all that touches moral science and man's duty, the soul and its immortality; intimating, at the end, that it is a bold thing in him to have discussed such subjects in the vernacular, and begging the noble Juan de Beamonte, at whose request he had undertaken it, not to permit a work so slight to be seen by others.

It shows a good deal of the learning of its time, and still more of the acuteness of the scholastic metaphysics then in favor. But it is awkward and uninteresting in the general structure of its fiction, and meagre in its style and illustrations. This, however,

de Mena, mi sentencia primera verdadera, que ninguno en esta vida vive beato. Desde Cadiz hasta Ganges si toda la tierra expiamos [espiamos?] a ningund mortal contenta su suerte. El caballero entre las puntas se codicia mercader; y el mercader cavallero entre las brumas del mar, si los vientos australes enpreñian las velas. Al parir de las lombardas desea hallarse el pastor

en el poblado; en campo el ciudadano; fuera religion los de dentro como peques y dentro querrian estar los de fuera," etc. (fol. xviii. a). The treatise contains many Latinisms and Latin words, after the absurd example of Juan de Mena; but it also contains many good old words that we are sorry have become obsolete.

did not prevent it from being much read and admired. There is one edition of it without date, which probably appeared about 1480, showing that the wish of its author to keep it from the public was not long respected; and there were other editions in 1489, 1526, and 1538, besides a translation into Catalan, printed as early as 1484. But the taste for such works passed away in Spain, as it did elsewhere; and the Bachiller de la Torre was soon so completely forgotten, that his Vision was not only published by Dominico Delphino in Italian, as a work of his own, but was translated back into its native Spanish, by Francisco de Caceres, a converted Jew, and printed in 1663, under the full belief of the translator that it was an original Italian work, till then quite unknown in Spain.<sup>2</sup>

\* An injustice not unlike the one that oc- \* 378 curred to Alfonso de la Torre happened to his contemporary, Diego de Almela, and for some time

<sup>2</sup> The oldest edition, which is without date, seems, from its type and paper, to have come from the press of Centenera at Camora, in which case it was printed about 1480-1483. It begins thus: "Comiença el tratado llamado Vision Delectable, compuesto por Alfonso de la Torre, bachiller, endereçado al muy noble Don Juan de Beamonte, Prior de San Juan en Navarra." It is not paged, but fills seventy-one leaves in folio, double columns, black letter. The little known of the different manuscripts and earlier printed editions of the Vision is to be found in Antonio, Bib. Vetus, ed. Bayer, Tom. II. pp. 328, 329, with the note; Mendez, Typog., pp. 100 and 380, with the Appendix, p. 402; and Castro, Biblioteca Española, Tom. I. pp. 630-635. But it has been reprinted in the Biblioteca de Autores Españoles, Tom. XXXVI., 1855. The Vision was written for the instruction of the Prince of Viana, who is spoken of near the end as if still alive; and since this well-known prince, the son of John, King of Navarre and Aragon, was born in 1421

and died in 1461, we know the limits between which the Vision must have been produced. Indeed, being addressed to Beamonte, the Prince's tutor, it was probably written earlier;—perhaps during the Prince's nonage. One of the old manuscripts of it says, "It was held in great esteem, and, as such, was carefully kept in the chamber of the said King of Aragon." There is a life of the author in Rezabal y Ugarte, "Biblioteca de los Autores, que han sido individuos de los seis colegios mayores" (Madrid, 1805, 4to. p. 359). The best passage in the Vision Delectable is at the end,—the address of Truth to Reason. There is a poem of Alfonso de la Torre in MS. 7826, in the National Library, Paris (Ochoa, Manuscritos, Paris, 1844, 4to. p. 479); and the poems of the Bachiller Francisco de la Torre in the Cancionero, 1573 (ff. 124-127), and elsewhere, so much talked about in connection with Quevedo, have sometimes been thought to be his, though the names differ.



deprived him of the honor, to which he was entitled, of being regarded as the author of "The Valerius of Stories," — a book long popular and still interesting. He wrote it after the death of his patron, the wise Bishop of Carthagená, who had projected such a work himself, and as early as 1472 it was sent to one of the Manrique family. But, though the letter which then accompanied it is still extant, and though, in four editions, beginning with that of 1487, the book is ascribed to its true author, yet in the fifth, which appeared in 1541, it is announced to be by the well-known Fernan Perez de Guzman; — a mistake which was discovered and exposed by Tamayo de Vargas, in the time of Philip the Third, but does not seem to have been generally corrected till the work itself was edited anew by Moreno, in 1793.

The "Valerio" is thrown into the form of a discussion on Morals, in which, after a short explanation of the different virtues and vices of men, as they were then understood, we have all the illustrations the author could collect under each head from the Scriptures and the history of Spain. It is, therefore, rather a series of stories than a regular didactic treatise, and its merit consists in the grave, yet simple and \* 379 pleasing style \* in which they are told, — a style particularly fitted to most of them, which are taken from the old national chronicles. Originally, it was accompanied by "An Account of Pitched Battles"; but this, and his Chronicles of Spain, his collection of the Miracles of Santiago, and several discussions of less consequence, are long since forgotten. Almela, who enjoyed the favor of Ferdinand and Isabella, accompanied those sovereigns to the siege of Granada, in 1491, as a chaplain, carrying with him, as

was not uncommon at that time among the higher ecclesiastics, a military retinue to serve in the wars.<sup>3</sup>

In 1493, another distinguished ecclesiastic, Alonso Ortiz, a canon of Toledo, published, in a volume of moderate size, two small works which should not be entirely overlooked. The first is a treatise, in twenty-seven chapters, addressed, through the queen, Isabella, to her daughter, the Princess of Portugal, on the death of that princess' husband, filled with such consolation as the courtly Canon deemed suitable to her bereavement and his own dignity. The other is an oration, addressed to Ferdinand and Isabella, after the fall of Granada, in 1492, rejoicing in that great event, and glorying almost equally in the cruel expulsion of all Jews and heretics from Spain. Both are written in too rhetorical a style, but neither is without merit; and in the oration there are one or two beautiful and even touching passages on the tranquillity to be enjoyed in Spain, now that a foreign and hated enemy, after a contest of eight centuries, had been expelled from its borders, — passages which evidently came from the writer's heart, and no doubt found an echo wherever his words were heard by Spaniards.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Antonio, Bib. Vetus, ed. Bayer, Tom. II. p. 325. Mendez, Typog., p. 315. It is singular that the edition of the "Valerio de las Historias" printed at Toledo, 1541, folio, as well as one at Seville, 1542 - 43, which bears on its title-page the name of Fern. Perez de Guzman, yet contains, at f. 2, the very letter of Almela, dated 1472, which leaves no doubt that its writer is the author of the book. Some of his minor works are still extant in MS. See Spanish Trans. of this History, Tom. I. p. 557.

<sup>4</sup> The volume of the learned Alonso Ortiz is a curious one, printed at Seville, 1493, folio, 100 leaves. It is noticed by Mendez (p. 194), and by Antonio (Bib. Nov., Tom. I. p. 39), who seems to have known nothing about its author,

except that he bequeathed his library to the University of Salamanca. Besides the two treatises mentioned in the text, this volume contains an account of the wound received by Ferdinand the Catholic, from the hand of an assassin, at Barcelona, December 7, 1492; two letters from the city and cathedral of Toledo, praying that the name of the newly conquered Granada may not be placed before that of Toledo in the royal title; and an attack on the Prothonotary Juan de Lucena, — not the author lately mentioned, — who had ventured to assail the Inquisition, then in the freshness of its holy pretensions. The whole volume is full of bigotry, and the spirit of a triumphant priesthood. There is yet a third Lucena,



\* 380 \* Another of the prose-writers of the fifteenth century, and one that deserves to be mentioned with more respect than either of the last, is Fernando del Pulgar. He was born in Madrid, and was educated, as he himself tells us, at the court of John the Second. During the reign of Henry the Fourth, he had employments which show him to have been a person of consequence; and, during a large part of that of Ferdinand and Isabella, he was one of their counsellors of state, their secretary, and their chronicler. Of his historical writings notice has already been taken; but in the course of his inquiries after what related to the annals of Castile, he collected materials for another work, more interesting, if not more important. For he found, as he says, many famous men whose names and characters had not been so preserved and celebrated as their merits demanded; and, moved by his patriotism, and taking for his example the portraits of Perez de Guzman and the biographies of the ancients, he carefully prepared sketches of the lives of the principal persons of his own age, beginning with Henry the Fourth, and confining himself chiefly within the limits of that monarch's reign and court.<sup>5</sup>

Some of these sketches, to which he has given the general title of "Claros Varones de Castilla," like those of the good Count Haro<sup>6</sup> and of Rodrigo Man-

whose first name is not given, but who was the son of Juan Ramirez de Lucena, ambassador of Ferdinand and Isabella at Rome, and who published, in 1495, a small book in ff. 51, containing (1) "Repetición de Amores," which is a treatise on Love and its effects, with a correspondence between the Author and his Lady; verses of Torrellas, Inigo de Mendoza, etc., and (2) a treatise on chess. See Translation of this work into Spanish, Tom. I. p. 558.

<sup>5</sup> The notices of the life of Pulgar are from the edition of his "Claros Varones," Madrid, 1775, 4to; but there, as elsewhere, he is said to be a native of the kingdom of Toledo. This, however, is probably a mistake. Oviedo, who knew him personally, says, in his Dialogue on Mendoza, Duke of Infantado, that Pulgar was "de Madrid natural." Quinquagenas, MS.

<sup>6</sup> Claros Varones, Tit. 3.

rique,<sup>7</sup> are important from their subjects, while others, like those of the great ecclesiastics of the kingdom, are now interesting \* only for the skill \* 381 with which they are drawn. The style in which they are written is forcible and generally concise, showing a greater tendency to formal elegance than anything by either Cibdareal or Guzman, with whom we should most readily compare him; but we miss the confiding naturalness of the warm-hearted physician, and the severe judgments of the retired statesman. The whole series is addressed to his great patroness, Queen Isabella, to whom, no doubt, he thought a tone of composed dignity more appropriate than any other.

As a specimen of his best manner, we may take the following passage, in which, after having alluded to some of the most remarkable personages in Roman history, he turns, as it were, suddenly round to the queen, and thus boldly confronts the great men of antiquity with the great men of Castile, whom he had already discussed more at large:

"True, indeed, it is, that these great men,—Castilian knights and gentlemen,—of whom memory is here made for fair cause, and also those of the elder time, who, fighting for Spain, gained it from the power of its enemies, did neither slay their own sons, as did those consuls, Brutus and Torquatus; nor burn their own flesh, as did Scævola; nor commit against their own blood cruelties which nature abhors and reason forbids; but rather, with fortitude and perseverance, with wise forbearance and prudent energy, with justice and clemency, gaining the love of their own countrymen, and becoming a terror to strangers, they disciplined their armies, ordered their battles, overcame

<sup>7</sup> Claros Varones, Tit. 13.



their enemies, conquered hostile lands, and protected their own. . . . So that, most excellent Queen, these knights and prelates, and many others born within your realm, whereof here leisure fails me to speak, did, by the praiseworthy labors they fulfilled, and by the virtues they strove to attain, achieve unto themselves the name of Famous Men, whereof their descendants should be above others emulous; while, at the same time, all the gentlemen of your kingdoms should feel themselves called to the same pureness of life, that they may at last end their days \* 382 \* in unspotted success, even as these great men also lived and died.”<sup>8</sup>

This is certainly remarkable, both for its style and for the tone of its thought, when regarded as part of a work written at the conclusion of the fifteenth century. Pulgar's Chronicle, and his commentary on “Mingo Revulgo,” as we have already seen, are not so good as such sketches.

The same spirit, however, reappears in his letters. They are thirty-two in number; all written during the reign of Ferdinand and Isabella, the earliest being dated in 1473, and the latest only ten years afterwards. Nearly all of them were addressed to persons of honorable distinction in his time, such as the queen herself, Henry the king's uncle, the Archbishop of Toledo, and the Count of Tendilla. Sometimes, as in the case of one to the King of Portugal, exhorting him not to make war on Castile, they are evidently letters of state. But, in other cases, like that of a letter to his physician, complaining pleasantly of the evils of old age, and one to his daughter, who was a nun, they seem to be familiar, if not confiden-

<sup>8</sup> Claros Varones, Tft. 17.

tial.<sup>9</sup> On the whole, therefore, taking all his different works together, we have a very gratifying exhibition of the character of this ancient servant and counsellor of Queen Isabella, who, if he gave no considerable impulse to his age as a writer, was yet in advance of it by the dignity and elevation of his thoughts, and the careless richness of his style. He died after 1492, and probably before 1500.

We must not, however, go beyond the limits of the reign of Ferdinand and Isabella, without noticing two remarkable attempts to enlarge, or at least to change, the forms of romantic fiction, as they had been thus far settled in the books of chivalry.

The first of these attempts was made by Diego de San Pedro, a senator of Valladolid, whose poetry is found in all the Cancioneros Generales.<sup>10</sup> He was evidently known \* at the court of the \* 383 Catholic sovereigns, and seems to have been favored there; but, if we may judge from his principal poem, entitled “Contempt of Fortune,” his old age was unhappy, and filled with regrets at the follies of his youth.<sup>11</sup> Among these follies, however, he reckons the work of prose fiction which now constitutes his only real claim to be remembered. It is called the Prison of Love, “Carcel de Amor,” and was written at the request of Diego Hernandez, a governor of the pages in the time of Ferdinand and Isabella.

It opens with an allegory. The author supposes himself to walk out on a winter's morning, and to

<sup>9</sup> The letters are at the end of the Claros Varones (Madrid, 1775, 4to), which was first printed in 1500.

<sup>10</sup> The Coplas of San Pedro on the Passion of Christ and the Sorrows of the Madonna are in the Cancionero of 1492 (Mendez, p. 135), and many of his other poems are in the Cancioneros

Generales, 1511-1573; for example, in the last, at ff. 155-161, 176, 177, 180, etc.

<sup>11</sup> “El Desprecio de la Fortuna” — with a curious dedication to the Count Urueña, whom he says he served twenty-nine years — is at the end of Juan de Mena's Works, ed. 1566.



find in a wood a fierce, savage-looking person, who drags along an unhappy prisoner, bound by a chain. This savage is Desire, and his victim is Leriano, the hero of the fiction. San Pedro, from natural sympathy, follows them to the castle or prison of Love, where, after groping through sundry mystical passages and troubles, he sees the victim fastened to a fiery seat, and enduring the most cruel torments. Leriano tells him that they are in the kingdom of Macedonia, that he is enamored of Laureola, daughter of its king, and that for his love he is thus cruelly imprisoned; all of which he illustrates and explains allegorically, and begs the author to carry a message to the Lady Laureola. The request is kindly granted, and a correspondence takes place, immediately upon which Leriano is released from his prison, and the allegorical part of the work is brought to an end.

From this time the story is much like an episode in one of the tales of chivalry. A rival discovers the attachment between Leriano and Laureola, and, making it appear to the king, her father, as a criminal one, the lady is cast into prison. Leriano challenges her accuser, and defeats him in the lists; but the accusation is renewed, and, being fully sustained by false \* 384 witnesses, Laureola is \* condemned to death.

Leriano rescues her with an armed force, and delivers her to the protection of her uncle, that there may exist no further pretext for malicious interference. The king, exasperated anew, besieges Leriano in his city of Susa. In the course of the siege Leriano captures one of the false witnesses, and compels him to confess his guilt. The king, on learning this, joyfully receives his daughter again, and shows all favor to her faithful lover. But Laureola, for her own honor's sake,

now refuses to hold further intercourse with him; in consequence of which he takes to his bed, and, with sorrow and fasting, dies. Here the original work ends; but there is a poor continuation of it by Nicolas Nuñez, which gives an account of the grief of Laureola and the return of the author to Spain.<sup>12</sup>

The style, so far as Diego de San Pedro is concerned, is good for the age; very pithy, and full of rich aphorisms and antitheses. But there is no skill in the construction of the fable, and the whole work only shows how little romantic fiction was advanced in the time of Ferdinand and Isabella. The *Carcel de Amor* was, however, very successful. The first edition appeared in 1492; two others followed in less than eight years; and, before a century was completed, it is easy to reckon ten, beside many translations.<sup>13</sup>

Among the consequences of the popularity enjoyed by the *Carcel de Amor* was probably the appearance of the "Question de Amor," an anonymous tale, which is dated at the end, 17 April, 1512. It is a discussion of the question, \*so often agitated from \* 385 the age of the Courts of Love to the days of Garcilasso de la Vega, who suffers most, the lover whose mistress has been taken from him by death, or

<sup>12</sup> Of Nicolas Nuñez I know only a few poems in the *Cancionero General* (1573, ff. 17, 23, 176, etc.), one or two of which are not without merit.

<sup>13</sup> Mendez, pp. 185, 283; Brunet, etc. There is a translation of the *Carcel* into English by good old Lord Berners. (Walpole's *Royal and Noble Authors*, London, 1806, 8vo, Vol. I. p. 241. Dibdin's *Ames*, London, 1810, 4to, Vol. III. p. 195; Vol. IV. p. 339.) To Diego de San Pedro is also attributed the "Tractado de Amores de Arnalte y Lucenda," of which the first edition was printed in 1491, at Burgos, and others in 1522 and 1527. (*Asso, De Libris Hisp. Rarioribus, Cæsaraugustæ*, 1794, 4to, p. 44.) From a phrase in his "Contempt of Fortune" (*Cancionero General*, 1573, f. 158), where he speaks of "aquellas cartas de Amores, escritas de dos en dos," I suspect he wrote the "Proceso de Cartas de Amores, que entre dos amantes pasaran,"—a series of extravagant love-letters, full of the conceits of the times; in which last case he may also be the author of the "Quexa y Aviso contra Amor," or the story of Luzindaro and Medusina, alluded to in the last of these letters. But, as I know no edition of this story earlier than that of 1548, I prefer to consider it in the next period.



the lover who serves a living mistress without hope. The controversy is here carried on between Vasquiran, whose lady-love is dead, and Flamiano, who is rejected and in despair. The scene is laid at Naples and in other parts of Italy, beginning in 1508, and ending with the battle of Ravenna and its disastrous consequences, four years later. It is full of the spirit of the times. Chivalrous games and shows at the court of Naples, a hunting scene, jousts and tournaments, and a tilting-match with reeds, are all minutely described, with the dresses and armor, the devices and mottoes, of the principal personages who took part in them. Poetry, too, is freely scattered through it,—*villancicos*, *notes*, and *invenciones*, such as are found in the *Cancioneros*; and, on one occasion, an entire eclogue is set forth, as it was recited or played before the court, and, on another, a poetical vision, in which the lover who had lost his lady sees her again as if in life. The greater part of the work claims to be true, and some portions of it are known to be so; but the metaphysical discussion between the two sufferers, sometimes angrily borne in letters, and sometimes tenderly carried on in dialogue, constitutes the chain on which the whole is hung, and was originally, no doubt, regarded as its chief merit. The story ends with the death of Flamiano from wounds received in the battle of Ravenna; but the question discussed is as little decided as it is at the beginning.

The style is that of its age; sometimes striking, but generally dull; and the interest of the whole is small, in consequence both of the inherent insipidity of such a fine-spun discussion, and of the too minute details given of the festivals and fights with which it is crowded. It is, therefore, chiefly interesting as a very

early attempt to write historical romance; just as the "Carcel de Amor," which called it forth, is an attempt to write sentimental romance.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>14</sup> The "Question de Amor" was printed as early as 1527, and, besides several editions of it that appeared separately, it often occurs in the same volume with the *Carcel*. Both are among the few books criticised by the author of the "Diálogo de las Lenguas," who praises both moderately;

the *Carcel* for its style more than the *Question de Amor*. (Mayans y Siscar, *Orígenes*, Tom. II. p. 167.) Both are in the *Index Expurgatorius*, 1667, pp. 323, 864; the last with a seeming ignorance, that regards it as a Portuguese book.