

LOW STATE OF LETTERS ABOUT THE YEAR 1500. — INFLUENCE OF ITALY. — CONQUESTS OF CHARLES THE FIFTH. — BOSCAN. — NAVAGIERO. — ITALIAN FORMS INTRODUCED INTO SPANISH POETRY. — GARCILASSO DE LA VEGA. — HIS LIFE, WORKS, AND PERMANENT INFLUENCE.

THERE was, no doubt, a great decay of letters and good taste in Spain during the latter part of the troubled reign of John the Second, and the whole of the still more disturbed period when his successor, Henry the Fourth, sat upon the throne of Castile. The Provençal school had passed away, and its imitations in Castilian had not been successful. The earlier Italian influences, less fertile in good results than might have been anticipated, were almost forgotten. The fashion of the court, therefore, in the absence of better or more powerful impulses, ruled over everything, and a monotonous poetry, full of conceits and artifices, was all that its own artificial character could produce.

Nor was there much improvement in the time of Ferdinand and Isabella. The introduction of the art of printing and the revival of a regard for classical antiquity were, indeed, foundations for a national culture such as had not before been laid; while, at the same time, the establishment of the University of Alcalá, in 1508, by Cardinal Ximenes, and the revival of that of Salamanca, with the labors of such scholars as Peter Martyr, Lucio Marineo, Antonio de Lebrixa, and Arias Barbosa, could hardly fail to exercise a favorable influence on the intellectual cultivation, if

not on the poetical taste, of the country.<sup>1</sup> Occasionally, as we have \* seen, proofs of the old \* 435 energy appeared in such works as the "Celestina" and the "Coplas" of Manrique. The old ballads, too, and the other forms of the early popular poetry, no doubt maintained their place in the hearts of the common people. But it is not to be concealed that, among the cultivated classes, — as the Cancioneros and nearly everything that came from the press in the time of Ferdinand and Isabella sufficiently prove, — taste was at a very low ebb.

The first impulse to a better state of things came from Italy. In some respects this was unhappy; but there can be little doubt that it was inevitable. The intercourse between Italy and Spain, shortly before the accession of Charles the Fifth, had been much increased, chiefly by the conquest of Naples, but partly by other causes. Regular interchanges of ambassadors took place between the See of Rome and the court of Ferdinand and Isabella, and one of them was a son of the poetical Marquis of Santillana, and another was the father of Garcilasso de la Vega. The universities of Italy continued to receive large numbers of Spanish students, who still regarded the means of a generous education at home as inadequate to their wants; and Spanish poets, among whom were Juan de la Enzina

<sup>1</sup> The buildings at Alcalá were begun in 1498, and the institution was opened in 1508. (Pisa, *Descripcion de Toledo*, 1617, Lib. V. c. 10, p. 237.) Of Lebrixa, who did so much to introduce a knowledge of classical literature into Spain, I have already spoken (*ante*, p. 172), and must often speak again. But the first translation of an ancient classic printed in Spain was not by him, as has sometimes been claimed. It was a version of Julius Cæsar by Diego Lopez de Toledo, 1498, in excellent old

Castilian, but not very accurate, — perhaps from the youth of its author, who says he was only seventeen years old when he made it. He was bred with Prince John, son of Ferdinand and Isabella, and dedicates the work to him, though it was not published until after the death of that prince, which occurred October 4, 1497, when he was twenty years old. As Lebrixa taught Isabella and her children, it is likely that this translation of Julius Cæsar was made under his influence.



and Torres Naharro, resorted there freely, and lived with consideration at Rome and Naples. In the latter city the old Spanish family of Dávalos — one of whom was the husband of that Vittoria Colonna whose poetry ranks with the Italian classics, and who herself received the homage of the magnificent verse of Michael Angelo — were among the chief patrons of letters during their time, and kept alive an intellectual union between the two countries, by which they \* 436 \* were equally claimed and on which they reflected equal honor.<sup>2</sup>

But, besides these individual instances of connection between Spain and Italy, the gravest events were now drawing together the greater interests of the mass of the people in both countries, and fastening their thoughts intently upon each other. Naples, after the treaty of 1503 and the brilliant successes of Gonzalvo de Córdoba, was delivered over to Spain, bound hand and foot, and was governed, above a century, by a succession of Spanish viceroys, each accompanied by a train of Spanish officers and dependants, among whom, not unfrequently, we find men of letters and poets, like the Argensola and Quevedo. When Charles the Fifth ascended the throne, in 1516, it was apparent that he would at once make an effort to extend his political and military power throughout Italy. The tempting plains of Lombardy became, therefore, the theatre of the first great European contest entered into by Spain, — a grand arena, in which, as it proved, much of the fate of Europe, as well as of Italy, was to

<sup>2</sup> Ginguené, Hist. Lit. d'Italie, Paris, 1812, 8vo, Tom. IV. pp. 87-90; and more fully in Historia de Don Hernando Dávalos, Marques de Pescara, en Anvers, Juan Steelsio, 1558, 12mo; — a curious book, which was printed as

early as 1555, and seems to have been written before 1546. It was the work of Pedro Valles, an Aragonese. Lattassa, Bib. Nueva de Escritores Aragoneses, Pamplona, Tom. I. 4to, 1798, p. 289.

be decided by two young and passionate monarchs, burning with personal rivalry and the love of glory. In this way, from 1522, when the first war broke out between Francis the First and Charles the Fifth, to the disastrous battle of Pavia, in 1525, we may consider the whole disposable force of Spain to have been transferred to Italy, and subjected, in a remarkable degree, to the influences of Italian culture and civilization.

Nor did the connection between the two countries stop here. In 1527, Rome itself was, for a moment, added to the conquests of the Spanish crown, and the Pope became the prisoner of the Emperor, as the King of France had been before. In 1530, Charles appeared again in Italy, surrounded by a splendid Spanish \* court, and at the head of a military \* 437 power that left no doubt of his mastery. He at once crushed the liberties of Florence and restored the aristocracy of the Medici. He made peace with the outraged Pope. By his wisdom and moderation, he confirmed his friendly relations with the other states of Italy; and, as the seal of all his successes, he caused himself, in the presence of whatever was most august in both countries, to be solemnly crowned King of Lombardy and Emperor of the Romans, by the same Pope whom, three years before, he had counted among his captives.<sup>3</sup> Such a state of things necessarily

<sup>3</sup> The coronation of Charles V. at Bologna, like most of the other striking events in Spanish history, was brought upon the Spanish theatre. It is circumstantially represented in "Los dos Monarcas de Europa," by Bartolomé de Salazar y Luna. (Comedias Escogidas, Madrid, 1665, 4to, Tomo XXII.) But the play is quite too extravagant in its claims, both as respects the Emperor's humiliation and the Pope's glory, considering that Clement VII.

had so lately been the Emperor's prisoner. As the ceremony is about to begin, a procession of priests enters, chanting,

In happy hour, let this child of the Church,  
Her obedient, dutiful son,  
Come forth to receive, with her holiest rites,  
The crown which his valor has won.

To which the Emperor is made to reply,

And in happy hour, let *him* show his power,  
His dominion and glorious might,

Francisco I  
prisoner

offended

plain in  
M. T. 1527



implied a most intimate connection between Spain and Italy; and this connection was maintained down to the abdication of the Emperor, in 1555, and, indeed, long afterwards.<sup>4</sup>

On the other hand, it should be remembered that Italy was now in a condition to act with all the power of a superior civilization and refinement on this large body of Spaniards, many of them the leading spirits of the Empire, who, by successive wars and negotiations, were thus kept for half a century travelling in Italy, and living at Genoa, Milan, \* and Venice, Florence, Rome, and Naples. The age of Lorenzo de' Medici was already past, leaving behind it the memorials of Poliziano, Boiardo, Pulci, and Leonardo da Vinci. The age of Leo the Tenth and Clement the Seventh was contemporary, and had brought with it the yet more prevalent influences of Michael Angelo, Raffaele, and Titian, of Machiavelli, of Berni, of Ariosto, of Bembo, and of Sannazaro; the last of whom, it is not unworthy of notice, was himself a descendant of one of those very Spanish families whom the political interests of the two countries had originally carried to Naples. It was, therefore, when Rome and Naples, Florence and the North of Italy, were in

Who now sees, in the dust, a king faithful and just  
Surrender, rejoicing, his right.

But such things were common in Spain, and tended to conciliate the favor of the clergy for the theatre.

A striking proof of the progress made by the higher classes of Spaniards, about this time, in intellectual accomplishments, is to be found in the fine old Castilian translation made by Antonio Barba of a dialogue of Sepulveda, written in 1531, where, noticing this coronation of the Emperor at Bologna the preceding year, and speaking of his own intercourse with the brilliant young

nobles of Spain collected there for that magnificent occasion, he says: Pero de lo que mas placer uve fue ver algunos dellos ser inclinados no solamente a las armas pero tambien a las letras, *contra la costumbre de nuestra nacion*; porque, en los tiempos passados, era cosa muy rara ver hombre Español de casa ilustre que viesse deprendido siquiera la Lengua Latina. Dialogo llamado Democrates, Sevilla, 1541, 4to, f. 3.

<sup>4</sup> P. de Sandoval, Hist. del Emperador Carlos V., Amberes, 1681, folio, Lib. XII. to XVIII., but especially the last book.

the maturity of their glory, as seats of the arts and letters, that no small part of what was most noble and cultivated in Spain was led across the Alps and awakened to a perception of such forms and creations of genius and taste as had not been attempted beyond the Pyrenees, and such as could not fail to produce their full effect on minds excited, like those of the whole Spanish people, by the glorious results of their long struggle against the Moors, and their present magnificent successes both in America and Europe.

Visible traces of the influence of Italian literature might, therefore, from general causes, soon be looked for in the Spanish; but an accident brings them to our notice somewhat earlier, perhaps, than might have been anticipated. Juan Boscan, a patrician of Barcelona, was, as he himself tells us, devoted to poetry from his youth. The city to which he belonged had early been distinguished for the number of Provençal and Catalonian Troubadours who had flourished in it. But Boscan preferred to write in the Castilian; and his defection from his native dialect became, in some sort, the seal of its fate. His earlier efforts, a few of which remain to us, are in the style of the preceding century; but at last, when, from the most distinct accounts we can obtain, he was about twenty-five years old, and when, we are assured, he had been received at court, had served in the army, and had visited foreign countries, he was induced, by an accident, \* to attempt the proper Italian measures, \* 439 as they were then practised.<sup>5</sup>

He became, at that period, acquainted with Andrea Navagiero, who was sent, in 1524, as ambassador from

<sup>5</sup> The Dictionary of Torres y Amat contains a short, but sufficient, life of Boscan; and in Sedano, "Parnaso Español" (Madrid, 1768-1778, 12mo, Tom. VIII. p. xxxi), there is one somewhat more ample.



Venice to Charles the Fifth, and returned home in 1528, carrying with him a dry but valuable itinerary, which was afterwards published as an account of his travels. He was a man of learning, and a poet, an orator, and a statesman, of no mean name.<sup>6</sup> While in Spain, he spent, during the year 1526, six months at Granada.<sup>7</sup> "Being with Navagiero there one day," says Boscan, "and discoursing with him about matters of wit and letters, and especially about the different forms they take in different languages, he asked me why I did not make an experiment in Castilian of sonnets and the other forms of verse used by good Italian authors; and not only spoke to me of it thus slightly, but urged me much to do it. A few days afterwards I set off for my own home; and whether it were the length and solitariness of the way I know not, but, turning over different things in my mind, I came often back upon what Navagiero had said to me. And thus I began to try this kind of verse. At first, I found it somewhat difficult; for it is of a very artful construction, and in many particulars different from ours. But afterwards it seemed to me — perhaps from the love we naturally bear to what is our own — that I began to succeed very well; and so I went on, little by little, with increasing zeal."<sup>8</sup>

This account is interesting and important. It is rare that any one individual has been able to exercise such an influence on the literature of a foreign nation as was exercised by Navagiero. It is still more rare, — indeed, perhaps, wholly unknown, in any case

<sup>6</sup> Tiraboschi, Storia della Lett. Italiana, Roma, 1784, 4to, Tom. VII., Parte I. p. 242; Parte II. p. 294; and Parte III. pp. 228-230.

<sup>7</sup> Andrea Navagiero, Il Viaggio fatto in Spagna, etc., Vinegia, 1563, 12mo,

ff. 18-30. Bayle gives an article on Navagiero's life, with discriminating praise of his scholarship and genius.

<sup>8</sup> Letter to the Duquesa de Soma, prefixed to the Second Book of Boscan's Poems.

where it may have \* occurred, — that the precise mode in which it was exercised can be so exactly explained. Boscan tells us not only what he did, but what led him to do it, and how he began his work, which we find him, from this moment, following up, till he devoted himself to it entirely, and wrote in all the favorite Italian measures and forms with boldness and success. He was resisted, but he tells us Garcilasso sustained him; and from this small beginning in a slight conversation with Navagiero, at Granada, a new school was introduced into Spanish poetry which has prevailed in it ever since, and materially influenced its character and destinies.

Boscan felt his success. This we can see from his own account of it. But he made little effort to press his example on others; for he was a man of fortune and consideration, who led a happy life with his family at Barcelona, and hardly cared for popular reputation or influence. Occasionally, we are told, he was seen at court; and at one period he had some charge of the education of that Duke of Alva whose name, in the next reign, became so formidable. But in general he preferred a life of retirement to any of the prizes offered to ambition.

Letters were his amusement. "In what I have written," he says, "the mere writing was never my object; but rather to solace such faculties as I have, and to go less heavily through certain heavy passages of my life."<sup>9</sup> The range of his studies, however, was wider than this remark might seem to imply, and wider than was common in Spain at the beginning of the sixteenth century, even among scholars. He translated a tragedy of Euripides, which was licensed

<sup>9</sup> Letter to the Duquesa de Soma.



to be published, but which never appeared in print, and is, no doubt, lost.<sup>10</sup> On the basis of \* 441 \* the "Hero and Leander" of Musæus, and following perhaps the example of Trissino, he wrote, in the *versi sciolti*, or blank verse, of the Italians, a tale nearly three thousand lines long, which may still be read with pleasure, for the gentle and sweet passages it contains.<sup>11</sup> And in general, throughout his

<sup>10</sup> It is mentioned in the permission to publish his works granted to Boscan's widow, by Charles V., February 18, 1543, and prefixed to the very rare and important edition of his works and those of his friend Garcilasso, published for the first time in the same year, at Barcelona, by Carlés Amoros; a small 4to, containing 237 leaves. This edition is said to have been at once counterfeited, and was certainly reprinted not less than six times as early as 1546, three years after its first appearance. In 1553, Alonso de Ulloa, a Spaniard, at Venice, who published many Spanish books there with prefaces of some value by himself, printed it in 18mo, very neatly, and added a few poems to those found in the first edition; particularly one, at the beginning of the volume, entitled "Conversion de Boscan," religious in its subject, and national in its form, which, however, was printed in Spain as early as 1544. At the end Ulloa puts a few pages of verse, attacking the Italian forms adopted by Boscan; describing what he thus adds as by "an uncertain author." They are, however, the work of Castillejo, and are found in "Obras de Castillejo." Anvers, 1598, 18mo, f. 110, etc. Among the works printed by Ulloa is the "Dialogo de las Empresas militares y amorosas," translated by him from the Italian of Paulo Jovio, Ludovico Domenichi, and Gabriello Simeone, with some additions by himself, in 1558, when, from his Dedication, it appears that he had been twelve years in Venice employed in editing Spanish books, and making translations from the Italian. From the body of the work we learn (p. 155) that he had earlier been a servant of Cortés. In 1561, it was reprinted at Lyons. It is a curious, pleasant book of its class.

<sup>11</sup> Góngora, in the first two of his Burlesque Ballads, has made himself merry (Obras, Madrid, 1654, 4to, f. 104, etc.) at the expense of Boscan's "Leandro." But he has taken the same freedom with better things.

Blank verse in Spain can, I think, be traced no further back than this volume of Boscan and Garcilasso, 1543, where it occurs in the "Leandro" of Boscan, and in the gay "Epistola" of Garcilasso, beginning, "Señor Boscan, quien tanto gusto tiene" (f. clxxxviii). Trissino is commonly regarded as its inventor in Italy, and is supposed to have first used it in his Sofonisba, dedicated to Leo X. in 1515, and printed in 1524. (Ginguené, Hist. Litt., 8vo, Tom. V. p. 124, VI. p. 19. Alacci Drammaturgia, 4to, p. 727.) Now, Trissino was at the coronation of Charles V., at Bologna, in 1530, and bore the Pope's train during the ceremony. (Ginguené, Tom. V. p. 119.) Garcilasso was also there in the suite of the Emperor, and probably knew Trissino and his poetry. But Boscan, at that period, had been writing in the Italian measures four years; so that it is likely he is to have the precedence in this form, as he has in the other forms. At any rate, the *versi sciolti* were, I think, first introduced into Spanish by Boscan and Garcilasso in 1543, as they were a little later into English by Surrey, who calls them "a strange meter." Acuña soon followed in Castilian with other examples of it; but the first really good Spanish blank verse known to me is to be found in the eclogue of "Tirsi," by Francisco de Figueroa, written about half a century after the time of Boscan, and not printed till 1626. The translation of a part of the Odyssey by Perez, in 1553, and the "Sagrada Eratos" of Alonso Carillo Laso de la Vega,

poetry, he shows that he was familiar with the Greek and Latin classics, and imbued, to a considerable degree, with the spirit of antiquity.

His longest work was a translation of the Italian "Courtier" of Balthazar Castiglione, — the best book on good-breeding, as Dr. Johnson thought, two centuries afterwards, that was ever written.<sup>12</sup> Boscan, however, frankly says that he did not like the business of translating, which he regarded as "a low vanity, beseeeming men of little knowledge"; but Garcilasso \* de la Vega had sent him a copy of the \* 442 original soon after it was published, and he made this Spanish version of it, he tells us, "at his friend's earnest request."<sup>13</sup> Either or both of them may have known its author in the same way Boscan knew Navagiero; for Castiglione was sent as ambassador of Clement the Seventh to Spain in 1525, and remained there till his death, which happened at Toledo, in 1529.

But, however this may have been, the Italian original of the "Courtier" was prepared for the press

which is a paraphrase of the Psalms, printed at Naples in 1657, folio, afford much longer specimens that are generally respectable. But the full rhyme is so easy in Spanish, and the *asonante* is so much easier, that blank verse, though it has been used from the middle of the sixteenth century, has been little cultivated or favored. Figueroa (Pasagero, 1617, f. 87) says nobody had succeeded in it except Garcilasso and Camoens; and Castillejo (1598, f. 112), who tolerated nothing except the old Spanish measures, says of those who wrote in blank verse,

Usan de cierta prosa  
Medida sin consonantes.

Many Spaniards since have been of Castillejo's mind. Indeed, for a long time this measure was so exclusively employed only in formal and grave subjects that it was called *verso heroico*. Rengifo, ed. 1727, p. 84.

<sup>12</sup> Boswell's Life of Johnson, ed. Croker, London, 1831, 8vo, Tom. II. p. 501.

<sup>13</sup> The first edition of it is in black letter, Barcelona, 1534. I have one without the name of place, 4to, one hundred and forty leaves, dated 1549. Another edition appeared perhaps also in 1549, and another in 1553; the last supposed by Antonio to have been the oldest of all. It is on the Index of 1667, p. 245, for expurgation. It was long a popular book, however, as is proved, not only by the many editions of Boscan's translation, but by the imitation of it by Luis Milan, who, in 1561, published a "Cortesano," which came to a second edition in 1565. (Rodriguez, Bib. Val. 1747, p. 308.) An ample notice of it may be found in Gayangos' translation of this work, Tom. II. p. 486.



in Spain, and first printed in 1528;<sup>14</sup> soon after which Boscan must have made his translation, though it did not appear till 1534. As a version it does not profess to be very strict, for Boscan says he thought an exact fidelity to be unworthy of him;<sup>15</sup> but, as a Spanish composition, it is uncommonly flowing and easy. Garcilasso declares that it reads like an original work;<sup>16</sup> and Morales, the historian, says, "The 'Courtier' discourseth not better in Italy, where he was born, than here in Spain, where Boscan hath exhibited him so admirably well."<sup>17</sup> Perhaps nothing in Castilian prose of an earlier date is written in so classical and finished a style as this translation by Boscan.

With such occupations Boscan filled up his unostentatious life. He published nothing, or very little, and we have hardly a single date to record concerning him. But, \* from the few facts that can be collected, it seems probable he was born before 1500, and we know that he died at Perpignan, in 1540, while he was there with the Duke of Alva.<sup>18</sup> In 1543 his poems were published at Barcelona, by his widow, under a license from the Emperor Charles the Fifth, with a Preface, in which she says her husband had partly prepared them for the press, because he feared they would be printed from some of the many imperfect copies that had gone into circulation without his consent.

<sup>14</sup> Ginguené, Hist. Lit. d'Italie, Tom. VII. pp. 544, 550.

<sup>15</sup> "I have no mind," he says in the Prólogo, "to be so strict in the translation of this book as to confine myself to giving it word for word. On the contrary, if anything occurs which sounds well in the original language and ill in our own, I shall not fail to change it or to suppress it." Ed. 1549, f. 2.

<sup>16</sup> "Every time I read it," says Gar-

cilasso, in a letter to Doña Gerónima Palova de Almogovar, prefixed to it, "it seems to me as if it had never been written in any other language." This letter of Garcilasso is very beautiful in point of style.

<sup>17</sup> Morales, Discourse on the Castilian Language, Obras de Oliva, Madrid, 1787, 12mo, Tom. I. p. xli.

<sup>18</sup> Documentos Ineditos para la Historia de España por Salvá y Baranda, 8vo, Tom. XVI., 1850, p. 161.

They are divided into four books. The first consists of a small number of poems in what are called *coplas Españolas*, or what he himself elsewhere terms "the Castilian manner." These are his early efforts, made before his acquaintance with Navagiero. They are *villancicos*, *canciones*, and *coplas*, in the short national verses, and seem as if they might have come out of the old Cancioneros, in which, indeed, two of them are to be found.<sup>19</sup> Their merit is not great; but, amidst their ingenious conceits, there is sometimes a happiness and grace of expression rarely granted to the poets of the same school in that or the preceding century.

The second and third books, constituting by far the larger part of the volume, are composed entirely of poems in the Italian measure. They consist of ninety-three sonnets and nine *canzones*; the long poem on Hero and Leander, in blank verse, already mentioned; an elegy and two didactic epistles, in *terza rima*; and a half-narrative, half-allegorical poem, in one hundred and thirty-five octave stanzas. It is not necessary to go beyond such a mere enumeration of the contents of these two books to learn that, at least so far as their forms are concerned, they have nothing to do with the elder national Castilian poetry. The sonnets and the *canzones* especially are obvious imitations of Petrarch, as we can see in the case of the two beginning "Gentil \* Señora mia," and "Claros y \* 444 frescos rios," which are largely indebted to two of the most beautiful and best-known *canzoni* of the lover of Laura.<sup>20</sup> In most of these poems, however,

<sup>19</sup> Cancionero General, 1535, f. 153.

<sup>20</sup> Petrarca, Vita di Madonna Laura, Canz. 9 and 14. But Boscan's imitations of them are marred by a good

many conceits. Some of his sonnets, however, are free from this fault, and are natural and tender.



and amidst a good deal of hardness of manner, a Spanish tone and spirit are perceptible, which rescue them, in a great degree, from the imputation of being copies. Boscan's colors are here laid on with a bolder hand than those of his Italian master, and there is an absence of that delicate and exact finish, both in language and style, which, however charming in his models, would hardly be possible in the most skilful Spanish imitations.

The elegy, which is merely entitled "Capitolo," has more conceits and learning in it than become its subject, and approaches nearer to Boscan's first manner than any of his later poems. It is addressed to his lady-love; but, notwithstanding its defects, it contains long passages of tenderness and simple beauty that will always be read with pleasure. Of the two epistles, the first is poor and affected; but that addressed to the old statesman, poet, and soldier, Diego de Mendoza, is much in the tone and manner of Horace, — acute, genial, and full of philosophy.

But the most agreeable and original of Boscan's works is the last of them all, — "The Allegory." It opens with a gorgeous description of the Court of Love, and with the truly Spanish idea of a corresponding and opposing Court of Jealousy; but almost the whole of the rest consists of an account of the embassy of two messengers from the first of these courts to two ladies of Barcelona who had refused to come beneath its empire, and to persuade whom to submission a speech of the ambassador is given that fills nearly half the poem, and ends it somewhat abruptly. No doubt the whole was intended as a compliment to the two ladies, in which the story is of little consequence. But it is a pleasing and airy trifle, in which its author

has sometimes happily hit the tone of Ariosto, \* and at other times reminds us of the Island of \* 445 Love in the "Lusiad," though Boscan preceded Camoens by many years. Occasionally, too, he has a moral delicacy, more refined than Petrarch's, though perhaps suggested by that of the great Italian; such a delicacy as he shows in the following stanza, and two or three preceding and following it, in which the ambassador of Love exhorts the two ladies of Barcelona to submit to his authority, by urging on them the happiness of a union founded in a genuine sympathy of tastes and feeling: —

For is it not a happiness most pure,  
That two fond hearts can thus together melt,  
And each the other's sorrows all endure,  
While still their joys as those of one are felt;  
Even causeless anger of support secure,  
And pardons causeless in one spirit dealt;  
That so their loves, though fickle all and strange,  
May, in their thousand changes, still together change? <sup>21</sup>

Boscan might, probably, have done more for the literature of his country than he did. His poetical talents were not, indeed, of the highest order; but he perceived the degradation into which Spanish poetry had fallen, and was persuaded that the way to raise it again was to give it an ideal character and classical forms such as it had not yet known. But, to accomplish this, he adopted a standard not formed on the intimations of the national genius. He took for his models foreign masters, who, though more advanced than any he could find at home, were yet entitled to supremacy in no literature but their own, and could

<sup>21</sup> Y no es gusto tambien assi entenderos,  
Que podays si pre entrambos conformaros:  
Entrambos en un punto entristeceros,  
Y en otro punto entrambos alegraros:  
Y juntos sin razon embraueceros,

Y sin razon tambien luego amansaros:  
Y que os hagan, en fin, vuestros amores  
Igualmente mudar de mil colores?  
Obras de Boscan, Barcelona, 1543, 4to, f. clx.