

ENCYCLOPÆDIA BRITANNICA.

MEN—MEN

MENA, JUAN DE, one of the Italianizing Spanish poets of the 15th century, was born at Cordova about 1411. We are informed by Romero, to whom we are indebted for almost all we know about his life, that he had attained the age of twenty-three before he began to give himself to "the sweet labour of good learning," pursuing a regular course of study at Salamanca and afterwards at Rome. It was at the latter city that he first became acquainted with the writings of Dante and Petrarch, which afterwards so powerfully influenced his own style. Having returned to Spain, he became a "veinticuatro," or magistrate, of his native town, and was received as a poet with great favour at the court of John II., being made Latin secretary to the king and historiographer of Castile. He died suddenly, in consequence of a fall from his mule, in 1456, at Torrelaguna, where the marquis of Santillana, his friend and patron, erected his monument and wrote his epitaph. De Mena's principal work, *El Laberinto* ("The Labyrinth"), sometimes called *Las Trescientas* ("The Three Hundred") from the original number of its stanzas, is a didactic allegory on the duties and destinies of man, obviously constructed on the lines of the *Divina Commedia* of Dante. The poet, while wandering in a wood and exposed to the attacks of various beasts of prey, is met by Providence in the guise of a beautiful woman, who offers to guide him safely through the dangers which surround him, and at the same time to explain—"as far as they may be grasped by human understanding"—the dark mysteries of life that weigh upon his spirit. He is then led to the spherical centre of the five zones, where he sees the three wheels of destiny, the past, the future, and the present, and the men belonging to each, arranged in the seven circles of planetary influence. Opportunity is thus afforded for a vast quantity of mythological and historical portraiture; the best sketches are those of the poet's own contemporaries, but the work in general is much disfigured with all sorts of pedantry, and hardly ever attains to mediocrity as a poem. The *Laberinto* was first printed at Seville in 1496; Nuñez and Sanchez accompanied it with commentaries in 1499 and 1582 respectively; and it is still regarded with a good deal of reverence by the Spaniards as the "magnum opus" of their "Ennius." De Mena was the author of a number of minor poems or "vers de société," written merely for

court circles, and having neither general interest nor permanent value; most of them are to be found in the *Cancionero General*. He also wrote a poem entitled *La Coronacion*, the subject being the "crowning" of the marquis of Santillana by the Muses and the Virtues on Mount Parnassus. Finally, his *Siete Pecados Mortales* ("Seven Deadly Sins") is a dull allegory on the antagonism between reason and the will of man. Complete editions of the poems of De Mena appeared in 1528, 1804, and 1840.

MÉNAGE, GILLES (1613–1692), described by Bayle as "one of the most learned men of his time, and the Varro of the 17th century," was the son of Guillaume Ménage, king's advocate at Angers, and was born in that city or August 15, 1613. A tenacious memory and an early developed enthusiasm for learning carried him speedily through his literary and professional studies, and we read of him practising at the bar at Angers as early as 1632. In the same year he pleaded several causes before the parlement of Paris, and soon afterwards he attended the "Grand Tours" at Poitiers, but after having been laid aside by a severe illness he abandoned the legal profession and declared his intention of entering the church. He succeeded in obtaining some sinecure benefices, and lived for some years in the household of Cardinal De Retz (then only coadjutor to the archbishop of Paris), where he had ample leisure for his favourite literary pursuits. Some time after 1648 he withdrew to a house of his own in the cloister of Notre Dame, where his remarkable conversational powers enabled him to gather round him on Wednesday evenings those much frequented literary assemblies which he called "Mercuriales." His learning procured for him admission to the Della Cruscan Academy of Florence, but his irrepressible tendency to caustic sarcasm led to his remorseless exclusion from the French Academy. He died at Paris on July 23, 1692. Of the voluminous works of Ménage (fully enumerated in the *Dictionnaire* of *Chauffepié*) the following may be mentioned:—*Origines de la Langue Française* (1650; greatly enlarged in 1694); *Diogenes Laertius Græce et Latine, cum Commentario* (1663 and again much improved in 1692); *Poemata Latina, Gallica, Græca, et Italica* (1656; 8th ed., 1687); *Origines della Lingua Italiana* (1669); and *Anti-Baillet* (1690).

After his death a volume of *Menagiana* was published; it was afterwards expanded into two, and, with great additions, into four in the Paris edition of 1715.

MENANDER, the most famous Greek poet of the New Comedy, which prevailed from about the death of Alexander the Great (323 B.C.) to 250. He was born at Athens in 342, and died, it was said, by drowning in the harbour of that city (Piræus) in 291. His social tastes induced him to write plays rather for the upper classes, and to raise comedy to a gentility which it had hardly possessed in the hands of the preceding comic poets. He was the associate, if not the pupil, of Theophrastus, who himself had been a disciple of Plato and Aristotle, and he was the intimate friend and admirer of Epicurus; but he also enjoyed the more distinguished patronage of Demetrius Phalereus (who was likewise a pupil of Theophrastus), and of Ptolemy the son of Lagus.¹ His principal rival in the art was Philemon, who appears to have been more popular with the multitude, and for that reason probably more successful. It is said that out of a hundred comedies Menander gained the prize with but eight. All the extant plays of Terence, with the exception of the *Phormio*, are avowedly taken from Menander; but some of them appear to have been adaptations and combinations of more than one plot, although Terence himself says in the prologue to the *Adelphi* (11) that he copied the Greek model closely, "verbum de verbo expressum extulit." Julius Caesar called Terence *dimidiatus Menander*, as if two halves of different plays had been fitted into one.²

The Attic New Comedy, says Dr Wagner,³ "may be designated as essentially domestic," i.e., as opposed to that free discussion of the politics of the day which gave to the Old Comedy the place which is held by the "leading articles" of a modern newspaper. "The stock characters were such as the stern or weak father, the son whose follies are seconded by a slave or a hungry parasite, the pettifogger, active in stirring up law suits, and the gasconading soldier of fortune."⁴ These and cognate subjects, which formed the stock-in-trade of Menander's plays, are summed up in two well-known lines of Ovid—

"Dum fallax servus, durus pater, improba lena
Vivet, dum meretrix blanda, Menandros erit."

It is a good remark of Dr Wagner's⁵ that the last-mentioned of these, the *meretrix blanda* (which probably refers especially to the *Thais*), "holds the most important and conspicuous part in the New Attic Comedy, while married ladies are continually represented as the plague and bore of their husbands' lives." Intrigues with these, generally through the medium of a clever confidential slave, are for the most part the very point or pivot on which the plot turns.

The more literary Romans greatly admired Menander as a poet. Pliny (*N. H.*, xxx. 1, § 7) speaks of him as "Menander litterarum subtilitati sine æmulo genitus." Propertius, contemplating a visit to Athens,⁶ anticipates the pleasure of reading Menander in his native city—

"Persequar aut studium linguæ, Demosthenis arma,
Libaboque tuos, scito Menandre, sales."

¹ In allusion to this Pliny writes (*N. H.*, vii. 30, § 111), "Magnum et Menandro in comico socco testimonium regum Ægypti et Macedoniae contigit classe et per legatos petito: majus ex ipso, regie fortune prælata litterarum conscientia." This seems to say that Menander had been invited to the courts of Alexander and Ptolemy, as Euripides had been to that of Archelaus, king of Macedonia, but had preferred to write comedies for the Attic stage.

² Thus the *Andria*, *Heautontimorumenos*, and *Hecyra* are described severally in the *tituli* prefixed as *Græca* or *tota Græca Menandri*. The *Eunuch* and *Timorumenos* are each based on two plays of Menander, and the *Adelphi* was compiled partly from Menander and partly from Diphilus.

³ *Introduction to Terence*, p. 6 (Bell, 1869).

⁴ Professor Jebb, *Primer of Greek Literature*, p. 101.

⁵ *Ut sup.*, p. 7.

⁶ *El.*, iv. 21. 27.

He elsewhere speaks of him as "mundus Menander," neat, terse, and urbane; and his skill in depicting the character of a fascinating Thais is alluded to here and in ii. 6, 3:

"Turba Menandrea fuerat nec Thaidos olim
Tanta, in qua populus lusit Erichthonius."

Of this comedy, the *Thais*, Professor Mahaffy remarks⁷ that perhaps it was the most brilliant of Menander's plays, "the manners and characters of the personage being painted with thorough experience as well as genius." Nevertheless, only five verses of this play have been preserved to us, one of which is that quoted by St Paul (1 Cor. xv. 33), "Evil communications corrupt good manners." The same critic, in praising Menander's style as the purest model of the New Attic, observes that a remarkable feature of the New Comedy was "its utter avoidance of rhetoric" (p. 489). The influence which this art had on Euripides is well known. Sophocles was not wholly exempt from a kind of rhetorical pedantry, and the speeches in Thucydides are so many exercises of the author in that art. But, as rhetoric pertained essentially to public life, it was likely to have a much less scope in scenes borrowed almost solely from social and domestic experiences.

Menander, however, did not neglect the other branch of a liberal Attic education,—philosophy. A follower and a friend of Epicurus, whose *summum bonum* was the greatest amount of enjoyment to be got out of life, he carried out in practice what he advocated by precept; for he was essentially the well-to-do gentleman,⁸ and moved in the upper circles of Athenian society. "The philosophers of the day" (i.e., the schools and universities in our modern systems of teaching) "were still," says Professor Mahaffy,⁹ viz., even during the period of the New Comedy, "the constant butt of the dramatists." He adds that, "what is still stranger, political attacks on living personages, not excepting Alexander the Great, were freely and boldly made."

On the whole, our estimate of the spirit and object of Menander must be formed rather from his imitator and copyist Terence than from the fragments which remain, about 2400 verses in all, as collected by Meineke in his *Fragmenta Comicorum Græcorum*. For, as Professor Mahaffy well observes,¹⁰ the extracts made by Athenæus, our principal authority, have reference chiefly to "the archaeology of cooks and cookery," while Stobæus was a collector of *γνώμαι* or wise maxims,—a most unfortunate and worthless kind of citation." It follows that no sound conclusions as to dramatic genius, or of the knowledge of human nature, can be drawn from detached verses preserved without the least reference to these particular points. The extraordinary popularity of Menander must have been due to literary merit, if not to great originality. Mr Mahaffy observes on this¹¹ that "there is so much of a calm gentlemanly morality about his fragments, he is so excellent a teacher of the ordinary world-wisdom—resignation, good temper, moderation, friendliness—that we can well understand this popularity. Copies of his plays continued long in existence, and were certainly known to Suidas and Eustathius as late as the 11th and 12th centuries, if they did not survive to a yet later period."¹²

In respect of language, Menander occupies the same position in poetry which his contemporary Demosthenes does in prose. In both the New Attic is elaborated with great finish, and with much greater grammatical precision than we find in writers of the Old Attic, such as Sophocles and Thucydides. A considerable addition to the vocabulary of every-day life had now been made, as was indeed inevitable from the versatile character of the language and the genius of the people who used it. Many new verb-forms, especially the perfect active,¹³ now occur, and indeed form a characteristic innovation of the style of Plato. The earlier prose was in its general vocabulary to a considerable extent poetical, and such a concurrence of short syllables as in the Platonic ἀποδοκιμαχίες

⁷ *Hist. Class. Gr. Lit.*, i. p. 488.

⁸ Pliny calls Menander "diligentissimus luxuriosus interpres," *N. H.*, xxxvi. 5.

⁹ *Hist. Class. Gr. Lit.*, i. p. 480.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 487.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 487.

¹² A curious example is ἀπεκράγασαι, the transitive perfect of ἀποκρίσκειν. Similarly we have the unusual forms κέρηκα (frag. 559), ἐψόθηκα (727), συγκέχρηκα (810).

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 480.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 490.

(ἀποδοκιμαχίαι) is ill-suited even to choral metre. The Old Comedy was worked by men of real genius, who "were indeed giants, while the men of Menander's day only showed how strong and thorough was the culture which in art and literature outlived the decadence of the nation."¹⁴

In all, we have, as collected by Meineke, 1045 fragments of Menander, of which 515 can be referred to known plays, the titles of those quoted from amounting to ninety, and including the Terentian *Andria*, *Adelphi*, *Eunuchus*, *Heautontimorumenos*. These fragments contain about 1650 verses or parts of verses, not including a considerable number of words quoted expressly as from Menander by the old lexicographers. Besides all these there are not fewer than 758 monostich verses separately preserved in MSS., though some of these are met with in the other and longer fragments. Many of the fragments are obscure, some corrupt; and they have been a fertile field for critical acumen from the time of Bentley. Not unfrequently we come upon the shrewd or original remark of an observer. Thus (frag. 7) "A poor man has no relations, for no one acknowledges him, lest he should beg." Frag. 145, "Everything that takes place is brought about by law, necessity, or fashion." 237, "The gods do not save men through any human means (prayer or sacrifices); if they did, the human would have more power than the divine." 275, "Poverty is the most easily cured of all evils, any friend can do it by merely putting his hand in his pocket." 397, "A poor man who lives in a large town makes himself more wretched than he need; for he cannot help comparing with his own the luxurious lives of the rich." 435, "No man realizes the extent of a sin when he commits it; it is afterwards that he sees it." 460, "A man is convinced not so much by what is said as by the manner of saying it." 474, "There is one thing only that hides vulgarity, villainy, and every other fault,—wealth. Everything but that is carped at and criticized." 517, "People who have no merit of their own generally boast of their birth and their ancestors. But every living man has ancestors, or he would not be a living man." 578, "Wealth acts on a man as wind does on a ship,—it often forces him out of his proper course." 663, "Many a young lady says a great deal in her own favour by saying nothing at all." 683, "A man who abuses his own father is practising blasphemy against the gods." In fact, Menander is characteristically a sententious writer, like Euripides, with whom in the general style of his writings, though not, of course, in his somewhat loose and irregular versification, he is sometimes compared. (F. A. P.)

MENCIUS, the Latinized form of Mäng-tsze, "Mr Mäng," or "Mäng the philosopher," a name in China only second as a moral teacher to that of Confucius. His statue or spirit-tablet (as the case may be) has occupied, in the temples of the sage, since our 11th century, a place among "the four assessors"; and since 1530 A.D. his title has been "the philosopher Mäng, sage of the second degree."

The Mängs or Mäng-suns had been in the time of Confucius one of the three great clans of Lü (all descended from the marquis Hwan, 711–694 B.C.), which he had endeavoured to curb. Their power had subsequently been broken, and the branch to which Mencius belonged had settled in Tsâu, a small adjacent principality, the name of which still remains in Tsâu hsien, a district of Yen-chün Shan-tung. A magnificent temple to Mencius is the chief attraction of the district city. The present writer visited it in 1873, and was struck by a large marble statue of him in the courtyard in front. It shows much artistic skill, and gives the impression of a man strong in body and mind, thoughtful and fearless. His lineal representative lives in the city, and thousands of Mängs are to be found in the neighbourhood.

The dates of some of the principal events in Mencius's life are fixed by a combination of evidence, and his death is referred by common consent to the year 289 B.C. He had lived to a great age,—we say to his eighty-fourth year, placing his birth in 372 B.C., and others to his ninety-seventh, placing it in 385. All that we are told of his father is that he died in the third year of the child, who was thus left to the care of his mother. She was a lady of superior character, and well discharged her trust. Her virtues and dealings with her son were celebrated by a great writer in the first century before our era, and for two thousand years she has been the model mother of China.

¹⁵ Mahaffy, *Ibid.*, p. 490.

We have no accounts of Mencius for many years after his boyhood, and he is more than forty years old when he comes before us as a public character. He must have spent much time in study, investigating the questions which were rife as to the fundamental principles of morals and society, and brooding over the condition of the country. The history, the poetry, the institutions, and the great men of the past had received his careful attention. He intimates that he had been in communication with men who had been disciples of Confucius. That sage had become to him the chief of mortal men, the object of his untiring admiration; and in the doctrines which he had taught Mencius recognized the truth for want of an appreciation of which the bonds of order all round him were being relaxed, and the kingdom hastening to a general anarchy.

When he first comes forth from Tsâu, he is accompanied by several eminent disciples. He had probably imitated Confucius in becoming the master of a school, and encouraging the resort to it of inquiring minds that he might resolve their doubts and unfold to them the right methods of government. One of his sayings is that it would be a greater delight to the superior man to get the youth of brightest promise around him and to teach and train them than to enjoy the revenues of the kingdom. His intercourse with his followers was not so intimate as that of Confucius had been with the members of his selected circle; and, while he maintained his dignity among them, he was not able to secure from them the same homage and reverent admiration.

More than a century had elapsed since the death of Confucius, and during that period the feudal kingdom of Châu had been showing more and more of the signs of dissolution, and portentous errors that threatened to upset all social order were widely disseminated. The sentiment of loyalty to the dynasty had disappeared. Several of the marquises and other feudal princes of earlier times had usurped the title of king. The smaller fiefs had been absorbed by the larger ones, or reduced to a state of helpless dependence on them. Tsin, after greatly extending its territory, had broken up into three powerful kingdoms, each about as large as England. Mencius found the nation nominally one, and with the traditions of two thousand years affirming its essential unity, but actually divided into seven monarchies, each seeking to subdue the others under itself. The consequences were constant warfare and chronic misery.

In Confucius's time we meet with recluses who had withdrawn in disgust from the world and its turmoil; but these had now given place to a class of men who came forth from their retirements provided with arts of war or schemes of policy which they recommended to the contending chiefs, ever ready to change their allegiance as they were moved by whim or interest. Mencius was once asked about two of them, "Are they not really great men? Let them be angry, and all the princes are afraid. Let them live quietly, and the flames of trouble are everywhere extinguished." He looked on them as little men, and delighted to proclaim his idea of the great man in such language as the following:—

"To dwell in love, the wide house of the world, to stand in propriety, the correct seat of the world, and to walk in righteousness, the great path of the world; when he obtains his desire for office, to practise his principles for the good of the people, and when that desire is disappointed, to practise them alone; to be above the power of riches and honours to make dissipated, of poverty and mean condition to make swerve from the right, and of power and force to make bend.—these characteristics constitute the great man."

Most vivid are the pictures which Mencius gives of the condition of the people in consequence of the wars of the states. "The royal ordinances were violated; the multi-