

the expense of a French toilette. *Las gradas*, another kind of gallery under the boxes, on both sides of which people sit who wish to be at their ease. The *patio*, which answers to our pit, but contains hardly any except the mob, with their vulgar manners, ignorance, and tatters. This part of the audience, which is standing, is always the most clamorous and difficult to please, as if it were their right to be so.

The actors often address themselves to these five classes of spectators under the name of *mosqueteros*, and lavish on them many stale epithets to gain their applause.

At Madrid the actors are divided between two theatres. For a long time they were known by the quarter of the town where they performed, such as *de la Cruz* and *del Principe*; but this last house wanting repairs, the company was removed to another theatre called *Caños del Peral*, which till then was little used, unless for concerts given by the *amateurs*, or other public entertainments, and where for some time the Italian opera had been performed. These two theatres make a common cause as to profit, but there is a rivalry between them as to talents. Each has a manager who is a player, and who every year discharges his company. The favourite actors then make their bargain with one of the managers, either with the most active or the most generous; and it may well be supposed that the *graciosos* are not forgotten

in this periodical change. The two managers agree to divide them, as also the first characters, for fear there should be too great an inequality in their company, by which both would be sufferers. However, all these talents, with few exceptions*, are more adapted for show, than to improve the stage of Thalia. Those who join to a graceful carriage force of sentiment and elegance of expression, those who in a word render the art of declamation the sister and the rival of the fine arts, are hardly dreamt of in Spain. The players, when

* The following character of them is founded on late remarks :—A young and pretty actress, called *La Rita*, has a striking voice, eyes full of expression, an excellent carriage, but is still too much in the old manner. *A. M. Maïques*, who plays the lover, and has travelled with advantage to Paris and elsewhere, has much warmth and sometimes energy, and, as some have pronounced, is the *Tulma* of Madrid. In less difficult parts an excellent *Figuron* is mentioned ; in Spain the hero of the farce is so called ; his name is *Quéral*, and he has acted for these twenty years with deserved applause. In the character of a *valet* or *gracioso*, old *Garrido* has for thirty years been able to entertain the Spanish capital, and to make his buffooneries go down. With respect to those that may be compared with our *pères nobles*, and who in Spain are called *Barba*, the talents of *Pinto* are much praised. In the lyric department the voice of *Bernardo Gil* is more likely to please than his acting, and in every country it would be admitted that the *Correas* are very agreeable singers. All the other actors and actresses resemble, more or less, the portrait I have drawn in the text.

(Note to the edition of 1806.)

they cannot give a servile imitation of the models before their eyes, know not how to create any from the imaginary but possible world, where every thing is noble without ceasing to be true. Awkward in their delivery and in their gesture, they lose all moderation, exaggerate every thing, disfigure every thing, and, instead of sparing their strength in order to obtain their end, exhaust it at once. Their impassioned women become furies, their heroes swagger, their conspirators become malefactors, and their tyrants butchers.

They are indeed at a great distance from a Clairon, a Le Kain, a Garrick, or a Siddons, and the players in Spain are nothing but hirelings, and admitted into society only in the same way as jugglers, who when they have amused for a moment are paid and sent away; whilst in other countries, where prejudice estimates them still less, the just admiration which some of them inspire, raises them to the level of men of talent and genius.

The Spaniards had at least in their old comedies examples of every virtue fit to be preached to the people; examples of loyalty, of firmness, of justice, of benevolence; and however disgusting the exaggeration of their pictures may be in many respects, one cannot see these representations without imbibing a disposition for performing the virtues they present. In the modern productions, on the contrary, (those we quoted above ex-

cepted,) not only common decency is disregarded, but images of immorality are presented without endeavouring to inspire horror for them. Plots of a son against his father, cruelty of husbands, infidelity of wives, and even conspiracies of malefactors go unpunished; all is risked by the authors, all is allowed by the police, and all is approved by the public. The consequences of this toleration are important, especially in Spain, where all classes of people frequent the play-house. The mob even seems to be the principal object to please; they predominate in the theatre, their humour must be gratified, their perverse taste must be flattered; and the tumultuous manner in which they express their gross feelings stifles the no less noisy voice of the more enlightened part of the audience; a singular thing this, in a despotic government, where the people otherwise are of so little account. May it not be inferred from hence, that there is even in the lowest class of this nation, a kind of fierceness, a feeling of independence which the long duration of absolute power has repressed, but has not yet annihilated?

One would suppose that persons whose age and profession made decorum an imperious part of their duty, would be careful not to appear at a theatre so grossly indecent; yet notwithstanding, young people of outward modest appearance, and even ecclesiastics whose grave manners and austere habit form such a contrast to the lessons of cor-

ruption and licentiousness given before them, are frequently present. A wise heathen instantly quitted the theatre at Rome, for fear his presence should countenance its improper exhibitions. The Spanish priests, intolerant on the most trifling subjects, are not so scrupulous with respect to the interests of virtue. Apostles of religion! have they no concern with morals? or are they ignorant that without morality religion is nothing but a deception and a scourge? Let them contribute to purify the play-house, and their presence will be forgiven.

In order to succeed in reforming the stage, a concurrence of circumstances would be necessary, which is still wanting in Spain. It would in the first place require that the sovereign should take some interest in its success. Louis XIV knew and protected Moliere, and presided himself at the most splendid festivals, of which theatricals always made a principal part. Why was the stage so flourishing in the time of Philip III and IV, which in other respects was the epocha of the decline of Spain? Because these princes encouraged the dramatic writers by praise and rewards; because they were pleased with theatrical entertainments.

The kings of the new dynasty, although they have done well in discarding the dull models, have not like their predecessors encouraged and protected the Spanish stage. Philip V was religious, and loved a retired life. Ferdinand VI

liked the arts of Italy better than those of Spain. Charles III appeared to encourage the other arts; he built the *Caserta*, explored the ruins of Herculaneum, protected the pencil of Mengs, embellished with many buildings the capital of Spain; but he showed if not an aversion to the stage at least a complete indifference, and Charles IV has not had time as yet to work out the regeneration which every lover of the stage waits with impatience. Their minister Florida Blanca seemed to set himself up as the protector of the theatre in the capital; but he rather partook of than opposed the taste of the nation.

This part of the police is in Madrid divided between the *corregidor*, the members of the town-house and the *alcaldes de corte*. But the limits of their jurisdiction are ill defined; and from the uncertainty in their powers result the irregularities which every one of their inspectors sees, but which no one of them singly has the power to repress. Each of the three or four censors, under whose cognisance every new piece should come, depends on the rigidity of his colleagues; and their concurrence even is not sufficient to repel those productions which too often wound propriety no less than taste. Add to this, that these examiners are often infected with the general contagion; and it would require more spirit than they possess, abruptly to tear the favourite objects of affection from the people, and to withstand the solicitations

of the players, whose receipts would materially suffer by such a sudden reform.

M. Olavidé, whose active mind would have embraced all the different branches of administration and police, had begun at least to bring about some reform in the scenery, the costume, and the art of declamation; and this is one of the faults which his enemies imputed to him at the time of his disgrace.

There have been however, in the reign of Charles III., some examples of this spirit of reform, which cannot be too much practised in order to polish the Spanish nation. The *autos sacramentales*, in which angels, saints, and personified virtues played their parts to the scandal of religion and reason, have been entirely done away; in these compositions Calderon had employed all his capricious imagination. Some other pieces have likewise been prohibited, such as *Los zelos de san Josef*, and particularly *Le Diable prédicateur*; two dramas at the same time of a sacred and burlesque cast, in which ingenious devotion seems formerly to have found subjects of edification.

A revolution has also taken place in the mechanical part of the theatre. At Madrid, at least, the scenery is better understood, the costume is less distant from truth, and we no longer see (if ever it was seen, as the dashing impostor of *Le Voyage de Figaro* asserts), we no longer see on the Spanish

stage *Orosman* in a *morning gown*, and *Zaira* in a *pet-en-l'air*. There are still many other incongruities, to ridicule which would require no invention. In Spain, as well as in Italy, the actors when they are on the stage cast their eyes towards the boxes, and *graciously* smile at the persons they know; and when at the end of a long speech they have received an abundance of applause, they turn to the audience and show their gratitude by a low bow. These are defects which are peculiar to individual players; the following belongs to the stage itself.

You see sometimes one or more actors leaving the stage entirely, and going to seat themselves in a box, from whence a dialogue is begun between them and the other characters. I know a piece in which this extravagance is carried still further. It is one of those heroic comedies where Moors and Spaniards are represented making war, and where they belabour one another with eloquent abuse. One of the Moorish generals not being able to get in on any side towards the enemy, to whom he had a menacing challenge to deliver, he comes into the pit on horseback, and from thence harangues the Spaniards.

And what can be said of the way in which a strange custom has interlarded their most serious comedies with short interludes that have not the least connexion with them? I mean those modern farces which the Spaniards call *saynetes* or *inter-*

mes, pièces of one act, as simple in their plot as their plays are intricate. The humours of the day, the manners of the inferior classes of society, their customs, and the petty interests that unite and divide them, are here represented with the most scrupulous fidelity. You think that the fruit-woman or the porter you have seen in the street is before you ; their gestures, their manners, and their language are so accurate.

The Spaniards do not appear to feel that simple nature may be embellished without ceasing to be true, and that herein consists the merit of imitation. The same observations may be made on the productions of the greatest masters of their school in painting. Look at the shepherds, the young peasants of Velasquez, or even of Murillo :—they are to fine painting what the *saynetes* are to the dramatic art, striking but disgusting in their resemblance.

The Spanish comedians have a wonderful talent for this sort of character. If they could throw as much nature into their other pieces, they would be the first actors in Europe.

The *saynetes* seem to be invented only to give a respite to the attention of the auditors, who are fatigued with following the long plays in their inextricable labyrinth ; but their most certain effect is, that the thread is wholly lost, for it very rarely happens that the old Spanish plays are represented without interruption. There is scarce

any exception, indeed, but with the new pieces, either original or translations, in which it was thought proper that more regularity should exist. All the old and most of the modern are written in those acts which are called *jornadas*. After the first act the *saynete* begins; and if the warrior, or king, who has been just seen covered with a helmet or a diadem, should have a part in the interlude, he sometimes retains a part of his noble costume. His scarf and his buskins are visible under the dirty cloak of a common man, or the gown of an *alcalde*.

When the *saynete* is finished, the great piece continues. At the end of the second act a fresh interruption ensues, still longer than the first;—another *saynete* followed by a kind of short comic opera, called *tonadilla*. Sometimes a single actress does the whole. She appears, and either sings or says an insipid story, or relates some light tale of gallantry, solicits in retiring the applause of the audience, and at last suffers the third act to begin.

What becomes of the illusion and the interest after such interruptions? [It is not rare to see, when the *tonadilla* is finished, many auditors disappear without waiting for the third act of the principal piece.]

The *saynetes* and the *tonadilla* are frequently in this ridiculous medley the most attractive part of the representation. After being some time in

Spain, a foreigner even attaches a great value to them; for the manners, habits, customs, and music are new to him, and all bear the national stamp. Besides, two kinds of beings peculiar to the country are constantly seen represented, of which the copies and even the originals please the Spaniards very much. These are the *majos* and the *majas* on one part, and the *gitanos* and the *gitanas* on the other.

The *majos* are a kind of fops of the lower sort, or rather swaggerers, whose grave and cold self-importance is seen in all their exterior. The face half covered with a cap of brown stuff called *montera* denotes a character of stern severity, which appears to brave every thing, and is not even softened by the presence of a mistress. The agents of justice hardly dare to attack them; and if an attempt is made to take them even by good words, an impatient gesture and a fierce look, and sometimes a long rapier hid under the cloak, admonish that you may not take liberties with impunity.

For their part, the *majas* counteract these caprices as much as the weakness of their means will permit. Language, attitudes, walk, all have in them a perfect air of effrontery and licentiousness; but if you are not over scrupulous as to the means of exciting voluptuousness, you may find in them the most seductive priestesses that ever attended the altar of Venus; their alluring charms inflame the senses of even the wisest, and promise at least

pleasure if they do not inspire love. The most indulgent spectators lament that the *majos* and *majas* were thus brought on the stage, and preserve their attractions in the midst of the best company. There are in both sexes persons of distinguished rank, those who choose their models amongst the heroes of the populace, adopt their customs, their manners, their way of speaking, and appear flattered when the resemblance is found perfect.

With respect to the *gitanos* and *gitanas*, they are a kind of gipsies that go about the country, lead a dissolute life, tell fortunes, have a language and signs peculiar to themselves, and, like others, have a roguish turn, and take people in cunningly. This class of people, of whom society should long since have been purged, has been tolerated there however till now, and on the stage they act parts striking from their originality, but the effect of which is to make vice familiar by decorating it with the flowers of mirth. They are, it may be said, the shepherds of the Spanish stage, less insipid to be sure, but less innocent also, than ours. Their knavish tricks, their plots, and their amorous intrigues, of a piece with their morals, are the subjects of several *saynetes* and *tonadillas*, and in this school more than one of the spectators is formed.

Such is the national stage of modern Spain. There are play-houses in most of the principal cities, and it may be easily supposed they are still

more defective than those in the capital. What then must the strolling players be who are called *comicos de la legua*, and travel from one town to another with the rags that serve them for scenery; barns and stables being the places where they show their talents? The heroes of Scarron are at least pleasant, but these inspire nothing but disgust. After the death of Ferdinand IV, who had an Italian opera at his court, there was for some time nothing but the national theatre. The marquis de Grimaldi, at the decease of Charles III, re-established a similar representation, which disappeared again when he retired. Towards the end of his reign, this prince had one established in his capital. The principal hospitals there at first defrayed the expenses and enjoyed the profits; but this establishment becoming burthensome to them, they gave it up to the direction of proprietors, most of them grandees of Spain, who could only continue it for a few years by making considerable sacrifices; and it was at last abandoned. Both serious and comic operas were performed; the decorations were superb and the dresses magnificent: the ballets were very good. The Spanish actors have had these models, and it appeared they approved of them; but notwithstanding the representations of their pieces have gained nothing. They are therefore incurable.

As to French theatres, they have been for a long time entirely banished from Spain. Towards

the middle of the reign of Charles III there was one established at Cadiz, but the undertakers of it were ruined, and the thing given up: more recently it was proposed to have one at Madrid. The ambassador La Vauguyon appeared to take great interest in it. The devout caballed, they pretended that the French pieces contained maxims of toleration which breathed too much of the new philosophy. They counted thirteen heresies in the play of *Pygmalion* alone. Besides, the general hospital, whose revenues are greatly increased by contributions from the two Spanish theatres, expressed their fears lest they should diminish. The king yielded to the combined clamours of scruple and of charity, and the project was given up. Translations of several of our pieces, however, have appeared, and Madrid will not long be without a French theatre.

CHAPTER XIV.

Of bull-fights.

AT the head of the entertainments that belong almost exclusively to the Spanish nation, must be placed a spectacle for which it has still an unbounded attachment, whilst it is repugnant to the delicacy of the rest of Europe; I mean the bull-fights*.

Many of the Spaniards still see in them the means of cherishing the energy which characterizes their nation. One might however ask them, what connexion there is between strength and courage, and an exhibition where the spectators

* They were at length prohibited in 1805, not without exciting the regret of that part of the nation, which, although the most numerous, is so easy to govern when you oppose with firmness the empire of its habits or its caprices. This spirited reform does honour to the reign of Charles IV, and proves the wisdom of his prime minister. Every thing will gain by it, industry, agriculture, and morals. We shall notwithstanding leave our description of them as they existed before. It may perhaps satisfy the curiosity of those who never saw them, and probably never will see them. To those who regret them, they will perhaps have the same kind of value which we affix to the portraits of deceased friends.

run not the least danger, and where the actors prove by the rarity of accidents that theirs is not sufficient to excite a great interest. I know very well that the exaggeration with which they are commonly related, represents these accidents as rather frequent. The horsemen indeed, when overthrown, receive sometimes considerable bruises; but during nine years that I have frequented bull-fights, I have known only one *torreador* who died of his wounds. However, at all events, a priest with the holy oil is present in a grated box: and if the accidents were as frequent as they are rare, they would only familiarise the spectators with the effusion of blood, and with the sufferings of their fellow-creatures, but would not teach them how to suffer pain and face danger. They might make them hard-hearted and cruel, but not firm and courageous.

There is another proof that this spectacle does not influence the morals of those who frequent it. Young ladies, old men, people of all ages and of all characters are present, and yet the habit of attending these bloody festivals does not correct their weakness or their timidity, nor injure the sweetness of their manners. I have moreover known foreigners distinguished by the gentleness of their manners, who experienced at first seeing a bull-fight such very violent emotions as made them turn pale, and they became ill; but, notwithstanding, this entertainment became after-

wards an irresistible attraction, without operating any revolution in their character.

These bull-fights are very expensive, but of great consequence to the undertakers. The least places cost two or four reals, according as they are in the sun or in the shade; the price of the dearest is twenty-four reals. When the cost of horses and bulls and the salary of the *torreadors* are deducted, the remainder of the receipt is commonly applied to pious foundations. At Madrid it makes one of the principal revenues of the general hospital.

These bull-fights seldom take place except in summer, because the animals are then most vigorous, and the season permits the show in the open air. Privileged casts are condemned to this kind of sacrifice. A list is distributed to the spectators, in which are given the number and the country of the victims whose torments are to serve for their amusement.

The arena is a kind of circus, round which are placed a score of seats one above another, the highest of which only is covered; the boxes are in the upper part of the building. In some towns which have not places spaciously appropriated for these combats, the principal square is used for the fight. It is indeed a very striking sight, to see all the inhabitants assemble around this circus, waiting the signal for the fight, and wearing in their exterior every sign of impatience.









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The entertainment begins with a kind of promenade round the arena, where appear on horseback as well as on foot the athletic heroes who are to be matched with the furious animals, all dressed in the elegance of Spanish costume; the *pica-dores* wear a round hat, half covered with a short cloak, of which the sleeves float loose in the air; they are seated in their saddle, and have, instead of boots, only gaiters made of white leather; those on foot wear a dress very similar, but more light and costly; both have a short waistcoat of silk, of a bright colour, trimmed with ribbons, a scarf of another colour, and their hair put in a large net of silk, the fringes of which descend below the waist.

When this promenade is over, one or two al-guazils on horseback, dressed in a black robe and a wig, advance gravely, and ask of him who presides at the festival (either the governor or the corregidor) the order for beginning it. The signal is then given: immediately, the animal, which has hitherto been kept in a kind of shed, the door of which opens into the arena, appears: (see Plate VIII. No. 1.) the agents of Themis, who have no quarrel with him, prudently hasten their retreat; and their fright, which is increased by their being commonly very ill mounted, is the prelude to the cruel pleasure the spectators are going to enjoy.

The bull is received and stunned by their cries and the noisy expressions of their joy. He is im-

mediately to defend himself against the combatants on horseback, *picadores*, who attack him with a long lance. (Plate VIII. No. 2.) This exercise, which requires at once address, strength, and courage, has nothing disgraceful in it. Formerly the first grandees did not disdain to partake of it; even at this time some *hidalgos* crave still the honour of combating the bull on horseback.

The *picadores* open the scene: often the bull, without being provoked, flies at them; and every body augurs favourably of his valour. If, in spite of the weapon which repulsed his attack, he return again immediately to the charge (Plate IX. No. 3 and 4.) the cries redouble; it is no longer pleasure, it is enthusiasm: but if the bull, in a pacific, confounded, and cowardly manner, sneaks round the place, the murmurs and hissings fill the whole edifice. All those within whose reach he comes, shower upon him curses and blows. He appears a common enemy who has to expiate a great crime. If nothing can excite his courage, he is judged unworthy to be tormented by men, and the cries of *perros, perros*, (the dogs, the dogs) redouble, and his enemies increase. Enormous large dogs are let loose on him, who get hold of his neck and ears. The animal finds his natural arms again; (Plate XIII. No. 12.) the dogs are thrown into the air, fall down again stupefied, and sometimes mangled, into the arena; they



Pl. II. Fol. II. Page 360. N^o 3.





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Note under







get up again, recommence the combat, and finish in common by dragging their antagonist to the ground, where he perishes by an ignoble blow.

But if he conducts himself according to the wishes of the spectators, he runs a more glorious, but a longer and more painful, career. The first act of this tragedy belongs to the combatants on horseback: these are the most animated, the most bloody, and often the most disgusting scenes.

The animal being irritated braves the iron that has deeply wounded him, flies on the innocent horse that carries his enemy, tears his sides, and throws him and his rider to the ground, (Plate X. No. 5.) who in this crisis would run great risk, if the combatants on foot, called *chulos*, did not distract and provoke the bull by holding before him some stuffs of different colours. But it is at their own hazard they save the riders. Sometimes the bull pursues them; they have then need of all their agility; they escape by dropping some pieces of stuff, which are their only arms, and upon which the rage of the deceived animal is exhausted. Sometimes he is not thus arrested, and the combatant has no other resource but to leap over the railing, which is six feet high, and encloses the arena. In some places this enclosure is double, and the space between the two railings is a kind of circular corridor, behind which the pursued *torre*

ador has nothing more to fear. Sometimes the bull clears the first railing, but urged by his irritation he turns in the corridor until he finds an outlet, which leads him to dangers, to torments, and to death. When the railing is single, and he clears it with a vigorous leap, a lively alarm seizes the spectators that are near. Their precipitation in escaping and getting to the upper part makes them sometimes run more risks than the bull, who, stumbling at every step on this unequal ground, is more intent on saving than avenging himself, and soon falls under the blows he receives.

If this does not happen, and which is very seldom, he remains in his place. The overthrown horseman has had time to get up again. He remounts if his horse is not too much wounded, and the combat begins anew, but he is often obliged to change horses several times. I have seen eight and ten horses torn, and their bellies ripped open, fall and expire in the field of battle. Expressions are wanting to celebrate the prowess which becomes the most favourite topic of conversation for some days. Sometimes these horses, affecting models of patience, of courage, and of docility, present a spectacle at which it may be allowable to shudder. You see them tread under their feet their own bloody entrails hanging out of their open sides, and still obey for some time the hand that guides them. Disgust at this period of the combat overpowers every sen-