

But whatever may be the critical objections to *Isabel la Católica*, as a specimen of dramatic art, it certainly has very high merit as a poem, and is full of fine and striking situations. Its effect was, of course, greatly assisted by the scenic accompaniments and the gorgeous pageantry for which the subject gave such scope. But this was by no means all. The versification is stately and heroic; the poetry, excellent throughout, is, in many passages, of a high order; and the tone and spirit of the whole work are lofty and thoughtful. The author, as I have said, was praised and garlanded. It will hardly be believed that this must have been done by the special permission of the *Jefe Politico* who, but a day or two before, had published a long edict, of which the following was an article:—

“*Sixth.* It shall likewise be necessary to obtain, beforehand, permission to throw verses, crowns, or flowers upon the stage in honor of an artist; it being absolutely forbidden to throw any other thing expressive of satisfaction or censure, and likewise for the audience to address words or signs to the actors, as well as for the actors to direct such to the audience.”

The name of the liberal and enlightened functionary who waged such war upon the consecrated prerogatives of the pit was Don José Zaragoza!

But the good fortune of Rubí was not confined to the relaxation, in his favor, of the *Jefe Politico*'s theatrical discipline. He received a substantial remuneration for his labors, which spoke as well for the public taste as for the liberality of the law regarding literary property. The existing statutes on this latter point prohibit the performance of any play without the author's consent,

and give the copyright to him during his life, with remainder to his heirs or assigns for twenty-five years. During all this time he and they have the right to exact from the managers of all theatres where the play may be performed a certain percentage on the receipts, and to occupy or have the control of a certain number of places. Ten per cent. is the rate allowed, where the play has three acts or more, and three per cent., where there are but one or two acts; but these rates are doubled on the first three nights of performance. From this source, a free benefit, and the printing of the work, Rubí had realized, after the first fourteen nights, the sum of thirty-six thousand reals, or eighteen hundred dollars. As the author of the best work performed during the dramatic year, he received, according to law, the premium of five hundred dollars. In addition to this and to the emoluments which were likely to follow from future performances, there was settled on him, by the Commissary of the Crusade, a yearly pension of four hundred dollars. The fund on which the pension was fixed proceeds from the sale of dispensations, which relieve the purchasers from the necessity of complying with some of the minor requisitions of church discipline. The Commissary-General was of opinion that the play had contributed, by the elevation of its tone, to the advancement of the cause of religion, and determined to reward it accordingly. May the race of such Commissaries never become extinct!

I give these facts, as they appeared in the newspapers at the time, supposing that they will be of interest to the reader, as showing the public feeling towards literature and the respectable inducements

which are held out for its cultivation, at least in one department. So far as such happy results are due to the laws, the Count of San Luis is entitled to the credit of having produced them. They do honor to his intelligence and taste. If he had been as familiar with Hamlet as he is with the dramatic poetry of his own country, he could not have more certainly provided against that "ill report" of the players, in his lifetime, than which even "a bad epitaph" is better.

XX.

LITERATURE. — BOOKS, BOOKSELLERS, AND BOOK-STALLS. — BOOK-HUNTING IN MADRID. — PUBLISHERS. — STANDARD WORKS. — HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL DICTIONARY OF MADRIZ. — CHEAP PUBLICATIONS. — MR. TICKNOR'S HISTORY OF SPANISH LITERATURE. — ITS CHARACTER AND TRANSLATION. — GAYANGOS. — VEDIA.

WERE I called upon to choose between two cant words, I should say, that, so far as Madrid afforded a criterion and a stranger could judge, there was more "movement" than "progress" in literature, at the time of my visit to Spain. A good many works, original and translated, were issuing from the press, and there seemed to be a fair demand for them and a general disposition to read them; but there was not one really good bookstore in the whole city, and scarcely a publishing house of any enterprise or liberality. Besides this, and notwithstanding the generally creditable style of the newspapers, and their obvious disposition to cater for a certain degree of literary taste among their readers, there was not in Madrid a review, or magazine, or any literary periodical worthy of notice.

It is not easy to imagine any thing much drearier than a book-hunt in the Spanish capital. The established bookstores are, in general, mere shops, very few of which are supplied with catalogues; the most of them being unprovided, likewise, in the absence of the master, with any one who has even a speculative idea as to what the shelves contain. You present yourself at the counter, in the rear of which lie the treasures. The proprietor is not at home. "*Ha ido á la calle,*" — "He has gone into the street." His representative looks around after you have made your inquiry, shakes his head slowly, and answers, "*Creo que no!*" — "I believe not!" It is not worth while to appeal from his judgment. Your doubts will convert his belief into a certainty, and you thus take your leave with the most abiding conviction, that the gentleman who has given you your answer has made it take the negative form, for no earthly reason but to save himself the trouble of a search. This is the style in the principal bookstores on the main streets. It, however, fell within the range of my duties to procure, if possible, certain works which were somewhat rare, and I was compelled, in pursuit of them, to make a pilgrimage to most of the depositories of old and second-hand works. As a general rule, the proprietors of these establishments have not the remotest idea of the character or value of the books which belong to them. They buy them, often, by the *arroba*, like old iron, or rags, or paper, and arrive, as well as they can, at the prices that should be asked for them, by a series of ingenious experiments upon those who desire to purchase. If they happen, once in their lives, to have had a casual high bid, which

they have refused in hope of a higher, neither time nor tide will ever induce them to sell the book in question for any thing less, — though it rot in waiting for a customer. The theory of moderate profits and speedy sales forms no part of their political economy. If a stranger presents himself, the standard rises. He is presumed not to inquire for any thing but what he wants, and to be able and willing to pay for what suits him. Should he be so unfortunate as to look twice at the same book, he must give up all hope of obtaining it, except on the owner's terms. The matter is resolved into a question of endurance in the bookseller's mind, and he regards it as settled that he will secure his price, if he can keep his patience. Being a Spaniard, he is quite equal to that.

A foreigner is not only troubled thus, himself, but becomes a cause of trouble to others. The unhappy book-fancier who follows in his wake is sure to find the market with an "upward tendency," and to learn, by way of justification, that a *caballero ingles* was there the day before, and was willing to give greatly more than the price demanded. Having myself, on several occasions, not far apart, discovered at one of these establishments certain works, which I had been long looking for and was anxious to obtain, — and having very cheerfully paid for them what the seller regarded as a high price, though, in view of my objects, it was very little, — I was amused at hearing, from a friend who frequented the same stall, that books on the subject to which mine related had of late become very valuable, as there was a young Englishman in town, who would buy them at any price.

By far the greater part of the book-stalls, where curious books are to be found, are in the open air. Sometimes they are arranged on shelves around a court, or on one side of a *plaza*, or against a church, or in some entry or open passage. Now and then they occupy the ground-floor of a house in some by-street, — the apartments which contain them being only lighted through the doors, which are of course left always open. In the latter case, you will find the proprietor, in the winter season, with cloak and hat on, sitting over his *brasero*, half torpid with cold. He will give you good day when you enter, and perhaps go through the form of removing the ashes from his coals; but he will rarely afford any other evidence that he is aware of your existence, unless you ask him a question. You will soon find, in most cases, that the best way of ascertaining what you desire to know is to examine for yourself, and you will accordingly prosecute your inspection, until your blood and curiosity fall below the freezing point. You will then bid him “Remain with God!” and he will tell you, in reply, to “Go with God!” so that you and your errand will be to him, when you depart, the mystery you were when you entered.

When the stall is entirely open to the weather, the owner sometimes has a sort of small sentry-box, to hold himself and his *brasero* with the most valuable of his properties, — sometimes he keeps watch and ward from the window of his lodgings, near the roof of an opposite tenement, — sometimes he walks up and down, *muy embozado*, in his cloak. It is a rare thing for him to manifest any more interest in your proceedings,

than a sentinel at the door of a picture-gallery. If you keep the peace, and neither damage nor steal any thing, he does not appear to think that he has any concern with you. I confess that, on the whole, I was not displeased at being thus left entirely to myself. The modern system of salesmanship has become so much like persecution reduced to a science, that it is quite a luxury to be allowed the use of your own discretion, without being dragooned, by a shopkeeper's deputy, into looking at what you do not care to see, or buying what you would not have. A man in his sane mind, with the usual organs of speech, has a right to be treated as if he knows what he wants and is able to ask for it. At the same time, I am willing to admit, that, when he does make a demand for information, he is entitled to receive it in a somewhat more explicit and reliable shape than the mass of a Madrid *librero's* explanations.

It is not very likely that a mode of bookselling, so far behind the locomotive style of traffic which the century has brought forth, will long continue, even in the lonely by-places and chilly courts of Madrid. An intelligent Catalan, at the time of my visit, had already established a shop on the Calle de Alcalá, near the Prado, where he purchased second-hand books of all sorts, to sell, not to keep. He advertised, every morning, his principal acquisitions of the day before, with the prices, usually moderate, at which he was prepared to dispose of them. The result was, that it was necessary to be early on the ground, if you desired to secure your bargains. Books of rarity and value were constantly passing through his hands, and I am sure

that he sold, in a month, more than a year's trade of all his cloak-wearing competitors put together. His advantage consisted in knowing something about his books and his business, and in being willing to put up with a small advance, for the sake of turning over his capital. Time was, when even Spaniards themselves were compelled to send to London in search of Spanish books which were really scarce. The agents of the London trade were always on the alert in the Spanish cities, and if any thing worth having found its way to the stalls, — as, in the changes of those days, was constantly happening, — they had every chance to capture it, before ordinary purchasers could know any thing about it. The Catalan of the Alcalá will put a stop to this, if he has not done so already. His constant demand must afford him the control of the market, and the publication of his lists will give the race to the swiftest. The example he has set, of intelligence and enterprise, cannot fail, by its success, to open the eyes of the booksellers proper, and perhaps stir them from their ancient stagnation. Before I left the city, it had begun to teach them lessons in the philosophy of advertising, and there was an almost daily increase in the number and extent of the notices of book-sales which headed the columns of the *Diario de Avisos*.

It is not to be inferred from the unpromising picture thus drawn, that the press of Madrid was altogether idle, or the hunter of books entirely without resources. The best French works, standard and ephemeral, together with Baudry's republications from the English, and a fair collection of Spanish books, could be found at Monier's on the Carrera de San Geronimo. It may

be interesting to the reader to know that the oily old man, with a pen in his mouth, who does the chief honors of that place, is the proprietor of the night-capped head and the "torso adorned with a shirt," which were thrust out a window to welcome M. Dumas to Madrid, on the morning when the illustrious Alexandre found himself in a strange court, where two women and five cats were sitting round a *brasero* ! There were two or three shops, besides, on the Calle de Carretas, not far from the Puerta del Sol, where the best Spanish standard works, and occasionally some new publications, were sold, with great dignity and severity, at the most inflexibly high prices. It was next to impossible, however, so far as modern books were concerned, to find a copy of any publication for sale, except at the shop of the publisher. Getting out a work, of any size or character, was considered as forming quite an epoch in the history of the house, and for the pride of the thing, — as well perhaps as for the sake of realizing all the profits of a limited market, — every man seemed disposed to monopolize the control of his own handiwork.

The publishing establishment of "*La Publicidad*," on the Calle de Correos, was probably the most extensive in Madrid. It certainly gave greater evidences of vitality than any other, in the number and style of its issues, as well as their literary caste. Two series, which were well advanced in 1850, were sufficient to give character to the concern. These were a republication of the best standard writers, from the formation of the language to the present day, — and another, of the *Codigos Españoles*, — the main body of Spanish written law,

Of the first-named series, nineteen or twenty octavo volumes, out of the forty-five in preparation, have already appeared, and the first edition of several of the works had been absorbed so speedily, that a second was about to be issued while I was in Spain. The reprint of the *Codigos* was far advanced, and the volumes which had been printed were edited with learning and care, under the direction of the most distinguished jurists and legal antiquaries of Madrid. The Count of San Luis, with his usual solicitude for the advancement of letters, — when they did not interfere with “order,” or meddle with ministers, or their doings or places, — gave the *Codigos* the full encouragement and support of his Department. He issued an order, directing all the municipalities representing two hundred householders or more to subscribe to the work, and credit themselves for the subscription on their tax accounts. All the *employés*, “active and passive,” of the government, pensioners as well as office-holders, were authorized, by royal order, to have their subscriptions paid, if they should choose to make them, out of the arrears of their pensions and salaries. After reading the sad though humorous and graceful descriptions of the “*cesantes*” and the “*clases pasivas*” by Gil y Zárate, one hardly knows whether to smile or sigh over the fate of the poor people to whom the royal order was so gracious. After living or starving on promises and hope, they must have found great consolation, in the absence of food and fire, from being permitted to refresh themselves, out of their unpaid pittance, with quarto copies of the laws of the Visigoths! The learned juriconsults of the Middle Ages should certainly not be offended

at finding themselves gathered together in the pawn-brokers' shops, like Bible-Society bibles on the gin-counters in London!

The same sort of encouragement had been lent by the government to the eminent *Progresista* Deputy, Don Pascual Madoz, in aid of his publication which I have already mentioned, — the “Geographical, Statistical, and Historical Dictionary of Spain and her Dependencies.” This is not the place for notices of books, but the work of Madoz well deserves to be referred to, as indicating both the existence and encouragement, in Spain, of a high degree of literary energy and spirit. In a country, where every facility existed, — where statistical details were regularly collected and made accessible, — where there was constant intercourse between the various districts, and where universal education and an active and intelligent press had been long at work, — even there, it would have been no easy matter to do justice to the promises made on Don Pascual's title-page. With scarcely any of those circumstances to aid him, he has nevertheless kept himself fully up to the level of his task. Fifteen large octavo volumes, the fruit of fifteen active and toilsome years, had already appeared, when I left Spain, and but one more was wanting, to complete the publication. As far as it had gone, it was, with great propriety, styled, by the Madrid journals, “a monumental work.” There was not a village or a parish in the kingdom omitted. In regard to all, the details were as copious as could be desired. The historical notices were written with impartiality and fulness, — the political, artistic, and antiquarian dissertations, with liberality, taste,

and learning. Statistical information of the most varied character — collected by the author himself, whose parliamentary career is notable for his accuracy in such matters — was for the first time given to the world. Commercial, agricultural, scientific, and professional knowledge, of a high grade, made the Dictionary valuable as an authority, no less than as a compendium for common reference. The literary merit of the whole was as considerable as its other recommendations, and it may indeed be doubted whether any other country possesses at this day a more worthy and complete epitome of itself. It is the more remarkable, too, from the fact, that in the midst of duties so multifarious as its preparation must have imposed, and principally on himself in person, the author has been active as a politician, and prominent and useful as a legislator and statesman. Few orators in the Chamber of Deputies carried more weight than he. None had more readiness, more energy, or a larger stock of the manageable information which tells in debate. He was one of the leaders of the liberal party, and had, as he deserved, its confidence ; although, as he did not make a trade of politics, and was not afraid to say and do what he thought right, he was occasionally regarded as “ impracticable,” — an epithet applied in Spain, as out of it, to the political riders who will not jockey to win. In fine, he was one of the best illustrations extant of the Catalan character, —

“ Impiger, iracundus, inexorabilis, acer,” —

morally, intellectually, and in action.

In the “ Glimpses of Spain ” I had occasion to remark

that the system of cheap publications, in numbers, had extended itself to Spain, and had been the means, as with us, of flooding the country with all manner of worthless and prurient trash. In Madrid this was particularly conspicuous. The appetite for all things French which prevailed there caused the novels from Paris to be chief in demand, and an activity of the press, which might have produced an indefinite diffusion of useful and elevating knowledge and have given a permanent impulse to the national literature, was wasted on translations of the very worst and most pernicious of the *feuilletons*. During the discussions in the Cortes upon the subject of reducing the postage on printed matter, one of the most respectable journals took occasion to insist, that it was the policy of the government to discourage, rather than to favor, the diffusion of the publications which the measure would most affect. It was but a scheme, the writer said, "to give scanty alms to hungry translators, — to put a premium on rendering bad French into worse Spanish." There was, I think, a general concurrence of opinion among the best-informed men, to the same effect. It seemed to be the impression, that as long as the booksellers could find a ready market for foreign extravagances, which cost them nothing, they would continue to hold back from the literary labor of their own country the encouragement for which it was suffering so much. The activity which was displayed in the circulation of the bane, seemed to have stimulated an equal zeal in the preparation of the antidote. A literary friend informed me that the "Key to Paradise" was perhaps the only book which divided the suffrages of the trade with the "Mysteries of Paris."

When I left Madrid, the admirable "History of Spanish Literature," by our countryman, Mr. George Ticknor, was in the hands of Don Pascual de Gayangos, the celebrated Arabic scholar and antiquarian, and his friend Don Enrique Vedia, a gentleman of fine taste and accomplishments, for translation. Although it was impossible for any work to have received more unqualified commendation, from the whole body of Spanish literati, than Mr. Ticknor's history, and although the translators were men of the highest merit and reputation, there was great difficulty, nevertheless, in finding a publisher with sufficient spirit to take any liberal share in the enterprise. I have since seen a copy of the first volume, very elegantly printed, and bearing date at Madrid, but whether the publishing houses were entitled to any of the credit of its production I have not learned. Their unwillingness to engage in the adventure was a conspicuous illustration of their want of liberality and taste, — as well, perhaps, as of a similar defect in the book-buying public. There is, in the Spanish language, no thorough history of the national literature. The only native work that I am acquainted with, which professes to give a comprehensive view of the subject, at any length, is the *Resumen Histórico*, forming part of the *Manual de Literatura*, published in 1844 by Gil y Zárate, for the instruction of youth. It was not, of course, at all within the scope of such a work to meet the requisitions of an accurate scholarship. Sismondi's brilliant though superficial treatise has been translated, and was published at Seville, some ten years ago, but is not, I believe, to be readily obtained. Of the translation of Bouterwek's more learned and profound, though still

imperfect work, only a single volume has seen the light. This was published, with many valuable annotations, in 1829; an epoch at which there was, unhappily, but little encouragement in Spain for labors of the sort. The length of time which has elapsed, since its cold and discouraging reception, of course precludes all hope of the work's being completed. Amador de los Rios, one of its editors and the author of a book of some reputation, on the History of the Jews in Spain, was said to be engaged, in 1850, on a work of his own, upon the same subject. It was generally believed, however, that he was not altogether suited to the task.

Mr. Ticknor's History is every thing that could be desired, to supply what is thus felt, in Spain, to be a pressing literary want. It is a history of books, as well as of literature. The variety, completeness, and accuracy of its details were — as I had occasion to know — a source of gratified surprise to the most learned of the Spanish literary archæologists. The acuteness and profundity of its criticisms, and its perfect comprehension and appreciation of the Spanish mind and taste and spirit, were regarded by the most eminent of the native writers and thinkers as all that a Spaniard could have been able to attain, and next to miraculous in a foreigner. A distinguished man of letters — whose opinion would be regarded as oracular in Spain, and whose familiar acquaintance with French and English literature rendered the basis of his judgment as broad as that of almost any one — told me that he regarded Mr. Ticknor's work as "the best history of a literature" that he had ever seen. With the prestige of all this in its favor, — and the security, besides, that any

accidental error or omission would be certainly remedied or supplied by the translators, — so that the book could, at once, pass from their hands into a standard authority, — its publication was hindered, nevertheless, by the difficulties to which I have referred. That it should have appeared, at last, in spite of them, is certainly creditable to the zeal and energy of the editors, and bespeaks a confidence in the literary discernment of the community, which augurs something better for the future.

XXI.

QUINTANA. — THE JUNTA CENTRAL. — QUINTANA'S POLITICAL AND LITERARY LIFE AND WORKS. — NICASIO GALLEGO. — HIS POLITICAL CAREER AND POEMS. — DEBATES ON THE INQUISITION. — CLERICAL LIBERALITY. — DOS DE MAYO. — MARTINEZ DE LA ROSA. — HIS POLITICAL AND LITERARY LIFE AND WORKS. — ESTATUTO REAL.

OF the eminent literary persons whose career began before the revolutions of the present century, and whose works are numbered among the classics of the language, there survive now, in Madrid, but two, Don Manuel Josef Quintana and Don Juan Nicasio Gallego. The one a civilian, the other a priest, — both of them poets and both prominent in political service, — they have the further bond of a common devotion to the cause of rational liberty and of common suffering for their efforts to establish and maintain it.

Quintana was born in 1772, and educated at Salamanca, under the direction of Melendez Valdez. He did not devote himself long or actively to the profession of the law, though it continued to be his nominal pursuit, but soon became one of the little band of men

of letters whose leader — and in some sort patron — was the wise and accomplished Jovellanos. Of his first productions, which were dramatic, the tragedy of “Don Pelayo” gave him earliest distinction. A volume of lyric poetry, published about the same time, full of noble inspiration and a burning, lofty patriotism, commended him still further to the love and admiration of his countrymen. These works were followed by a volume of lives of celebrated Spaniards, to which, of later years, he has added several biographies, remarkable for their learning, grace, and historic impartiality. In 1808 he gave to the press several volumes of selections from Spanish poetry, commencing at the days of Juan de Mena and embracing the choicest productions of the best masters, with historical and critical annotations. The convulsions which followed the invasion of Napoleon drove Quintana at once into the arena of active and troubled life. The position of Secretary to the *Junta Central*, which he was called to fill, was perhaps the most important civil station, at that time, in the public gift, and to the ability with which Quintana discharged its duties, and the eloquence and power of the state papers which came from his hands, was attributable mainly the hold of the *Junta* upon public confidence. “It was a happy selection for that body,” says the Count of Toreno, in his History. “The public opinion of the *Junta*, and of its plans and ideas, was formed from the masterly expositions of the Secretary.” Certainly no writer of his day was capable of addressing to the people appeals so stirring as those with which, in poetry and prose, he kindled and sustained the national enthusiasm.

With the downfall of the constitution in 1814, fell the Cortes of which Quintana was a conspicuous member, and the day of tribulation began for him, as for all the ablest and worthiest of his countrymen. He was thrown into a cell in the fortress of Pamplona, — cut off from books and friends, and even denied the use of writing materials, — until the constitutional reaction of 1820. Upon that revival of free institutions, he was at once elevated to the Directorship of Public Instruction, — an office created by the constitution, and, in the hands of a statesman so enlightened and liberal as Quintana, one of the mightiest engines of national regeneration. The public acts of those days attest the wisdom and comprehensiveness of his ideas and administration, and there can be no doubt that there were seeds of knowledge and sound doctrine sown among the people, during the short reign of his system, which have sprung up to the best fruit in more recent times. The reëstablishment of despotism, in 1823, of course put an end to Quintana's public labors. He was fortunate in being allowed to cultivate his literary tastes in a quiet and distant province, where he remained until 1833, when the death of Ferdinand the Seventh recalled him to his old duties, and threw on him new honors. Created a member of the House of *Proceres* (or Peers) under the *Estatuto Real*, he prepared, in 1836, in conjunction with Gallego and others, a plan of public instruction, which was adopted by the government. In his legislative capacity he was the author of many able reports upon important political and economical questions, and when the present constitutional system was finally adopted, he was made a Senator. During the

minority of Queen Isabella, he was intrusted with the direction of her education, and he is now President of the Council of Public Instruction. Of the distinguished positions to which he has, from time to time, been called, several have been the gift of administrations and parties to which he was opposed, — an honorable tribute to his ability and patriotism, and to the consistent integrity with which he has clung to the political principles of his early manhood. The persecutions and privations of a troubled life, and the insensible but steady change which is wrought in most men by the experience of years and of human affairs, have done little towards extinguishing the enthusiasm of the veteran *Progresista*. While others — and many of them among the most conspicuous of the original constitutionalists — have been tempted by the love of place or repose, or driven by their disgust for popular fickleness and ingratitude, almost into the arms of the system which they once abhorred, he has remained as he began. Too able and too clear-sighted to have overlooked the follies of his party, he has had the wisdom to foresee and the patience to await the ultimate triumph of the permanent over the transient.

If the bulk of Quintana's literary productions is less than might have been expected from his long and industrious life, it is because during the greater part of it he has sacrificed the leisure and tastes of a scholar to the sterner duties of a patriot. In the preface to an edition of his poems, in 1821, he speaks of several works which he had already nearly completed, when the war of the Peninsula broke out. "Since then," he says, "the duty of devoting myself to labors of a

far different kind, the necessity of moving constantly from place to place, and the whirlwind of misfortune, persecution, and imprisonment, which has raged around me, have scattered my manuscripts, consumed the best years of my life, and set my literary plans at naught. The present circumstances of the country render it impossible for me to renew these last. Other writers will fall upon calmer times, and doubtless will be blessed with better fortune." In the edition of Quintana's works which has recently been published, as a part of the series of standard authors referred to in the last chapter, there appear, for the first time, a number of letters addressed by him to Lord Holland, in 1823 and 1824, and containing a history of the curious and important political events of that day. Additional value is given to them by a striking analysis of the political history of Spain, from the reign of Charles the Third down to the period at which the letters were written. Upon this subject, and more especially in reference to the incidents which passed under the author's personal observation, the letters are a valuable contribution to the history of the century. The epoch is one of which little is truly known out of Spain, and in regard to which but little that is worth reading has been written there. The work of the Marquis of Miraflores, which is the principal source of information, is executed in the most partial and illiberal spirit, as if its author had but one idea in producing it, — that of recanting and atoning for all his previous enthusiasm in behalf of liberal and rational ideas.

In passing to and from my apartments in the House of Cordero, on the Calle de Pontejos, I had often given

place upon the stairs to a venerable gentleman, apparently in robust health, of fine stature, and full of energy and vigor. The habit — soon acquired abroad, if it be not natural — of meddling but little with other people and their affairs, had prevented my making any inquiries in regard to him, and I had been more than a month in the same house with Sr. Quintana, and hearing his footsteps at night in the apartments above me, without knowing that he was my neighbor. The happy accident through which I made the discovery was the means, also, of giving me the honor of his acquaintance, under favorable auspices. It was a gratification which I should ill repay, were I to say more than that he is surrounded in his old age by all the appliances which can make the enjoyment of a man of taste, education, and moderate desires, — the centre of a circle of quiet and cultivated friends, whose regard is dearer to him than the public homage, and from whom his learning, accomplishments, and virtues win reverence as profound as their affection. Few poets have lived to realize such pleasant disappointment as he, — in comparing the actual decline of his life with the melancholy anticipations expressed in his “Farewell to Youth.” Few public men have lived through so many storms, to see the shadows fall so peacefully on so serene an evening.

Though but five years the junior of Quintana, Nicasio Gallego belongs, in a literary point of view, to a later epoch. Scarcely any of his most admired poems were given to the public until after Quintana’s reputation had become national. During the French invasion, he was too busily occupied with public affairs to

“meditate the thankless Muse.”

In the upheaving of all things old, and the confusion of things new and old as well, which made that period remarkable in Spain, the *Junta Central*, which had the reins of the provisional government, was overwhelmed with projects of legal and constitutional reform. All the political theorists in the land had set their heads and hands industriously to work, and all the subordinate *juntas* and pragmatical corporations sent in their recipes for the preparation of Utopias, warranted to last. To give to these multiform schemes the consideration to which they were entitled, on the score of merit or policy, and to cull from among them such as might be worthy to be ingrafted on the permanent legislation of the country, was of course impossible for an administrative body, in the throbs and throes of a revolution. A board was accordingly constituted for that purpose, and Nicasio Gallego was one of its most prominent and useful members. To the Cortes of 1810 he was an active and able Deputy, and distinguished himself, especially, by his zeal in advocating and perfecting the laws which secured the freedom of the press. His reported speech against the proposition to establish a censorship is full of large ideas and a manly and liberal philosophy. It is the more deserving of note, as the production of an ecclesiastic, controverting the narrower views which were urged, in the name of religion, by others of his class. Justice, however, requires it to be said, in this connection, that there was no measure before the Cortes of those days, involving the popular freedom and its guaranties, which did not find among the clergy who were Deputies some of its most able and strenuous supporters. Of