

military braggart who owed his origin both to Plautus¹ and to the Spanish officers who abounded in the Italy of those days. The popular character-comedy, a relic of the ancient *Atellanes*, likewise took a new lease of life—and this in a double form. The *improvised* comedy (*commedia a soggetto*) was now as a rule performed by professional actors, members of a *craft*, and was thence called the *commedia dell'arte*, which is said to have been invented by Francesco (called Terenziano) Cherea, the favourite player of Leo X. Its scenes, still unwritten except in skeleton (*scenario*), were connected together by the ligatures or links (*lazzi*) of the *arlechino*, the descendant of the ancient Roman *sannio* (whence our *zany*). Harlequin's summit of glory was probably reached early in the 17th century, when he was ennobled in the person of Cecchino by the Emperor Matthias; of Cecchino's successors Zaccagnino and Truffaldino, we read that "they shut the door in Italy to good harlequins." Distinct from this growth is that of the *masked* comedy, the action of which was chiefly carried on by certain typical figures in masks, speaking in local dialects,² but which was not improvised, and indeed from the nature of the case hardly could have been. Its inventor was A. Beolco of Padua, who called himself Ruzzante (joker), and who published six comedies in various dialects, including the Greek of the day (1530). This was the masked comedy to which the Italians so tenaciously clung, and in which, as all their own and imitable by no other nation, they took so great a pride that even Goldoni was unable to overthrow it.

Meanwhile the Latin imitations of Roman, varied by occasional translations of Greek, comedies early led to the production of Italian translations, several of which were performed at Ferrara in the 15th century, and before its close to the composition of what is regarded as the first original Italian comedy—in other words, as the first of the modern drama. But the claim to this honour of Boiardo's *Timone* (before 1494) is doubtful—not in time,³ but because this play is only in part original, being founded upon, and in a great measure taken from, a dialogue of Lucian's; since moreover its personages are abstractions, it represents at most the transition from the moralities. The "first Italian comedy in verse," Ricchi's *I Tre Tiranni* (before 1530), is likewise a morality, and Trissino's comedy, which followed, a mere adaptation of the *Menechmi* of Plautus. About this time, however, the *commedia erudita*, or scholarly comedy, began to be cultivated by a succession of eminent writers, among whom the title of the father of modern comedy, if it belongs to any man, belongs to Ariosto (1474–1533). His comedies (though the first two were originally written in prose) are in blank verse, to which he gave a singular mobility by the dactylic ending of the line (*sdruciolò*). Ariosto's models were the masterpieces of the *palliata*, and his morals those of his age, which equalled those of the worst days of ancient Rome or

Early Italian regular comedy

Ariosto.

¹ Pyrgopolinices in the *Miles Gloriosus*.

² The masked characters, each of which spoke the dialect of the place he represented, were (according to Baretto) *Pantulone*, a Venetian merchant; *Dottore*, a Bolognese physician; *Spavento*, a Neapolitan braggadocio; *Pulcinella*, a wag of Apulia; *Giangurgulo* and *Coviello*, clowns of Calabria; *Gelomino*, a Roman beau; *Brighella*, a Ferrarese pimp; and *Arlecchino*, a blundering servant of Bergamo. Besides these and a few other such personages (of whom four at least appeared in each play), there were the *Amorosos* or *Innamoratos*, men or women (the latter not before 1560, up to which time actresses were unknown in Italy) with serious parts, and *Smeraldina*, *Colombina*, *Spilletta*, and other *servettas* or waiting-maids. All these spoke Tuscan or Roman, and wore no masks.

³ Boiardo died in 1494, in or after which year Nardi's *Amicizia* was written; while Dorizio's (afterwards Cardinal of Bibbiena) disreputable but entertaining *Calandria*, a prose comedy, which protests that it is not taken from Plautus, is thought to have been composed not long before its representation in 1508.

Byzantium in looseness, and surpassed them in effrontery. He chose his subjects accordingly; but his dramatic genius displayed itself in the effective drawing of character,⁴ and more especially in the skillful management of complicated intrigues.⁵ Such, with an additional brilliancy of wit and lasciviousness of tone, are likewise the characteristics of Machiavelli's (1469–1527) famous prose comedy, the *Mandragola* (*The Magic Draught*);⁶ and, in their climacteric, of the plays of P. Aretino (1492–1557), especially the prose *Marescalco*, whose name, it has been said, ought to be written in asterisks. Other comedians of the 16th century were B. Accolti, whose *Virginia* (prob. before 1513) treats the story from Boccaccio which reappears in *All's Well that Ends Well*; G. B. Araldo and J. Nardi, noteworthy as decent and moral in tone and tendency; G. Cecchi, F. d'Ambra, A. F. Grazzini, N. Secco or Secchi, and L. Dolce—all writers of romantic comedy of intrigue in verse or prose.

During the same century the *pastoral drama* flourished in Italy. The origin of this peculiar species—which was the bucolic idyll in a dramatic form, and which freely lent itself to the introduction of both mythological and allegorical elements—was purely literary, and arose directly out of the classical studies and tastes of the Renaissance. Its first example was the renowned scholar A. Poliziano's *Orfeo* (1472), which begins like an idyll and ends like a tragedy. Intended to be performed with music—for the pastoral drama is the parent of the opera—this beautiful work tells its story simply. N. da Correggio's (1450–1508) *Cefalo*, or *Aurora*, and others followed, before in 1554 A. Beccari produced, as totally new of its kind, his Arcadian pastoral drama *Il Sacrificio*, in which the comic element predominates. But an epoch in the history of the species is marked by the *Aminta* of Tasso (1573), in whose Arcadia is allegorically mirrored the Ferrara court. Adorned by choral lyrics of great beauty, it presents an allegorical treatment of a social and moral problem; and since the conception of the characters, all of whom think and speak of nothing but love, is artificial, the charm of the poem lies not in the interest of its action, but in the passion and sweetness of its sentiment. This work was the model of many others, and the pastoral drama reached its height of popularity in the famous *Pastor Fido* (written before 1590) of B. Guarini, which, while founded on a tragic love-story, introduces into its complicated plot a comic element, partly with a satirical intention. Thus, both in Italian and in other literatures, the pastoral drama became a distinct species, characterized like the great body of modern pastoral poetry in general by a tendency either towards the artificial or towards the burlesque. Its artificiality affected the entire growth of Italian comedy, including the *commedia dell'arte*, and impressed itself in an intensified form upon the opera. (See OPERA.) The foremost Italian masters of the last-named species, so far as it can claim to be included in the poetic drama, were A. Zeno (1668–1750) and P. Metastasio (1698–1782).

The comic dramatists of the 17th century are grouped as followers of the classical and of the romantic school, G. B. Porta and G. A. Cicognini (whom Goldoni describes as full of whining pathos and common-place drollery, but as still possessing a great power to interest) being regarded as the leading representatives of the former. But neither of these largely intermixed groups of writers could, with all its fertility, prevail against the competition on the one hand of the musical drama, and on the other of the popular farcical entertainments and of those introduced in imita-

⁴ *La Lena*; *Il Negromante*.

⁵ *La Cassaria*; *I Suppositi*.

⁶ Of Machiavelli's other comedies one is in verse, the other two, free adaptations from Plautus and Terence, are in prose.

tion of Spanish examples. Italian comedy had fallen into decay, when its reform was undertaken by the wonderful theatrical genius of C. Goldoni (1707–1793). One of the most fertile and rapid of playwrights (of his 150 comedies 16 were written and acted in a single year), he at the same time pursued definite aims as a dramatist. Disgusted with the conventional buffoonery, and ashamed of the rampant immorality, of the Italian comic stage, he drew his characters from real life, whether of his native city (Venice)¹ or of society at large, and sought to enforce virtuous and pathetic sentiments without neglecting the essential objects of his art. Happy and various in his choice of themes, he produced, besides comedies of general human character,² plays on subjects drawn from literary biography³ or from fiction.⁴ Goldoni, whose style was considered defective by the purists whom Italy has at no time lacked, met with a severe critic and a temporarily successful rival in Count C. Gozzi (1722–1806), who sought to rescue the comic drama from its association with the real life of the middle classes, and to infuse a new spirit into the figures of the old masked comedy by the invention of a new species. His themes were taken from Neapolitan⁵ and Oriental⁶ fairy tales, to which he accommodated some of the standing figures upon which Goldoni had made war. This attempt at mingling fancy and humour—occasionally of a directly satirical turn⁷—was in harmony with the tendencies of the modern romantic school, and Gozzi's efforts, which though successful found hardly any imitators in Italy, have a family resemblance to those of Tieck. During the latter part of the 18th and the early years of the present century comedy continued to follow the course marked out by its acknowledged master Goldoni, under the influence of the sentimental drama of France and other countries. Villi, Nelli, the Marquis Albergati Capacelli, Sografi, Federici, and Signorelli (the historian of the drama) are mentioned among the writers of this school; to the present century belong Count Giraud, Marchisio (who took his subjects especially from commercial life), and Nota, a fertile writer, among whose plays are three treating the lives of poets. Of still more recent date are Bon and Brofferio. Though no recent Italian comedies have acquired so wide a celebrity as that which has been obtained by the successful productions of the recent French stage, there seems no reason to predict a barren future for Italian comedy any more than for Italian tragedy. Both the one and the other have survived periods of a seemingly hopeless decline; tragedy has been rescued from the pedantry of a timid classicism, and comedy from the conventionalism of its most popular but least progressive form; and neither the opera nor the ballet has succeeded in ousting from the national stage the legitimate forms of the national drama.

Comedians after Goldoni.

Modern Greek drama.

To the above summary of the history of the modern Italian drama it would not have been inappropriate to append a brief account of that of the MODERN GREEK. The dramatic literature of the later Hellenes is a creation of the literary movement which preceded their glorious

¹ *Momolo Cortesano* (*Jerome the Accomplished Man*); *La Bottega del Caffè*, &c.

² *La Vedova Scaltra* (*The Cunning Widow*); *La Putta Onorata* (*The Respectable Girl*); *La Buona Figlia*; *La B. Sposa*; *La B. Famiglia*; *La B. Madre* (the last of which was unsuccessful; "goodness," says Goldoni, "never displeases, but the public weary of everything"), &c.; and *Il Barbero Benefico* called in its original French version *Le Bourru Bienfaisant*.

³ *Molire*; *Terenzio*; *Tasso*.

⁴ *Pamela*; *Pamela Maritata*; *Il Filosofo Inglese* (*Mr Spectator*).

⁵ *L'Amore delle tre Melarance* (*The Three Lemons*); *Il Corvo*.

⁶ *Turandot*; *Zobeide*.

⁷ *L'Amore delle tre M.* (against Goldoni); *L'Angellino Belverde* (*The Small Green Bird*), (against Helvetius, Rousseau, and Voltaire).

struggle for independence, or which may be said to form part of that struggle. After beginning with dramatic dialogues of a patriotic tendency, it took a step in advance with the tragedies of J. R. Nerulos⁸ (1778–1850), whose name belongs to the political as well as to the literary history of his country. His comedies—especially one directed against the excesses of journalism⁹—largely contributed to open a literary life for the modern Greek tongue. Among the earlier patriotic Greek dramatists of the present century are T. Alkæos, J. Zampelios (whose tragic style was influenced by that of Alfieri),¹⁰ S. K. Karydis, and A. Valaoritis. A. Zoïros¹¹ is noteworthy as having introduced the use of prose into Greek tragedy, while preserving to it that association with sentiments and aspirations which will probably long continue to pervade the chief productions of modern Greek literature. The love of the theatre is ineradicable from Attic as it is from Italian soil; and the tendencies of the young dramatic literature of Hellas seem to justify the hope that a worthy future awaits it.

Italy produced many brilliant growths, from which the dramatic literatures of other nations largely borrowed; but SPAIN is the only country of modern Europe which shares with England the honour of having achieved, at a relatively early date, the creation of a genuinely national form of the regular drama. So proper to Spain was the form of the drama which she produced and perfected, that to it the term *romantic* has been specifically applied, though so restricted a use of the epithet is clearly unjustifiable. The influences which from the Romance peoples—in whom Christian and Germanic elements mingled with the legacy of Roman law, learning, and culture—spread to the Germanic nations were represented with the most signal force and fulness in the institutions of chivalry,—to which, in the words of Scott, "it was peculiar to blend military valour with the strongest passions which actuate the human mind, the feelings of devotion and those of love." These feelings, in their combined operation upon the national character, and in their reflection in the national literature, were not peculiar to Spain; but nowhere did they so long or so late continue to animate the moral life of a nation. Outward causes contributed to this result. For centuries after the crusades had become a mere memory, Spain was a battle ground between the cross and the crescent. And it was precisely at the time when the Renaissance was establishing new starting-points for the literary progress of Europe, that Christian Spain rose to the height of Catholic as well as national self-consciousness by the expulsion of the Moors and the conquest of the New World. From their rulers or rivals of so many centuries the Spaniards had derived that rich glow of colour which became permanently distinctive of their national life, and more especially of its literary and artistic expressions; they had also perhaps derived from the same source an equally characteristic refinement in their treatment of the passion of love. The ideas of Spanish chivalry—more especially religious devotion and a punctilious sense of personal honour—asserted themselves (according to a process often observable in the history of civilization) with peculiar distinctness in literature and art, after the great achievements to which they had contributed in other fields had already been wrought. The ripest glories of the Spanish drama belong to an age of national decay—mindful, it is true, of the ideas of a greater past. The chivalrous enthusiasm pervading so many of the masterpieces of its literature is indeed a characteristic of

SPANISH DRAMA.

⁸ *Apsasia*; *Polyzena*.

⁹ *Ephemeridophobos*.

¹⁰ *Timoleon*; *Konstantinos Palaeologos*; *Rhigas of Phœra*.

¹¹ *The Three Hundred*, or *The Character of the Ancient Hellenes* (Leonidas); *The Death of the Orator* (Demosthenes); *A Scion of Timoleon*, &c.

the Spanish nation in all, even in the least hopeful, periods of its later history; and the religious ardour breathed by these works, though associating itself with what is called the Catholic Reaction, is in truth only a manifestation of the spirit which informed the noblest part of the Reformation movement itself. The Spanish drama neither sought nor could seek to emancipate itself from views and forms of religious life more than ever sacred to the Spanish people since the glorious days of Ferdinand and Isabella; and it is not in the beginnings but in the great age of Spanish dramatic literature that there is often most difficulty in distinguishing between what is to be termed a religious and what a secular play. After Spain had thus, the first after England among modern European countries, fully unfolded that incomparably richest expression of national life and sentiment in an artistic form—a truly national dramatic literature,—the terrible decay of her greatness and prosperity gradually impaired the strength of a brilliant but, of its nature, dependent growth. In the absence of high original genius the Spanish dramatists began to turn to foreign models, though little supported in such attempts by popular sympathy; and it is only in more recent times that the Spanish drama has sought to reproduce the ancient forms from whose master-pieces the nation had never become estranged, while accommodating them to tastes and tendencies shared by later Spanish literature with that of Europe at large.

Early efforts.

The earlier dramatic efforts of Spanish literature may without inconvenience be briefly dismissed. The reputed author of the *Couplets of Mingo Revulgo* (R. Cota the elder) likewise composed the first act of a story of intrigue and character, purely dramatic but not intended for representation. This tragic comedy of *Calisto and Melibœa*, which was completed (in 21 acts) by 1499, afterwards became famous under the name of *Celestina*; it was frequently imitated and translated, and was adapted for the Spanish stage by R. de Zepeda in 1582. But the father of the Spanish drama was J. de la Enzina (b. c. 1468), whose *representaciones* under the name of "eclogues" were dramatic dialogues of a religious or pastoral character. His attempts were imitated more especially by Gil Vicente (fl. 1502-1536), a Portuguese who wrote both in Spanish and in his native tongue—the dramatic literature of which is stated to have produced nothing of equal merit afterwards. (The Portuguese literary drama is held to have begun with the prose comedies of Vicente's contemporary, F. de Sa de Miranda.) A further impulse came, as was natural, from Spaniards resident in Italy, and especially from B. de T. Naharro, who in 1517 published, as the chief among the "firstlings of his genius" (*Propaladia*), a series of eight *comedias*—a term generally applied in Spanish literature to any kind of drama. He claimed some knowledge of the theory of the ancient drama, divided his plays into *iornadas*¹ (to correspond to acts), and opened them with an *introito* (prologue). Very various in their subjects, and occasionally odd in form,² they were gross as well as audacious in tone, and were soon prohibited by the Inquisition. The church remained unwilling to renounce her control over such dramatic exhibitions as she permitted, and sought to suppress the few plays on not strictly religious subjects which appeared in the early part of the reign of Charles I. The few translations published from the classical drama exercised no effect.

Thus the foundation of the Spanish national theatre was reserved for a man of the people. Cervantes has vividly

¹ The term is the same as that used in the old French collective mysteries (*jeuées*).

² In some of his plays (*Comedia Serafina; C. Tinlararia*) there is a mixture of languages even stranger than that of dialects in the Italian masked comedy.

sketched the humble resources which were at the command of Lope de Rueda (fl. 1544-1567), a mechanic of Seville, who with his friend the bookseller Timoneda, and two brother authors and actors in his strolling company, succeeded in bringing dramatic entertainments out of the churches and palaces into the public places of the towns, where they were produced on temporary scaffolds. The manager carried about his properties in a corn sack; and the "comedies" were still only "dialogues, and a species of eclogues between two or three shepherds and a shepherdess," enlivened at times by intermezcos of favourite comic figures, such as the negress or the Biscayan, "played with inconceivable talent and truthfulness by Lope." One of his plays at least,³ and one of Timoneda's,⁴ seem to have been taken from an Italian source; others mingled modern themes with classical apparitions;⁵ one of Timoneda's was (perhaps again through the Italian) from Plautus.⁶ Others of a slighter description were called *pasos*,—a species afterwards termed *entremeses* and resembling the modern French *proverbes*. With these popular efforts of Lope de Rueda and his friends a considerable dramatic activity began in the years 1560-1590 in several Spanish cities, and before the close of this period permanent theatres began to be fitted up at Madrid. Yet Spanish dramatic literature might still have been led to follow Italian in turning to an imitation of classical models. Two plays by G. Bermudez (1577), called by their learned author "the first Spanish tragedies," treating the national subject of Inez de Castro, but divided into five acts, composed in various metres, and introducing a chorus; a *Dido* (c. 1580) by C. de Virues (who claimed to have first divided dramas into three *jornadas*); and the tragedies of L. L. de Argensola (acted 1585, and praised in *Don Quixote*) alike pointed in this direction.

Such were the alternatives which had opened for the Spanish drama, when at last, about the same time as that of the English, its future was determined by writers of original genius. The first of these was the immortal Cervantes, who, however, failed to anticipate by his earlier plays (1584-1588) the great (though to him unproductive) success of his famous romance. In his endeavour to give a poetic character to the drama he fell upon the expedient of introducing personified abstractions speaking a "divine" or elevated language—a device which was for a time favourably received. But these plays exhibit a neglect or ignorance of the laws of dramatic construction; their action is episodic; and it is from the realism of these episodes (especially in the *Nymancia*, which is crowded with both figures and incidents), and from the power and flow of the declamation, that their effect must have been derived. When in his later years (1615) Cervantes returned to dramatic composition, the style and form of the national drama had been definitively settled by a large number of writers, the brilliant success of whose acknowledged chief may previously have diverted Cervantes from his labours for the theatre. His influence upon the general progress of dramatic literature is, however, to be sought, not only in his plays, but also in those *novelas ejemplares* to which more than one drama is indebted for its plot, and for much of its dialogue to boot.

Lope de Vega (1562-1635), one of the most astonishing geniuses the world has known, permanently established the national forms of the Spanish drama. Some of these were in their beginnings taken over by him from ruder predecessors; some were cultivated with equal or even superior success by subsequent authors; but in variety, as in fertility of dramatic production, he has no rivals. His

³ *Los Engaños* (*Gli Ingannati*).

⁴ *Cornelia* (*Il Negromante*).

⁵ Lope, *Armeline* (Medea, and Neptune as *deus ex machina*—*modo machina adfuisse*).

⁶ *Menenos*.

fertility, which was such that he wrote about 1500 plays, besides 300 dramatic works classed as *autos sacramentales* and *entremeses*, and a vast series of other literary compositions, has indisputably prejudiced his reputation with those to whom he is but a name and a number. Yet as a dramatist Lope more fully exemplifies the capabilities of the Spanish theatre than any of his successors, though as a poet Calderon may deserve the palm. Nor would it be possible to imagine a truer representative of the Spain of his age than a poet who, after suffering the hardships of poverty and exile, and the pangs of passion, sailed against the foes of the faith in the Invincible Armada, subsequently became a member of the Holy Inquisition and of the Order of St Francis, and after having been decorated by the Pope with the cross of Malta and a theological doctorate, honoured by the nobility, and idolized by the nation, ended with the names of Jesus and Mary on his lips. From the plays of such a writer we may best learn the manners and the sentiments, the ideas of religion and honour, of the Spain of the Philippine age, the age when she was most prominent in the eyes of Europe and most glorious in her own. For, with all its inventiveness and vigour, the genius of Lope primarily set itself the task of pleasing his public,—the very spirit of whose inner as well as outer life is accordingly mirrored in his dramatic works. In them we have, in the words of Lope's French translator Baret, "the movement, the clamour, the conflict of unforeseen intrigues suitable to unreflecting spectators; perpetual flatteries addressed to an unextinguishable national pride; the painting of passions dear to a people never tired of admiring itself; the absolute sway of the point of honour; the deification of revenge; the adoration of symbols; buffoonery and burlesque, everywhere beloved of the multitude, but here never defiled by obscenities, for this people has a sense of delicacy, and the foundation of its character is nobility; lastly, the flow of proverbs which at times escape from the *gracioso*" (the comic servant domesticated in the Spanish drama by Lope)—"the commonplace literature of those who possess no other."

The plays of Lope, and those of the national Spanish drama in general, are divided into classes which it is naturally not always easy, and which there is no reason to suppose him always to have intended, to keep distinct from one another. After in his early youth composing eclogues, pastoral plays, and allegorical moralities in the old style, he began his theatrical activity at Madrid about 1590, and the plays which he thenceforth produced have been distributed under the following heads. The *comedias*, all of which are in verse, include (1) the so-called *c. de capa y espada*—not comedies proper, but dramas the principal personages in which are taken from the class of society which wears cloak and sword. Gallantry is their main theme, an interesting and complicated, but well-constructed and perspicuous intrigue their chief feature; and this is usually accompanied by an underplot in which the *gracioso* plays his part. Their titles are frequently taken from the old proverbs or proverbial phrases of the people,¹ upon the theme suggested by which the plays often ('s Mr Lewes admirably expresses it) constitute a kind of gloss (*glosa*) in action. This is the favourite species of the national Spanish theatre; and to the plots of the plays belonging to it the drama of other nations owes a debt almost incalculable in extent. (2) The *c. herbicas* are distinguished by some of their personages being of royal or very high rank, and by their themes being often historical and largely² (though not

invariably³) taken from the national annals, or rounded on contemporary or recent events.⁴ Hence they exhibit a greater gravity of tone; but in other respects there is no difference between them and the cloak and sword comedies with which they share the element of comic underplots. Occasionally Lope condescended in the opposite direction, to (3) plays of which the scene is laid in common life, but for which no special name appears to have existed.⁵ Meanwhile, both he and his successors were too devoted sons of the church not to acknowledge in some sort her claim to influence the national drama. This claim she had never relinquished, even when she could no longer retain an absolute control over the stage. For a time, indeed, she was able to reassert even this; for the exhibition of all secular plays was in 1598 prohibited by the dying Philip II., and remained so for two years; and Lope with his usual facility proceeded to supply religious plays of various kinds. After a few dramas on scriptural subjects he turned to the legends of the saints; and the *comedias de santos*, of which he wrote a great number, became an accepted later Spanish variety of the miracle-play. True, however, to the popular instincts of his genius, he threw himself with special zeal and success into the composition of another kind of religious plays—a development of the Corpus Christi pageants, in honour of which all the theatres had to close their doors for a month. These were the famous *autos sacramentales* (i.e., solemn "acts" or proceedings in honour of the Sacrament), which were performed in the open air by actors who had filled the cars of the sacred procession. Of these Lope wrote about 400. These entertainments were arranged on a fixed scheme, comprising a prologue in dialogue between two or more actors in character (*loa*), a farce (*entremes*), and the *auto*, proper, an allegorical scene of religious purport, as an example of which Ticknor cites the *Bridge of the World*,—in which the Prince of Darkness in vain seeks to defend the bridge against the Knight of the Cross, who finally leads the Soul of Man in triumph across it. Not all the *entremeses* of Lope and others were, however, composed for insertion in these *autos*. This long-lived popular species, together with the old kind of dramatic dialogue called *eclogues*, completes the list of the varieties of his dramatic works.

Autos sacramentales.

Entremeses.

The example of Lope was followed by a large number of writers, and Spain thus rapidly became possessed of a dramatic literature almost unparalleled in quantity—for in fertility also Lope was but the first among many. Among the writers of Lope's school, his friend G. de Castro (1569-1631) must not be passed by, for his *Cid*⁶ was the basis of Corneille's; nor J. P. de Montalvan (1602-1638), "the first-born of Lope's genius," the extravagance of whose imagination, like that of Lee, culminated in madness. Soon after him died (1639) Ruiz de Alarcon, in whose plays, as contrasted with those of Lope, has been recognized the distinctive element of a moral purpose. To G. Tellez, called Tirso de Molina (d. 1648), no similar praise seems due; but the frivolous gaiety of the inventor of the complete character of Don Juan was accompanied by ingenuity in the construction of his excellent⁷ though at times "sensational"⁸ plots. F. de Roxas y Zorilla (b. 1607), who was largely plundered by the French dramatists of the latter half of the century, survived Molina for about a generation. In vain scholars

³ *Roma Abrasada* (R. in Ashes—Nero).

⁴ *Arauco Domado* (The Conquest of Arauco, 1560).

⁵ *La Moza de Cantaro* (The Water-maid).

⁶ *Las Mocedades* (The Youthful Adventures) del Cid.

⁷ *Don Gil de las Calzas Verdes* (D. G. in the Green Breeches).

⁸ *El Burlador de Sevilla y Convidado de Piedra* (The Deceiver of Seville, i.e., Don Juan, and the Stone Guest).

¹ *El Azero de Madrid* (The Steel Water of Madrid); *Dineros son Calidad* (= The Dog in the Manger), &c.

² *La Estrella de Sevilla* (The Star of Seville, i.e., Sancho the Brave); *El Nuevo Mundo* (Columbus), &c.

of strictly classical tastes protested in essays in prose and verse against the ascendancy of the popular drama; the prohibition of Philip II. had been recalled two years after his death and was never renewed; and the activity of the theatre spread through the towns and villages of the land, everywhere under the controlling influence of the school of writers who had established so complete a harmony between the drama and the tastes and tendencies of the people.

The glories of Spanish dramatic literature reached their height in P. Calderon de la Barca (1600-1681), though in the history of the Spanish theatre he holds only the second place. He elaborated some of the forms of the national drama, but brought about no changes of moment in any of them. Even the brilliancy of his style, glittering with a constant reproduction of the same family of tropes, and the variety of his melodious versification, are mere intensifications of the poetic qualities of Lope, while in their moral and religious sentiments, and their general views of history and society, there is no difference between the two. Like Lope, Calderon was a soldier in his youth and an ecclesiastic in his later years; like him he suited himself to the tastes of both court and people, and applied his genius with equal facility to the treatment of religious and of secular themes. In fertility he was inferior to Lope (for he wrote not many more than 100 plays); but he surpasses the elder poet in richness of style, and more especially in fire of imagination. In his *autos* (of which he is said to have left not less than 73), Calderon probably attained to his most distinctive excellence; some of these appear to take a wide range of allegorical invention,¹ while they uniformly possess great beauty of poetical detail. Other of his most famous or interesting pieces are *comedias de santos*,² in his secular plays Calderon treats as wide a variety of subjects as Lope, but it is not a dissimilar variety; nor would it be easy to decide whether a poet so uniformly admirable within his limits has achieved greater success in romantic historical tragedy,³ in the comedy of amorous intrigue,⁴ or in a dramatic work combining fancy and artificiality in such a degree that it has been diversely described as a romantic caprice and as a philosophical poem.⁵

Contem-
poraries of
Calderon.

During the life of the second great master of the Spanish drama there was little apparent abatement in the productivity of its literature; while the *autos* continued to flourish in Madrid and elsewhere, till in 1765 (shortly before the expulsion of the Jesuits from Spain) their public representation was prohibited by royal decree. In the world of fashion, the opera had reached Spain already during Calderon's lifetime, together with other French influences, and the great dramatist had himself written one or two of his plays for performance with music. But the regular national drama continued to command popular favour; and with A. Moreto (1618-1669) may be said to have even taken a fresh step. While he wrote in all the forms established by Lope and cultivated by Calderon, his manner seems most nearly to approach the master-pieces of French and later English comedy of character, he was the earliest writer of the *comedias de figuron*, in which the most prominent personage is (in Congreve's phrase) "a character of affectation," in other words, the Spanish fop of real life.⁶ His master-piece, a favourite of many stages, is one of the most graceful and pleasing of modern comedies—simple but interesting in plot, and true to nature, with something like Shakespearean truth.⁷ Other writers trod

¹ *El Divino Orfeo*, &c.

² *El Magico Prodigioso*; *El Purgatorio de San Patricio*; *La Devocion de la Cruz*.

³ *El Principe Constante* (Don Ferdinand of Portugal).

⁴ *La Dama Duende* (*The Fairy Lady*).

⁵ *Vida es Sueño* (*Life is a Dream*).

⁶ *El Linceo Don Diego* (*Pretty Don Diego*).

⁷ *Desden con el Desden* (*Disdain against Disdain*).

more closely in the footsteps of the masters without effecting any noticeable changes in the form of the Spanish drama; even the *saynete* (tit-bit), which owes its name to Benavente (fl. 1645), was only a kind of *entremes*. The Spanish drama in all its forms retained its command over the nation, because they were alike popular in origin and character; nor is there any other example of so complete an adaptation of a national art to the national taste and sentiment in its ethics and aesthetics, in the nature of the plots of the plays (whatever their origin), in the motives of their actions, in the conduct and tone and in the very costume of their characters.

National as it was, and because of this very quality, the Spanish drama was fated to share the lot of the people it so fully represented. At the end of the 17th century, when the Spanish throne at last became the declared apple of discord among the Governments of Europe, the Spanish people lay, in the words of a historian of its later days, "like a corpse, incapable of feeling its own impotence." That national art to which it had so faithfully clung had fallen into decline and decay with the spirit of Spain itself. By the time of the close of the great war, the theatre had sunk into a mere amusement of the populace, which during the greater part of the 18th century, while allowing the old masters the measure of favour which accords with traditional esteem, continued to uphold the representa-

The
French
school of
the 18th
century.

tatives of the old drama in its degeneracy—authors on the level of their audiences. But the Spanish court was now French, and France in the drama, even more than in any other form of art, was the arbiter of taste in Europe. With the restoration of peace accordingly began isolated attempts to impose the French canons of dramatic theory, and to follow the example of French dramatic practice; and in the middle of the century these endeavours assumed more definite form. Montiano's bloodless tragedy of *Virginia* (1750), which was never acted, was accompanied by a discourse endeavouring to reconcile the doctrines of the author with the practice of the old Spanish dramatists; the play itself was in blank verse (a metre never used by Calderon, though occasionally by Lope), instead of the old national ballad-measures (the romance-measure with assurance and the rhymed *redondilla* quatrain) preferred by the old masters among the variety of metres employed by them. The earliest Spanish comedy in the French form (a translation only, though written in the national metre)⁸ (1751), and the first original Spanish comedy on the same model, Moratin's *Petimetra* (*Petite-Maitresse*), printed in 1726 with a critical dissertation, likewise remained unacted. In 1770, however, the same author's *Hormesinda*, an historic drama on a national theme and in the national metre, but adhering to the French rules, appeared on the stage; and similar attempts followed in tragedy by the same writer and others (including Ayala, who ventured in 1775 to compete with Cervantes on the theme of Numantia), and in comedy by Yriarte and Jovellanos (afterwards minister under Godoy), who produced a sentimental comedy in Diderot's manner.⁹ But these endeavours failed to effect any change in the popular theatre, which was with more success raised from its deepest degradation by R. de la Cruz (b. 1731), a fertile author of light pieces of genuine humour, especially *saynetes*, depicting the manners of the middle and lower classes. In literary circles La Huerta's voluminous collection of the old plays (1785) gave a new impulse to dramatic productivity, and the conflict continued between representatives of the old school, such as Comella (fl. 1780) and of the new, such as the younger Moratin (1760-1828), whose comedies—of which the last

⁸ Luzan, *La Razon contra la Mode* (Lachaussee, *Le Préjugé à la Mode*).

⁹ *El Delincuente Honrado* (*The Honoured Culprit*).

and most successful¹ was in prose—raised him to the foremost position among the dramatists of his age. In tragedy N. de Cienfuegos (d. 1809) likewise showed some originality. After, however, the troubles of the French domination and the war had come to an end, the precepts and examples of the new school failed to reassert themselves. The Spanish dramatists of the present century, after passing, as in the instances of F. Martinez de la Rosa and Breton de los Herreros, from the system of French comedy to the manner of the national drama, appear either to have stood under the influence of the French romantic school, or to have returned once more to the old national models. Among the former class A. Gil y Zarate, among the latter J. Zorilla, are mentioned as specially prominent. Meanwhile the old popular religious performances are not wholly extinct in Spain, and their relics may long continue to survive there. Whatever may be the future history of one of the most remarkable of dramatic literatures, it may confidently be predicted that so long as Spain is Spain, her theatre will not be permanently denationalized, and that the revolutions it may be destined to undergo are unlikely to extinguish, in whatever degree they may repress, its conservative elements.

The
French
regular
drama.

The beginnings of the regular drama in FRANCE, which here, without absolutely determining, potently swayed its entire course, sprang directly from the literary movement of the Renaissance. Du Bellay sounded the note of attack which converted that movement in France into an endeavour to transform the national literature; and in Ronsard the classical school of poetry put forward its conquering hero and sovereign lawgiver. Among the disciples who gathered round Ronsard, and with him formed the "Pleiad" of French literature, Stephen Jodelle (1532-1572), the reformer of the French theatre, soon held a distinguished place. The stage of this period left ample room for the enterprise of this youthful writer. The popularity of the old entertainments had reached its height when Louis XII., in his conflict with Pope Julius II., had not scrupled to call in the aid of Pierre Grégoire (Gringore), and when the *Mère Sotte* had mockingly masqueraded in the petticoats of Holy Church. Under Francis I. the Inquisition had to some extent succeeded in repressing the audacity of the actors, whose follies were at the same time an utter abomination in the eyes of the Huguenots. For a time the very mysteries had been prohibited. Meanwhile, isolated translations of Italian² or classical³ dramas had in literature begun the movement which Jodelle now transferred to the stage itself. His tragedy, *Cléopâtre Captive*, was produced there on the same day as his comedy, *L'Éugène*, in 1552, his *Didon se sacrifiant* following in 1558. Thus at a time when a national theatre was perhaps impossible in a country distracted by civil and religious conflicts, whose monarchy had not yet welded together a number of provinces attached each to its own traditions, and whose population, especially in the capital, was enervated by frivolity or enslaved by fanaticism, was born that long-lived artificial growth, the so-called classical tragedy of France. For French comedy, though subjected to the same influences as tragedy, had a national basis upon which to proceed, and its history is partly that of a modification of old popular forms.

The history of French tragedy begins with the *Cléopâtre Captive*, in the representation of which the author, together with other members of the "Pleiad," took part. It is a tragedy in the manner of Seneca, devoid of action and

¹ *El Si de las Niñas* (*The Young Maidens' Consent*).

² Trissino, *Sofonisba*.

³ Sophocles, *Antigone*; *Electra*; Euripides, *Hecuba*; Terence, *Andria*; Aristophanes, *Plutus* (by Ronsard, 1549).

provided with a ghost and a chorus. Though mainly written in the five-foot iambic couplet, it already contains passages in the Alexandrine metre, which soon afterwards La Pérouse by his *Médée* (pr. 1556) established in French tragedy, and which Jodelle employed in his *Didon*. Numerous tragedies followed in the same style by various authors, among whom Bounyn produced the first French regular tragedy on a subject neither Greek nor Roman,⁴ and the brothers De la Taille,⁵ and J. Grevin,⁶ distinguished themselves by their style. Though in the reign of Charles IX. a vain attempt was made by Filleul to introduce the pastoral style of the Italians into French tragedy⁷ (while the Brotherhood of the Passion was intermingling with pastoral plays its still continued reproductions of the old entertainments, and the religious drama making its expiring efforts), the classical school, in spite of all difficulties, prevailed. Monchrestien exhibited unusual vigour of rhetoric;⁸ and in R. Garnier (1545-1601) French tragedy reached the greatest height in nobility and dignity of style, as well as in the exhibition of dramatic passion, to which it attained before Corneille. In his tragedies⁹ choruses are still interspersed among the long Alexandrine tirades of the dialogue.

During this period, comedy had likewise been influenced by classical models; but the distance was less between the national farces and Terence, than between the mysteries and moralities, and Seneca and the Greeks. *L'Éugène* differs little in style from the more elaborate of the old farces; and while it satirizes the foibles of the clergy without any appreciable abatement of the old licence, its theme is the favourite burden of the French comic theatre of all times—*le coquage*. The examples, however, which directly facilitated the productivity of the French comic dramatists of this period, among whom Jean de la Taille was the first to attempt a regular comedy in prose,¹⁰ were those of the Italian stage, which in 1576 established a permanent colony in France, destined to survive there till the close of the 17th century, by which time it had adopted the French language, and was ready to coalesce with French actors, without, however, relinquishing all remembrance of its origin. R. Belleau (1528-1577), a member of the "Pleiad," produced a comedy in which the type (already approached by Jodelle) of the swaggering captain appears;¹¹ J. Grevin copied Italian intrigue, characters, and manners;¹² O. de Turnèbe (d. 1581) borrowed the title of one Italian play¹³ and perhaps parts of the plots of others; the Florentine F. d'Amboise (d. 1558) produced versions of two Italian comedies;¹⁴ and the foremost French comic poet of the century, P. de Larivey (1550-1612), likewise an Italian born (of the name of Pietro Giunto), openly professed to imitate the poets of his native country. His plays are more or less literal translations of L. Dolce,¹⁵ Secchi,¹⁶ and other Italian dramatists; and this lively and witty author, to whom Molière owes much, thus connects two of the most important and successful growths of the modern comic drama.

Before, however, either tragedy or comedy in France entered into the period of their history when genius was to illuminate both with creations of undying merit, they had, together with the general literature of the country, passed through a new phase of the national life. The troubles and terrors of the great civil and religious wars of the 16th century had in certain spheres of society produced a reaction towards culture and refinement; and the seal had been set upon the results of the Renaissance by Malherbe, the

⁴ *La Sallane* (1561).

⁵ *La Mort de César*.

⁶ *Les Lachés*; *Marie Stuart* or *L'Ecosaise*.

⁷ *La Juive*, &c.

⁸ *Le Reconnu* (Le Capitaine Rodomont).

⁹ *Les Contens* (S. Parabosco, *I Contenti*).

¹⁰ *Les Corvauz* (1573).

¹¹ *Les Napolitaines*; *Les Désespérades de l'Amour*.

¹² *Les Laquais* (*Ragazzi*).

¹³ *Daire* (*Darius*).

¹⁴ *Les Esbahis*.

¹⁵ *Les Tromperies* (*Gli Inganni*).

¹⁶ *Les Tromperies* (*Gli Inganni*).

Comedy
under
Italian
influence

father of French style. The people continued to solace or distract its weariness and its sufferings with the help of the ministers of that half-cynical gaiety which has always lighted up the darkest hours of French popular life. In the troublous days preceding Richelieu's definitive accession to power (1624) the *Tabarinades*—a kind of street dialogue recalling the earliest days of the popular drama—had made the Pont-Neuf the favourite theatre of the Parisian populace. Meanwhile the influence of Spain, which Henry IV. had overcome in politics, had throughout his reign and afterwards been predominant in other spheres, and not the least in that of literature. The *stilo culto*, of which Gongora was the native Spanish, Marino the Italian, and Lyly the English representative, asserted its dominion over the favourite authors of French society; the pastoral romances of Honoré d'Urfé—the text-book of pseudo-pastoral gallantry—was the parent of the romances of the Scudérys and De la Calprenède; the Hôtel de Rambouillet was in its glory; the true (not the false) *précieuses* sat on the heights of intellectual society; and Balzac (ridiculed in the earliest French dramatic parody)¹ and Voiture were the dictators of its literature. Much of the French drama of this age is of the same kind as its romance-literature, like which it fell under the polite castigation of Boileau's satire. Heroic love (quite a technical passion), "fertile in tender sentiments," seized hold of the theatre as well as of the romances; and Calprenède (1610-1663), G. de Scudéry² (1601-1667) and his sister (1607-1701), and others were equally fashionable in both species. Meanwhile Spanish and Italian models continued to influence both branches of the drama. Everybody knew by heart Gongora's version of the story of "young Pyramus and his love Thisbe" as dramatized by Th. Viaud (1590-1626); and the sentiment of Tristan³ (1601-1655) overpowered Herod on the stage, and drew tears from Cardinal Richelieu in the audience. Even Duryer's (1609-1659) style, otherwise superior to that of his contemporaries, is stated to have been Italian in its defects. A mixture of the forms of classical comedy with elements of Spanish and of the Italian pastoral was attempted with great temporary success by A. Hardi (1560-1631), a playwright who thanked Heaven that he knew the precepts of his art while preferring to follow the demands of his trade. The mixture of styles begun by him was carried on by Racan (1589-1670), Rotrou (1609-1650), and others; and among these comedies of intrigue in the Spanish manner the earliest efforts of Corneille himself⁴ are to be classed. Rotrou's noteworthy productions⁵ are later in date than the event which marks an epoch in the history of the French drama, the appearance of Corneille's *Cid* (1636).

P. Corneille (1606-1684) is justly revered as the first, and in some respects the unequalled, great master of French tragedy, whatever may have been unsound in his theories, or defective in his practice. The attempts of his predecessors had been without life, because they lacked really tragic characters and the play of really tragic passions; while their style had been either pedantically imitative or a medley of plagiarisms. He conquered tragedy at once for the national theatre and for the national literature, and this not by a long tentative process of production, but by a few master-pieces,—for in his many later tragedies he never again proved fully equal to himself. The French tragedy, of which the great age begins with the *Cid*, *Horace*, *Cinna*, and *Polyeucte*, was not, whatever it professed to be, a copy of the classical tragedy of Greeks or Romans, or an imitation of the Italian imitations of these; nor, though in

his later tragedies Corneille depended less and less upon characters, and more and more, after the fashion of the Spaniards, upon situations, were the forms of the Spanish drama able to assert their dominion over the French tragic stage. The mould of French tragedy was cast by Corneille; but the creative power of his genius was unable to fill it with more than a few examples. His range of passions and characters was limited; he preferred, he said, the reproach of having made his women too heroic to that of having made his men effeminate. His actions inclined too much to the exhibition of conflicts political rather than broadly ethical in their significance. The defects of his style are of less moment; but in this, as in other respects, he was, with all his strength and brilliancy, not one of those rarest of artists who are at once the example and the despair of their successors.

In comedy also Corneille begins the first great original epoch of French dramatic literature; for it was to him that Molière owed the inspiration of the tone and style which he made those of the higher forms of French comedy. But *Le Menteur* (the parent of a numerous dramatic progeny⁶) was itself derived from a Spanish original,⁷ which it did not (as was the case with the *Cid*) transform into something new. French tragi-comedy Corneille can hardly be said to have invented; and of the mongrel growth of sentimental comedy, domestic drama or *drame*, he rather suggested than exemplified the conditions.

The tragic art of Racine (1639-1699) supplements rather than surpasses that of his older contemporary. His works reflect the serene and settled formality of an age in which the sun of monarchy shone with an effulgence no clouds seemed capable of obscuring, and in which the life of a nation seemed reducible to the surroundings of a court. The tone of the poetic literature of such an age is not necessarily unreal, because the range of its ideas is limited, and because its forms seem to exist by an immutable authority. Madame de Sévigné said of Racine, whose plays so well suit themselves to the successive phases in the life of Louis XIV., that in his later years he loved God as he had formerly loved his mistresses; and this sally at all events indicates the range of passions which inspired his tragic muse. His heroes are all of one type—that of a gracious gloriousness; his heroines vary in their fortunes, but they are all the "trophies of love,"⁸ with the exception of the scriptural figures, which stand apart from the rest.⁹

T. Corneille (1625-1709), Campistron, Duché, Lafosse, and Quinault (1637-1688) were mere followers of one or both of the great masters of tragedy, though the last-named achieved a reputation of his own in the bastard species of the opera. The form of French tragedy thus established, like everything else which formed part of the "age of Louis XIV.," proclaimed itself as the definitively settled model of its kind, and was accepted as such by a submissive world. Proud of its self-imposed fetters, French tragedy dictatorially denied the liberty of which it had deprived itself to the art of which it claimed to furnish the highest examples. Yet, though calling itself classical, it had not caught the essential spirit of the tragedy of the Greeks. The elevation of tone which characterizes the serious drama of the age of Louis XIV. is a real elevation, but its heights do not lose themselves in a sphere peopled by the myths of a national religion. Its personages are conventional like its themes, but the convention is with itself only; Orestes and Iphigenia have not brought with them the cries of the stern goddesses and the flame on the altar of Artemis; their passions like their

¹ "L. du Peschier" (de Barry), *La Comédie des Comédies*.

² *L'Amour Tyrannique*.

³ *Mélie; Cléandre, &c.*

⁴ *Le Véritable Saint Genais; Venceslas.*

⁵ *Marianne.*

⁶ Steele, *The Lying Lover*; Foote, *The Liar*; Goldoni, *Il Bugiardo*.

⁷ Ruiz de Alarcón, *La Verdad Sospechosa*.

⁸ *Andromaque; Phédre; Bérénice, &c.*

⁹ *Esther; Athalie.*

speech are cadenced by a modern measure. In construction, the simplicity and regularity of the ancient models are stereotyped into a rigid etiquette by the exigencies of the court-theatre, which is but an apartment of the palace. The unities of time and place, with the Greeks mere rules of convenience, French tragedy imposes upon itself as a permanent yoke. The Euripidean prologue is judiciously exchanged for the exposition of the first act, and the lyrical element essential to Greek tragedy is easily suppressed in its would-be copy; lyrical passages still occur in some of Corneille's early master-pieces,¹ but the chorus is consistently banished, to reappear only in Racine's latest works² as a scholastic experiment appropriate to a conventional atmosphere. Its uses for explanation and comment are served by the expedient, which in its turn becomes conventional, of the conversations with *confidants* and *confidantes*, which more than sufficiently supply the foil of general sentiments. The epical element is allowed full play in narrative passages, more especially in those which relate parts of the catastrophe,³ and, while preserving the stage intact from realisms, suit themselves to the generally rhetorical character of this species of the tragic drama. This character impresses itself more and more upon the tragic art of a rhetorical nation in an age when the loftiest themes are elsewhere (in the pulpit) receiving the most artistic oratorical treatment, and develops in the style of French tragedy the qualities which cause it to become something between prose and poetry—or to appear (in the phrase of a French critic) like prose in full dress. The force of this description is borne out by the fact that the distinction between the versification of French tragedy and that of French comedy is at times an imperceptible one.

The universal genius of Voltaire (1694-1778) found it necessary to shine in all branches of literature, and in tragedy to surpass predecessors whom his own authority declared to have surpassed the efforts of the Attic muse. He succeeded in impressing the world with the belief that his innovations had imparted a fresh vitality to French tragedy; in truth, however, they represent no essential advance in art, but rather augmented the rhetorical tendency which paralyzes true dramatic life. Such life as his plays possess lies in their political and social sentiments, their invective against tyranny,⁴ and their exposure of fanaticism.⁵ In other respects his versatility was barren of enduring results. He might take his themes from French history,⁶ or from Chinese,⁷ or Egyptian,⁸ or Syrian,⁹ from the days of the Epigoni¹⁰ or from those of the Crusades;¹¹ he might appreciate Shakespeare, with a more or less partial comprehension of his strength, and condescendingly borrow from and improve the barbarian.¹² But he added nothing to French tragedy where it was weakest—in character; and where it was strongest—in diction—he never equalled Corneille in fire or Racine in refinement. While the criticism to which French tragedy in this age at last began to be subjected has left unimpaired the real titles to immortality of its great masters, the French theatre itself has all but buried in respectful oblivion the dramatic works bearing the name of Voltaire—a name second to none in the history of modern progress and of modern civilization.

As it is of relatively little interest to note the ramifications of an art in its decline, the contrasts need not be pursued among the contemporaries of Voltaire, between his

¹ *Le Cid; Polyeucte.*

² *Esther; Athalie.*

³ Corneille, *Rodogune*; Racine, *Phédre*.

⁴ *Brutus; La Mort de César; Sémiramis.*

⁵ *Œdipe; Le Fanatisme (Mahomet).*

⁶ *Adolphe du Guesclin.*

⁷ *L'Orphelin de la Chine.*

⁸ *Tanis et Zéïde.*

⁹ *Les Guebres.*

¹⁰ *Olympie.*

¹¹ *Tanorede.*

¹² *La Mort de César; Zaire (Othello).*

imitator Saurin (1706-1781), Saurin's royalist rival De Belloy (1727-1775), Racine's imitator Lagrange-Chancel (1676-1758), and Voltaire's own would-be rival, the "terrible" Crébillon the elder (1674-1762), who professed to vindicate to French tragedy, already mistress of the heavens through Corneille, and of the earth through Racine, Pluto's supplementary realm, but who, though thus essaying to carry tragedy lower, failed to carry it further. In the latter part of the 18th century French classical tragedy as a literary growth was dying a slow death, however numerous might be the leaves which sprouted from the decaying tree. Its form had been permanently fixed; and even Shakespeare, as manipulated by Ducis¹³ (1733-1816)—an author whose tastes were better than his times—failed to bring about a change. "It is a Moor, not a Frenchman, who has written this play," cried a spectator of Ducis's *Othello* (1791); but though Talma might astonish the theatre, Shakespeare's influence over the French drama was only gradually preparing itself, by means more especially of Letourneur's translation (1776-1782), which attracted the sympathy of Diderot and the execrations of the aged Voltaire. The command which classical French tragedy continued to assert over the stage was due in part, no doubt, to the love of Roman drapery which in more than one sense characterized the Revolution, and which was by the Revolution handed down to the Empire. It was likewise, and more signally, due to the great tragic actors who freed the tragic stage from much of its artificiality and animated it by their genius. No great artist has ever more generously estimated the labours of a predecessor than Talma (1763-1826) judged those of Le Kain (1728-1778); but it was Talma himself whose genius was pre-eminently fitted to reproduce the great figures of antiquity in the mimic world, which, like the world outside, both required and possessed its Cæsar. He, like Rachel (1821-1858) after him, reconciled French classical tragedy with nature; and it is upon the art of great original actors such as these that the theatrical future of this form of the drama in France depends. Mere whims of fashion—even when inspired by political feeling—will not waft back to it a real popularity; nor will occasional literary aftergrowths, however meritorious, such as the effective *Lucrèce* of F. Ponsard, and the attempts of even more recent writers, suffice to re-establish a living union between it and the progress of the national literature.

The rival influences under which classical tragedy has become a thing of the past in French literature connect themselves with the history of French comedy, which under the co-operation of other influences produced a wide variety of growths. The germs of most of these—though not of all—are to be found in the works of the most versatile, and, in some respects, the most consummate comic dramatist the world has known,—Molière (1622-1693). What Molière found in existence was a comedy of intrigue, derived from Spanish or Italian examples, and the elements of a comedy of character, in French and more especially in Italian farce and ballet-pantomime. Corneille's *Menteur* had pointed the way to a fuller combination of character with intrigue, and in this direction Molière's genius exercised the height of its creative powers. After beginning with farces, he produced in the earliest of his plays (from 1652), of which more than fragments remain, comedies of intrigue which are at the same time marvellously lively pictures of manners, and then proceeded with the *École des Maris* (1661) to begin a long series of master-pieces of comedy of character. Yet even these, the chief of which are altogether unrivalled in dramatic literature, do not exhaust the variety of his productions. To define the

¹³ *Hamlet; Le Roi Lear, &c.*