

translations from the French, and the most successful works of Soulié, Sue, Scribe, Dumas, Dudevant, Balzac, and Kock, are published in a cheap and popular form.

The singular absence of literary activity is strikingly illustrated by the fact that the "Society of Friends of the Country," in so considerable and prosperous a place as Xerez de la Frontera, advertised handsome premiums in May last, for the best Manual of Physical Science, adapted to the use of the primary schools, as well as for the best Manual of Natural History, suited to the same desirable object. No attempt whatever was sent in with reference to the first subject, and only two in reference to the second, both of which were so bad that the Society could not conscientiously adjudicate a reward to either candidate. Such was the result, after six months' interval.

The mind of Spain is however not wholly inactive, but its activity takes shapes and passes into channels, which cramp and enfeeble instead of invigorating its energies. Almost everything in prose or poetry assumes a political shape, and all is imbued with violent political passion. Espartero is abused, Diego Léon exalted, in stilted prose and rhyme; the "Siege of Seville" is celebrated in a hundred different forms, and even the inglorious field of Torrejon de Ardoz, where the warriors of Spain flung down their muskets on the miserable 22nd July 1843, finds infatuated bards to praise it.

Serial publication is naturally resorted to in Spain, as a means of cheapening, or rather apparently cheap-

ening, works which in the lump would be by no means so readily published. The principle here is perfectly analogous to that which makes indirect taxation popular. In a country where money is scarce, small outlays at intervals are preferred. The works thus published, and sold by all the booksellers, are of a very miscellaneous character, and when original seldom aspire to a high order of literature.

The romance and drama are almost invariably translated from the French; but Walter Scott is likewise very much in vogue. Scarcely any other English writer is known. The serial publications chiefly met with are as follows:—"The Church and State, a religious and political review." This is of moderate price and slight pretensions—the fact being that all the available talent of this kind is absorbed into the daily political journals. It is, however, of some authority and extensive circulation, the plan being rather judicious; one-third of its space is devoted to ecclesiastical affairs, one-third to politics, and the remaining third to general news—the divisions being rigorously adhered to. It appears every month:—The *Reparado*, a periodical of a nearly similar character:—The *Voz de la Religion*, whose objects are evident from the name, a cheap register of events, interesting to Roman Catholic devotees, in every quarter of the globe:—The *Fray Gerundio* and the *Tarantula*, small but pungent satirical journals, intensely and exclusively political, and sometimes replete with admirable stinging wit:—The "Preacher's *Prontuario*, or Heads of Sermons (in curious juxtaposition with the preceding), for the use of

Ecclesiastics who desire to improvise, or prefer composing their own discourses." This work is divided into twelve monthly issues, of forty pages each, for the convenience of transmission by post to country subscribers, just as under the penny-post system of the immortal Rowland Hill at home:—"Annals of Jurisprudence and Legislation"—a professional work, published periodically for the use of the Spanish bar and the law students of the several universities. This work is *utriusque juris*, giving more prominence however to the law than the canon, and contains an useful record of the various orders and circulars of the Minister of Grace and Justice, together with an analysis of the current legislation of the *Córtes*. It is a publication of respectable merit:—"The *Risa*" and "The *Carcajada*" (The Laughter and the Horselaugh), collections of the jokes of Spain and all other nations—indiscriminate Joe Millers—published fortnightly and highly popular; for the Spaniard, of all men, perhaps, most dearly loves his laugh:—"The Portable Encyclopædia," abridged from the French, &c., &c.

Amongst the popular works now in progress there is one, a serial publication, entitled "Celebrated Personages of the Nineteenth Century." The selection of celebrities is not a little curious. The following is the order of publication:—Louis-Philippe, Charles X. of France, Queen Cristina (Doña Cristina de Borbon), the Duke of Wellington, and Abd-el-Kader. Select works of Walter Scott, and one or two likewise of Bulwer, are translated; but the marvels of hydro-

pathy, and the astounding pretensions of Vincent Priessnitz, find still readier circulation and currency.

The *Panorama* is a work imitated from our Penny Journals, in which the illustrative wood-cuts are bad copies, and demonstrate great backwardness in the arts. The letterpress, too, is not so correct as it should be; and though I am far more disposed to encourage than to depress, I cannot exactly approve of such slovenlinesses as "Loock Lowond" instead of Loch Lomond, and Nottinghamshire in the impenetrable disguise of "Nitingamahive"—almost equalling Theodore Hook's "épécana" for Hyde Park Corner.

The puffing system flourishes here upon a ridiculously inflated scale. Thus I have seen a "Prodigy of the press! a continuous library of works literary and pleasing, historical, instructive, and pious (spectacles for all ages), at a real ($2\frac{1}{2}d.$) the volume! A volume every day!! For all tastes, ages, and conditions," which prodigy was unhappily strangled in the womb; an "Omnibus" which rolled over the length and breadth of Spain for some months, and really made great progress while in motion, its career being arrested by pure mismanagement: a "Literary Miracle, or Wonder of the Art Typographical; being the publication of a volume every day, consisting of one hundred pages in 16°. at the incredible price of a real the volume, with a handsome coloured and bordered cover." This twopenny-halfpenny marvel became wheezy on the second day and expired on the third. These speculations are all unfortunately crude and somewhat puerile, figuring at a great rate on

paper, but defective in a somewhat important point, seeing that they are absolutely impracticable. The projectors aim at the realisation of vast plans of civilisation, and forget the stubborn and nearly insuperable material obstacles in their path. They aim at a revolution in the press, but a revolution, like all others here, to be effected by violent means; and nothing either solid or substantial, nothing but disgust and disappointment can be the result. Political passions are a stumbling-block to all true progress, and no reading is relished but the party papers. Joint-stock Reading Societies upon an enormous scale have been projected, and National Libraries, guaranteeing 15 per cent. interest to the shareholders; but these were mere bubbles.

Though poets, in the nobler sense of the word, are now-a-days a scarce commodity in Spain, yet the art of poetry is cultivated by numerous votaries. Sustained and elaborate works are rarely attempted, and still more rarely with success. But the facilities which the harmonious terminations of the language afford for composition in verse, for easy rhyming, and rapid improvising, cause hundreds of brains to be constantly engaged upon the sonnet and the madrigal—almost the only forms employed, and unhappily upon subjects almost exclusively political, or of a temporary and fleeting interest. This habit of firing off detached sonnets (and upon the faith of them setting down the writer as a poet, though never aiming at an original thought), is as old as the time of Cervantes, to the original edition of whose *Don*

Qui vote are prefixed no fewer than ten of these compositions by his friends.

Poetry sometimes takes queer shapes here, a sonnet being frequently delivered in the shape of a toast at political banquets. The poetry follows with us in the shape of an appropriate or inappropriate song, but here it forms the essence of the *brindis* itself. These efforts are invariably said to be improvised, but are doubtless for the most part prepared. The following specimen was delivered by General Pezuela, the third of the trio of Christino officers, consisting of Narvaez, Concha, and himself, who landed last summer from France in the south-eastern ports of Spain, and speedily settled Espartero's business. This *brindis*, which was uttered at a military banquet held in celebration of the declaration of the Queen's majority, will be understood with little difficulty even by those who know nothing of Spanish, and the reader cannot fail to admire the energy of the concluding couplet:—

“ Si á pesar de derecho pretendido,
De la ambicion, de la discordia impia,
A ese trono católico ha subido
El ángel, gloria de la patria mia ;
De esperar es que se hundirá vencido
Hoy el genio feroz de la anarquia.
Mas ay ! si el trono amenazado aun vemos !
Nietos somos del Cid ! armas tenemos !”

The following difficult and clever, yet worthless, acrostic, by Señor M. Dominguez of Cadiz, published likewise upon the occasion of the declaration of Queen Isabel's majority, reminds one of the valueless Greek poems of Gregorius Nazianzinus, in which the suc

cession of initial letters formed long texts of scripture, and illustrates the laborious trifling which passes for poetry amongst the living writers of Spain:—

¡Veen pendones en la heróica vill	. . . . .	a
¡Proclamemos nuestra Reina amad	. . . . .	a
¡Cuba de los leales rodead	. . . . .	a
¡Y ocupar del dosel la régia sill	. . . . .	a
¡Bendiga tu reinado aquel que brill	. . . . .	a
En el empíreo : y hasta que asentad	. . . . .	a
¡La paz y la ventura desead	. . . . .	a
¡Que arraiguen en los reinos de Castell	. . . . .	a
¡Empieza, sin faltar á la clemenci	. . . . .	a
¡Gobernando tus pueblos con justici	. . . . .	a
¡Que á los españoles sin violenci	. . . . .	a
¡No deges que domine la codici	. . . . .	a
¡Cale á la religion la preeminenci	. . . . .	a
¡Y si serás de España la delici	. . . . .	a

The occasional verses, of which multitudes are published, are rarely so good as the foregoing. They are all political, which perhaps accounts for their inferiority. Yet these things are puffed outrageously in all the journals, for, excepting perhaps the productions of Martinez de la Rosa, high literature there is none.

A Spanish poet, the other day (I do not record his name, because of his singular blunder) wrote and published a letter in commendation of a youthful Canary—I mean a Canary poet, Don Placido Sanson, of Tenerife, in which there occurred some extraordinary misconceptions—"You will be a great poet, my friend. This prognostic I leave you as an inheritance. Do not imitate *Byron and Victor Hugo*, those poets of the head only, with prosaic hearts. Write for yourself, imitate the language of *Calderon*; you will then have a distinguished place upon Parnassus." Need I say

how such productions as these decide the character of a national literature?

The cross of the order of Carlos III. was lately given to Don Tomas Rodriguez Rubi, author of a comedy called "The Wheel of Fortune;" and, according to the official announcement in the *Gazette Concorded*, "in consideration of his literary merits." In England you must either cut throats dexterously, or be a dexterous diplomatic cheat, to secure the chance of such decorations. Yet they do not make poets in Spain.

The literature of France is considerably more popular in the Peninsula than that of England—a natural result of the far greater affinity of language, as well as of the greater proximity of the countries, and the general cultivation of French for centuries. Political troubles, and temporary emigration, have, to be sure, made Spaniards more familiar with England of late years; but the genius and habits of the Frenchman approximate more closely to those of the Spaniard—France sets the fashion, and is therefore more admired and studied, in spite of the invasion and its attendant horrors. The living drama of Spain, as I have elsewhere noticed, is for the most part borrowed from the romantic drama of France. Yet on one evening in the Balon Theatre of Cadiz, I was present when the performances consisted of two English dramas—"Lord Merville" and "The Two Robinsons"—obscure pieces taken from some stray leaves of the British repertory, and done both in manner and language into Spanish.

It is singular that Spain, with its literary apathy, should possess what is nearly without parallel in

Europe—a novelist of Ducal rank. The Duke de Rivas has assiduously wrought in the copious stores of Spanish history, and constructed some remarkable romances, which, if they are without European fame, are by no means destitute of merit—recording now the sublime virtues of Don Juan de Padilla; and now the sentence of infamy, proclaimed by the mouth of the town-crier through the streets of Valladolid, upon the unfortunate Alvaro de Luna.

I am happy to record that some isolated, but creditable efforts, have been made of late, in the revival and intelligent editing of the early Spanish literature, as well as in archæological research and topographical description—studies of surpassing interest in a country like Spain, and in which an infinity remains to be done. The most attractive of these which have lately appeared are topographies of Hiberia, or the ancient Granada, and of the Vascongadas, or Basque Provinces. May these interesting illustrative labours be continued, and extended over all Spain. As yet, they are almost as nothing; but these pioneers of civilisation, if they continue lustily to ply the hammer, will at last awaken an echo in the minds of their countrymen.

The Spaniard is with difficulty brought to read. He will smoke and lounge, and chat, and gape, and joke, and stroll through squares, churches, and *cafés*, to the crack of doom; but he won't read more than the newspaper of his own way of thinking. He is too lazy or careless to peruse an additional paper, and thus, by a comparison of conflicting statements, elicit truth, and discern perhaps, at last, in what leading-

strings he has held, and by what audaciously concocted falsehoods he is daily deluded. He is helpless because he will not help himself—at the mercy of a confederation of journalists, who, aware of his apathy, know that there is no invention of theirs he is not *gobemouche* enough to swallow. Nay, they are ever found to exaggerate colour, and at times to falsify or freely concoct, if they would keep up their influence with their party and please their readers. A tame, truth-telling, and colourless journal, would soon be flung aside for a more highly-seasoned commodity. Reflect, for a moment, how the journalist's leading article enters the minds of those for whom he writes. A dozen or twenty persons are seated round a table, in a *cayé*, or under a thick vine-trellis, or in the centre of a wide patio beneath its canvass shade, and the clearest-tongued youth and best reader of the party, is chosen to declaim the article as a violent speaker might deliver his harangue in the *Córtes*, or a passionate preacher his sermon, with cross in hand, during Holy Week. This is one way of appealing to the reason! The trial by jury is likewise a trial of the feelings, upon all political questions in Spain.

The Castilians have a familiar proverb: "*Después de comer, no mismo un sobreescrito leer.*" "After dinner you should not read even the superscription of a letter." Quietness is, doubtless, a good assistant to the process of digestion, and mental repose is an aid to the gastric juices. But unfortunately, the best precepts may be pushed beyond their legitimate boundaries; the sun and sky of the south are no stimulants to mental or bodily activity, and instead of

confining themselves to the advice of the proverb, too many read neither a superscription nor anything else, either after dinner nor before.

Of living art in Spain little may be said. High art there is none. Of art, properly so called, there is extremely little. Sculpture and engraving are almost entirely unknown, and the attempts made now and then, but serve to lay bare the poverty of the land. In a few of the large cities there are some clever draughtsmen to be met, and some painters even who do not dishonour the name, at Madrid, Seville, Zaragoza, Barcelona, and Toledo. The glorious works of Velasquez, at Madrid, of Murillo and Zurbaran, at Seville, have not left their countrymen wholly slumbering. And yet their waking is to such little purpose, as to produce only tolerable copies and marketable costume pictures. It is foreigners alone that the study of the Spanish masters inspires. Of the fallen state of art, as well as literature, the abundant cause is incessant political turmoil.

Exaggeration in all things is the leading vice of Spain. There is not a city in the Peninsula that is not "*muy noble, muy leal, y muy heroica*;" not a corporate body that is not "most excellent," or "most illustrious;" not a military corps that is not renowned for its valour and matchless for its bravery; not a ragamuffin in Castile that does not esteem himself noble, nor a brigand in Andalucía but calls himself a soldier; not a man but is a Don, nor a woman but is a Doña; not a dunce of a doctor but is profoundly learned, nor a scribbling poetaster but is a European celebrity. Where all are first-rate, how shall there be

improvement? Where there is no humility, how shall there be acquisition of knowledge? Where none are conscious of imperfection, how shall there be pruning or advancement? Pangloss might here have found his perfect world. This spirit of exaggeration is fearfully detrimental to progress. A modest consciousness of imperfection, and a true disposition to learn, are the first essentials to even tolerable future success. Where every little dribble that drops from a slumbering press is hailed by a writer's friends and party as a perfect chrysolite, it is evident that the successive blows of the chisel, and touches of the pumice-stone, will be wanting, and that nothing will result but a poor mediocrity. Great must be the labour, and incessant the polish, before even an approach to excellence can be attained. The rich proverbial language of Castile has many useful hints for these self-complacent writers, as *Entre sí son flores, no son flores*; "They call themselves flowers, but they are not flowers." *No está el horno para pasteles*—"The baker's oven is not for pastry." Shame on the Spaniard endowed with genius and learning, who suffers all his faculties to be absorbed by faction, who aims at producing nothing beyond a newspaper squib, or an ephemeral party pamphlet, and permits his glorious and majestic language to remain unused and unproductive. I hope great things from the literature of Spain, but my hope is in future ages.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE DRAMA—THE LANGUAGE.

THE rich comic repertory of the old Spanish stage is a mine wherein living playwrights might delve inexhaustible materials, and mould them into new and lasting beauty. Something of this kind is done at intervals, but with an art that, unfortunately, falls far short of the excellence of the original material. The teeming works of Lope de Vega and Calderon, the neglected comedies of Guillen and Cervantes, and the varied productions of Moreto, now find modernized shapes; and Don Ventura de la Vega and Don José Zorilla have recently presented some creditable specimens. But the dramatists of Spain, for the most part, aim at no grander theme than adaptation from the French. A genius rises up now and then of stronger wing and original flight, and secures a wide-spread fame more decided, because of the paucity of rivals. Such was Don Ramon de la Cruz, who has left behind him no fewer than 130 Saynetes—a species of composition of which the term *Vau-deville* would be the nearest exponent. “Saynete,” in Spanish, means a delicate morsel, and was used in ancient times for the piece of brain or marrow given to the falcon, to reward his successful return. The dramatic Saynete should, then, be a *morceau* of exquisite savour. La Cruz’s fame has increased

considerably since his death; and such critics as De la Rosa, Signorelli, Moratin, and Hartzembuch, set the highest value on his works, which the Society of the Union Literaria is now collecting for publication, in a popular form, as intellectual food for the nation. A delicate irony and a subtle insight into the hidden springs of human action are this writer's chief characteristics. The *Zarzuela*, a species of two-act farce, is very popular amongst the lower classes, who relish amazingly all sorts of coarse wit and humour, and are expert practitioners themselves. The plays of Martinez de la Rosa are deservedly celebrated as works of high genius; and, among the local dramatists, Don José Zorilla may fairly aspire to the name of poet, and has produced some respectable comedies, chiefly founded upon incidents in Spanish history. This gentleman belongs to Cadiz. The favourite drama of the modern Spanish school is the romantic drama run mad. Cloisters, friars, bleeding nuns, sepulchres, church-vaults, the Inquisition and the Devil, are the chosen scenes and characters. I have frequently seen something very like mass performed on the stage, and a trial gone through, with all its forms, with the solemn administration of an oath (which, in my mind, made the actors subsequently perjurers), and the minutest questioning and cross-examination of witnesses, lasting for two hours! They are particularly fond of conspiracies, as might be supposed; but, the worst of all is the profanation. The *Devil Preaching* (*El Diablo Predicador*) is a very popular piece; and pleasantly enough, it must be confessed, he preaches.

“The Devil behind the Cross” is likewise a stock piece. Lope de Vega first set the example of these irregular melo-dramatic horrors—having placed at defiance every rule of dramatic composition, trampled on the unities of place and time with a licentiousness to which Shakspeare affords no parallel, and revelled in the most extravagant and grotesque departure from probability and commonly-received proprieties—an extravagance into which he confesses that he was tempted, against his better judgment, by the vitiated taste of his countrymen. He has rooted this style of mingled buffoonery and bombast upon the Spanish stage, and was the author of a thousand plays, being more than nine hundred too many.

An original drama, lately produced in the Andalusian theatres, is called “*El Protestante*,” a title peculiarly attractive and horrible.

The working of the dramatic censorship is curious. In a recent instance, the *first* of the “illustrious censors” decided that the play was good and the language correct. The *second* decided that the plot was faulty and the language highly incorrect. The *third* of these pains-taking functionaries wrote that he concurred in opinion *with both!*

At Christmas, in Seville, I witnessed at the principal theatre a performance, which at that season is general all over Spain—“*El Nacimiento*”—or a representation of the Nativity. The *funcion* was divided into three acts, with eighteen decorations. The Shepherds made their adoration in a magnificent portal. The infant Saviour, or Niño Jesus, was of wax; but all the other figures were flesh and blood,

even to the ox and the ass. The general effect was good: but two old people, called Tia Norica and Tio Isasio, or Aunt Nora and Uncle Isaac, prattled a great deal too much, with that buffoonery which Spaniards love, during the intervals. Aunt Nora made her will, in which she bequeathed all her personal defects to her friends. The whole wound up with fire and water-works.

The theatres of Spain cut a remarkable figure in politics. In a country where blind men and tinkers are political characters of the highest importance, their vocal and other noises being turned by active partisans to a profitable account, it was not to be expected that the propagandism of the stage would be neglected. Accordingly, pieces strewn with political allusion are often represented upon the Spanish boards. Cristina suffered heavily in this respect, and the gist of the late Prime Minister's slanderous rag, *El Guirigay*, was moulded into the dramatic form, and flung at her in Madrid and the provinces. Espartero has since been made the popular victim; and we have had in more shapes than one, "*La Ambicion de un Regente durante la mena edad de una Regna.*" The French have been deemed the most mocking people in the world, but the Spaniards eclipse them in this respect, and in their passion for sarcastic and stinging wit quite equal the Athenians of old. Their fiery natures and extraordinary quickness of apprehension are favourable to this phase of the national character, and you have but to sit for an hour in the bull-ring at Seville to see it fully developed. It is in the theatres, or on the Alamedas (public walks) that

political rumours are always developed; and quick and unscrupulous wits seem to vie with each other in fabrication. The domestic habits of our northern climate are little understood or relished here, where the people, like the denizens of ancient Greece and Rome, for the most part live in public; and the *café*, the public walks, and the *patio*, or pit of the theatre, serve for the same purpose as the forum and temple-porch of old. The announcement of genuine news from the stage, especially of victories during the Carlist war, often gave rise to extraordinary bursts of feeling; and the Hymn of the Queen, or of Riego, was forthwith sung by the leading performer,—by command of the audience, who would have instantly torn down the theatre had the request not been complied with,—and joined in by the entire assembly. Often, too, the announcement of intelligence, within the walls of the theatre, of local disturbance or disaster, causes a rush through the doors into the outer streets and squares, with a ferment and *furor* unintelligible to our cooler natures. But the rumours, called *susurros*, propagated within the walls of the theatre, are rarely to be depended on, being for the most part the product of witty and ingenious invention, inspired by the *genius loci*, and given currency to by those to whose ears they are borne, far more through malice than credulity.

The spirit of gambling penetrates within the theatres. When actors desire to have their benefits particularly attractive; they usually make a genuine lottery a part of the performances. At the principal theatre of Cadiz, upon one of these occasions, I wit-

nessed the eagerness with which the fair part of the audience participated in this excitement. A ticket was given to every person in the theatre, and the drawing was accomplished on the stage, out of a small box, by a child. The prizes were three in number: 1, a mantilla of black silk (as usual), fringed with valuable lace; 2, a handsome crape dress; 3, *a ticket for the next lottery in Madrid*. Thus, the excitement and the perpetual round of gambling is most ingeniously kept up.

The petty playwrights of Spain are as reluctant as those of other countries, to avow that they are plain translators from the French, though all their resources are drawn without transmutation from the exhaustless Parisian mines. Instead of announcing their dramas as naked translations, they set them forth as an "Imitacion by Señor So-and-So."

Concerts of vocal and instrumental music, upon a large scale, are rare in the cities of Spain. The tinkling of the guitar, the joyous seguidilla, the tender romanza, and the fascinating serenade, are enough for the people. But the higher circles are pleased occasionally to patronise a more select concert, when there is an opera company at Cadiz, or when stars shoot to Madrid. These exhibitions almost invariably take place about 1 o'clock on the *Sunday*.

A peculiar system prevails in Spain, which is erroneously deemed favourable to the development of the poetical faculty. Upon royal birthdays, and national commemorations, verses appropriate to the occasion are received, and read from the stage. These

for the most part take the shape of the sonnet. The author's name is annexed, and read out, as well as his composition, so that this cheap and easy mode of publication is a good deal sought after. As the least experienced critic might pronounce, *à priori*, these verses rarely have the slightest real value. They are necessarily loaded with claptraps, and the applause which rings upon the utterance of these is no test whatever of merit, and only serves, unfortunately, to turn the self-supposed poet's head. The practice is strongly to be deprecated, as is likewise that of improvising, which positively stifles thought, is fatal to all sound and healthy exercise of the mind, and substitutes lackering, dross, and tinsel, for that deep and solid meditation, that fervid glow of sustained feeling and fancy, which constitutes the poet's pabulum, and shapes his glorious creations. Yet there is much so-called improvising here, chiefly on political festivals.

Bombast and extravagance are frequently met in Spain, have set their impress on the language, and are engrafted in the national manners. This feature springs directly from the greater energy and passion of southern natures: it is the excrescence of an exuberant growth; and while, in one view, it is a decided blemish, in another it is an evidence of inherent strength. The grand and sonorous language has probably, in a great degree, led to this formation of character.

The most pleonastic and hyperbolic language in Europe is undoubtedly the Spanish, while at the same time it is the most energetic and forcible. The form of numberless words is, in the highest degree,

sonorous; and their combination and pronunciation is frequently productive of exaggerated effects. The force of reduplicated negations constantly recurs; the termination of the participles and adverbs, ending for the most part in *anté*, *enté*, *ado*, and *ido*, are positively magnificent—a great improvement on the Latin; the glorious gerund (this epithet is no hyperbole) swells in every third or fourth sentence like the diapason of an organ—*demandando respondiendo*—what can be more noble in form and sound? A single sentence is whet and spur enough to set any reader to learn the language. “La noble lengua Castellana desperta un zelo nacional alzando el amor de la lengua patria à la patria misma. Riquisimas son las facultades de la lengua Española, siendo dialecto legitimo de la Latina y amiga de la Griega par la facilidad y grandeza de sus composiciones. Infinito es el caudal de sus tesoros!”* Every word here stirs like a trumpet, and the passage is a very ordinary one; there is no straining for effect. I have put it together without art or particular care. It is indeed a language to make patriots, and to die for; it outstrips all other tongues, dead and living; and is the majesty of spoken and written dialects.

But those very excellencies have the defect of tending to the production of grandiloquence and redun-

* The words are unstudied, and merely put together by way of example. The passage runs thus in English:—“The noble Castilian tongue awakens a national zeal, elevating to love of the country itself our love for the country’s language. Most rich are the resources of the Spanish tongue, which is a legitimate dialect of the Latin, and allied to the Greek by the facility and grandeur of its compositions. Infinite is the abundance of its treasures.”

dance. Exaggerated phraseology is at times inevitable. Politeness degenerates into empty ceremonial, and colloquial civilities into fulsome compliment. Yet, if more powerful than any other tongue to flatter, it is likewise more potent to wound. The augmentations and diminutions are of marvellous force and beauty; and the very wealth of the language makes it the most abusive in the world. You can here, indeed, speak daggers and blunderbusses.†

Spaniards are justly proud of the strength of their language. Their various terms for giving the lie are an instance. I only regret that they indulge at times too freely in such inelegant figures of speech, which, as Spaniards pronounce them, have a native and matchless energy:—" *No es verdad!*" "*Es falso!*" "*Es falso, falsissimo!*" "*Miente!*" "*Miente vil y cobardemente!*" Phoo! where are the knives?

When Spaniards casually meet, so many words pass between them in inquiries as to the state of their health, the health of their respective children and families, and how they have passed the previous night, with assurances of mutual respect and esteem (often the cloak of intense dislike or hatred), so many invocations of the Divine blessing and commendations to all the Saints, that seldom less than three or four minutes are consumed in this interchange of hyperboles. "*Good days!*" The habitual pleonasm always makes this phrase plural, "*Buenas dias,*" "*buenas tardes,*" "*buenas noches.*" "*May God give them good to Your Grace likewise!*" "*How does Your Grace find himself to-day?*" "*Well, to have the pleasure of serving Your Grace.*" "*I rejoice very much,*

muchest, in extreme, to hear it." "And your husband, your father, your brother, how is he?" "Well, I join for it to Your Grace the thanks. May Your Grace live a thousand years!" "Let Your Grace give to him many expressions on my part." "He will be very grateful to Your Grace for the remembrance." "Señor, Señora, at the obedience of Your Grace." "At the feet of Your Grace." "The servant of Your Grace." "I kiss the hand of Your Grace." "Let Your Grace be with God." "With God go Your Grace!" The conversation is interlarded with frequent exclamations of "*Jesus!*" (pronounced *Ghesoos*) "*Virgen Maria,*" "*Virgen Maria Santisima!*" Every Spanish letter commences with "*Muy Señor mio!*" "Very much my Lord!" and ends, if addressed to a high functionary, with "God guard Your Excellency many years!" if to a private individual, with "Your secure servant, who kisses Your Grace's hands!" If this were sincere it might be unobjectionable; but there is so much fustian in our own style epistolary, with all our spoken frankness and bluntness, that our mouths are corked against all comment. "*Pero dejemos ya esto, Sancho, y acaba antes que suceda desgracia.*" "Now, let us leave that there, Sancho, and have done before we get into a scrape."

A frequent commencement of a letter amongst friends is the very charming one which follows:—
 "Salud y pesetas!" (Health, and pocket-pieces);
 and an equally frequent conclusion is "*Sopilas y buen viño*" (Savoury soups and good wine!)
 The glorious bombast of Spaniards in a rage is