

knows not what it is, and he who is obliged to reside there does not think of making improvements. The lively descriptions of the beauties of the country, of the varied scenes of nature, which, in the midst of the pleasures of the city, inspire us with the desire of leaving them, the enthusiasm of Gesner, Thomson, and Saint Lambert, are unknown in Spain.

A living author, Don Francisco Gregorio de Salas, has given some views of the country, and he is the only one. His taste will be judged of by the first twenty or thirty verses of the first part of his *Rustic Observatory*. This is what he puts into the mouth of a philosopher : I translate literally.

“ My rustic cabin promises me the happy  
“ completion of my desires : stretched out under  
“ the little shade it furnishes me, I perceive in  
“ the furrows, lately traced by the plough, the  
“ hungry sparrows seeking for insects ; and the  
“ spotted goldfinch, which sings perched upon  
“ a slender thistle, lulls my tranquil mind. The  
“ simple laundress salutes me, and hastily looks at  
“ the height of the sun ; she sneezes, and with a  
“ diligent finger wipes her nose. A goatherd lies  
“ stretched out by my side and enjoys profound  
“ sleep, until he is awakened by snoring : he  
“ opens his eyes, yawns as he unfolds his arms,  
“ and gives himself a shake. The imprudent

“beggar, without either shelter or care, mends  
 “his shirt, and laughs at every thing he sees.  
 “The labourer sits down and relates to me his toils  
 “and domestic griefs: he pulls down his spatter-  
 “dashes and tranquilly scratches his legs,”\* &c.  
 &c. This beginning, seems to me sufficient to  
 satisfy the curiosity of the most intrepid reader.  
 May not the want of aptitude in the Spaniards,

\* Salicio filosofo, desde una pequeña casa, a la vista de la corte, dice así :

Mi rustica cabana me promete  
 El termino feliz de mi deseo ;  
 Solo desde ella veo,  
 A su pequeña sombra recostado,  
 En los recientes surcos del arado  
 Ambrientos pajarillos,  
 Que buscan los pequeños insectillos ;  
 Y al manchado gilguero,  
 Sobre un cardo ligero,  
 Que cantando se mece,  
 Y mi tranquilo spiritu adormece.  
 La simple labandera me salada,  
 Mira al sol presoruser y, estornuda  
 Y luego con los de dos diligenté  
 En jugala nariz sencillamente.  
 Un cabrero con migo se recuesta,  
 Y alli duerme lasiesta  
 Con descanso cumplido,  
 Hasta que le despierta algun reonguido  
 Abre luego los ojos, y bosteza,  
 Y estirando los brazos se espereza.  
 El incauto mendigo,  
 Sin resguardo, ni abrigo,

for all sentimental writings, be found in their disgust for the country? The climate under which they live is scorching, and dries and ossifies the fibres. Had the Spaniards more sensibility they would be fonder of the country: but they are attached to cities, and in their works of literature there is nothing but imagination, and passion and gallantry are the essence of their amours.

Their ignorance is in general extreme; most of them make no distinction between other nations, and many will maintain that a Frenchman, although a Christian, is not a Catholic. Their reading is confined to comedies, and their prayers to a recital of the chaplet. I beg the reader to remark, that I speak generally; for in Spain there are many men of learning, to whose merit I wish I were capable of doing justice.

Their bravery in war is but momentary; and, among the troops, signs of the greatest cowardice have been seen to succeed the most valiant actions. Several corps which would shew abundance of courage in an attack in the day-time,

Remienda la camisa  
 Y todo quanto pasa ve conrisa.  
 El labrador se sienta,  
 Y sus afanes rusticos me cuenta;  
 Las polainas se baja presuroso  
 Y las piernas se rasca con reposo.

. . . . .

shrink and are seized with a panic terror during a march by night. They are sometimes cruel in battle, which is a consequence of their phlegmatic disposition; and, when once heated, their rage knows no bounds. It was several times remarked in the wars of Italy, that they were in the habit of ill-treating their prisoners, and even of wounding them when they fell into their hands unhurt; they called this making sure of the prisoner, *asegurar el prisionero*.

They have often been accused of carrying the passion for vengeance too far; but in this respect the nation seems to be entirely changed. I do not think the Spaniards have lost that energy and vigour of character by which they were at once incited to great actions, and became a prey to the most dangerous passions; but reflection and a more just idea of honour have moderated its violence, and that vindictive spirit, which hurries them even to assassination, is confined to the lower classes of the people. The asylum afforded by churches, although at present limited to one in each city, will for a long time preserve that sure means of getting rid of an enemy.

The Spaniard is in general short, thin, and well proportioned; his complexion is olive; his manner grave; he has facility of expression, and speaks well; he has graces. Under his cloak which he wears, and handles with dexterity, he

carries a long sword to defend himself. He still retains a great partiality for the large round hat ; and as soon as he is in a country where this is not prohibited, he quits with pleasure the hat with three corners, or the French hat, as it is commonly called in Spain. His favourite colour in dress is black. When he quits the Spanish dress for the military habit ( for this the Spaniards call the French dress ) he makes choice of the most lively colours ; and it is not uncommon to see a common mechanic, fifty years of age, dressed in red or sky-blue silk ; in this particular there is no distinction of rank. The Spaniard loves to make an appearance, and spends, without either reflection or calculation, every thing he has, and afterwards lives how he can.

One of the most commendable qualities of the Spaniards is their never discharging a domestic by whom they have been well served ; the son keeps those of his father with his own, and the women who served his mother, and they all die under the roof of their master. On this account, in the houses of the great, it is common to see a prodigious number of servants.

I must not forget the most interesting class of the nation, that which every where consoles us, elevates our minds, constitutes our happiness, and has no vices except such as we communicate. Nothing is more engaging than a young female

Spaniard, at fifteen years of age, such as I have seen many in the country part of the kingdom. A face perfectly oval; hair of a fine clear auburn, equally divided on the forehead, and only bound by a silk net; large black eyes; a mouth full of graces; an attitude always modest; a simple habit, of neat black serge, exactly fitting the body, and gently pressing the wrist; a little hand perfectly proportioned; in fine, every thing charms in these youthful virgins. They recal to our recollection the softness, beauty, dress, and simplicity of the young Grecian females, of whom antiquity has left us such elegant models: the angels, in Spanish comedy, are always represented by young girls.

The countenance of the Spanish women is extremely sensible and full of vivacity. They are highly satisfied with a person who shews them marks of his affection, very desirous of being flattered and courted, always ingenuous, and but seldom timid. They express themselves with facility, and have a seducing volubility of speech; they are hasty, opinionated, and passionate; but have a good heart, and easily yield to reason when it is possible to induce them to listen to it. They have a singular passion for dress, especially for jewels; and, without choice or moderation, cover their fingers with plain and diamond rings. The poor as well as rich never go from home

without a *basquina*, or a great black mohair or silk petticoat, put over their other dress, which is frequently very rich. On this account they hasten to take off their petticoat as soon as they enter either their own house or that of a friend. The small-pox makes fewer ravages in Spain than in France; it is rare to see a woman there marked with it. The Spanish women in general have eyes so lively, expressive, and intelligent, that had they no other charms they would still be thought handsome.

What travellers have related of the extreme care the Spanish ladies take to conceal their feet, is no longer observable; and a woman who shews you her foot is not always ready, as these travellers say, to grant you every favour in her power. The length of their petticoat is less an effect of coquetry than of decency; and the folds spoken of by father Labat, which were in the middle of the petticoat, to lengthen it at pleasure, are now out of use. The proportion which the men have assigned, as the true standard for the foot of a woman, is more variable in Spain than elsewhere, on account of the nature and heat of the climate, and the early maturity of the Spanish women: but these are futilities which exist in the brain of only a very few Spaniards. A Spanish woman seldom gives you her hand to touch and kiss; an English or French

woman is familiar with none but her friends ; and these rules of decency are common to every nation.

The most general devotion among the Spaniards is that which they pay to the Virgin Mary ; and this, as a just acknowledgment for all the favours she has conferred upon them.

It would be difficult to express the veneration they have for her, and the two presents she has made to mankind, the scapulary and the rosary. Few women go out of doors, walk, play, or toy without a rosary in their hand. The men are never without one hung round their necks. In their comedies, if the devil be chained, it is with a rosary ; and he then makes a dreadful howling, by which the good people are much edified.

Equally remarkable is their respect for the dead, apparitions, and sepulchres ; the latter they strew over with flowers, and water with holy water. Each drop of holy water, says their priest, that is shed upon the tomb of the dead, extinguishes a part of the fire in purgatory. Who would not shed over them all the water in a river ? The diligent young girl waters the grave of her father and brother ; may she never sprinkle that of her lover !

The devout desire to benefit departed souls is universal in Spain. The people know the day

a soul is to be taken out of purgatory, and you frequently see an advertisement against the doors of churches: *Hoy se saca anima*; to day a soul is delivered.

After the death of any person the masses are without end: however poor the relations may be, they must deprive themselves of every thing for the repose of the soul of their departed friend. The masses a man appoints to be said for him after his death are privileged; his soul is preferred to his creditors. Philip V. ordered, by his will, all the priests of the place where he should die to say mass the same day for the repose of his soul: besides which they were to celebrate during three days, before privileged altars, as many masses as possible; and, that he might not fail in his purpose, he further commanded an hundred thousand masses to be said in his behalf, the surplus of as many as were necessary to conduct him to heaven, reversible to poor solitary souls, concerning whom no person bestowed a thought.

The blind respect the Spaniards have for priests is derived to them from the Goths. The monks, priests, and bishops, were infallible in the eyes of that people; they became the only judges in civil as well as ecclesiastical matters. The inferior clergy were looked upon by the prelates as

a band of slaves, and the same prejudice still exists in modern Spain. The pages, land and house stewards, and servants of a bishop, are ecclesiastics.

The Spaniards were so infatuated with monks, that Alphonso the Warrior, king of Arragon, left, by will, his states to the order of the knights templars. The grandees of the kingdom paid no attention to this strange bequest; they, however, elected a monk for their sovereign, Don Ramiro, brother to the deceased monarch. The templars had the impudence to claim the crown, and, by way of accommodation, received a gift of certain lands in the kingdom.

The zeal of the Spaniards for religion extends to the ministers of it. A priest is an object of veneration, to punish whom civil justice has no power, let him have committed ever so great a crime. A striking instance of this was seen a few years ago in Andalusia. A monk, of the order of barefooted Carmelites, had conceived a violent passion for a young girl to whom he was confessor. He had undoubtedly attempted in vain to explain to her his wishes; because, learning from herself that she was going to be married, and jealous that another should possess her whom he idolized, he became frantic; and one day, after the young woman had made her con-

fession to him, received the sacrament from his hands, and heard him say mass, he lay in wait for her at the church door, and, notwithstanding the cries of the mother, and the astonishment of all present, with three strokes of a poniard laid her dead at his feet. He was taken into custody, but the king being informed he was a priest, and certainly wishing to give him time to repent, condemned him to live at Porto Rico as a presidary or galley-slave.

In order to form a proper idea of the manners or laws of any country, an observer should collect and compare facts, and examine the different judgments pronounced in similar cases. A canon of the cathedral of Seville, affected in his dress, and particularly curious in his shoes, could not find a workman to his liking. An unfortunate shoemaker, to whom he applied, after quitting many others, having brought him a pair of shoes not made to please his taste, the canon became furious, and seizing one of the tools of the shoemaker, gave him with it so many blows upon the head as laid him dead upon the floor. The unhappy man left a widow, four daughters, and a son, fourteen years of age, the eldest of the indigent family. They made their complaints to the chapter; the canon was prosecuted, and condemned not to appear in the choir for a year.

The young shoemaker having attained to man's estate, was scarcely able to get a livelihood, and overwhelmed with wretchedness, sat down on the day of a procession at the door of the cathedral of Seville, in the moment the procession passed by. Amongst the other canons he perceived the murderer of his father. At the sight of this man, filial affection, rage and despair, got so far the better of his reason, that he fell furiously upon the priest, and stabbed him to the heart. The young man was seized, convicted of the crime, and immediately condemned to be quartered alive. Peter, whom we call the Cruel, and whom the Spaniards, with more reason, call the Lover of Justice, was then at Seville. The affair came to his knowledge; and, after learning the particulars, he determined to be himself the judge of the young shoemaker. When he proceeded to give judgment, he first annulled the sentence just pronounced by the clergy; and, after asking the young man of what profession he was, "I forbid you," said he, "to make shoes for a year to come."

The Spaniards never carry light into an apartment without saying, *Blessed be the holy sacrament of the altar.* The bye-standers answer, *For ever.* Their salutation is, *God keep you.* Their farewel at separating, *Go with God, with*

*the Virgin.* When they enter a house, the first words are, *Deo gratias, Ave Maria.* The company answer, *Sin pecado concebida,* conceived without sin. This subject of so many disputes is made a form of compliment in Spain. Never were God, the virgin, and the saints so much spoken of as in that kingdom.

Easter week is the source of a thousand sacrileges, which are the consequence of billets of confession. The priests of Spain have a maxim equally false and cruel; they say, that men should, by every possible means, be accustomed to do their duty, and that persuasion comes sooner or later. A few days before the holy-week, the vicar of each parish, accompanied by a register, makes a visit to his flock, and carefully takes down their names; fifteen days afterwards he repeats his visit, and all his parishioners are obliged to produce to him, not only a billet of confession, but another of communion. How many abuses result from this monstrous custom! The holy-days are scarcely begun before a sacrilegious traffic is made of that for which religion teaches us the highest veneration. Prostitutes are seen to communicate in every parish church, and sell to their impenitent lovers the billets they have received. Priests, unworthy of the name, pay with the same money the favours of these

wretches. Many persons, to spare the expence of a billet, become sacrilegious; and if any one, led astray by his passions, has preserved piety and decency enough to forbear having recourse to these horrid means, and on the day the curate makes his visit has not a billet of communion to present, he becomes the object of ecclesiastical censure; his name is shamefully posted up in the most public places; and if, in the time given, he does not fulfil the precept, he receives corporal punishment. Thus the man, perhaps the most religious amongst his brethren, is the most defamed; and falls a victim to his scruples and love of truth.

Few of the Spaniards, the women especially, are bled in the arm: this operation is generally performed in the hand or foot. They are all very partial to bleeding. It is common to hear them say, such a one has been indisposed; he has been bled four times and is now better. Most of the women are bled three or four times a month, by way of precaution. I am persuaded that the great number of blind persons in Spain is produced as much by the frequency of bleeding, as by the burning sands with which several parts of that kingdom are covered.

Persons whom you see but seldom when in health, fail not to make you frequent visits when

you are confined by illness. A Spaniard seldom neglects exterior social duties. You will receive his visit on your birth-day ; but during the rest of the year you must not expect to see him.

Such are the observations I have made on the character of the Spanish nation ; were I to say more upon the subject, I should but repeat what others have said much better before me.

## L I T E R A T U R E.

---

AT present I mean only to give a slight sketch of Spanish literature, as I intend to treat that subject more fully in a distinct work, in which I shall speak of all the ancient books printed in Spain, and give a catalogue of the men of letters who have distinguished themselves in that country, and rendered it illustrious by their works. I have already collected such materials as are necessary to enable me to treat of Spanish poetry, history, comedies, romances, and mystical authors. These strictures shall soon follow my essays.\*

I must here observe, that the Spaniards had translations of Plutarch, Seneca, and the best Greek and Latin historians, before the end of the fifteenth century, which was sooner than these authors were translated in France: their language had already made a considerable progress, and was become copious, full of harmony, and poetical. Spain owed this advantage to Alphonso, surnamed the Wise, who, in 1260, or-

\* M. Peyron died before these were finished.

dered all the charters, privileges, and public acts, to be translated from the Latin into the Castilian tongue. It was in this language that he digested and had composed the *Las Partidas*, which were, and are still, in a great measure the laws of the kingdom. He had several foreign manuscripts translated, and as Toledo was at that time the centre of fine taste, and the city in which the best language was spoken, when any difficulty arose, either relative to the pronunciation or meaning of a word, he ordered recourse to be had to the purists of Toledo.

The Spaniards have written history with sufficient exactness and simplicity, and are scarcely to be reproached with any thing, but rather too much national vanity and partiality.

One of their best historians is father Mariana; his style is admirable, and his narration ornamented without being turgid: he flatters neither kings nor his nation; but he is accused of having sometimes departed from truth, and of appearing too credulous relative to certain prodigies. He is nevertheless a good historian, but his history goes no further than the reign of Ferdinand the Catholic. The continuation of it by father Miniana has acquired some reputation, but the obscurity and dryness which reigns throughout the whole work renders it disgusting.

The chronicles of Ferreras de Saavedra are in great estimation. The history of Catalonia, by a bishop of Lerida, is written in the style of Livy.

The best memoirs which Spain has produced, are those of the Marquis of Saint Philip, on the war of the succession; they are accurate, and written in an agreeable style; the French translation of them is greatly inferior to the original.

The history of Mexico, by Antonio Solis, is translated into every European language. The Spaniards accuse him of being too florid and affected in his style, and he sometimes departs so far from truth that his book may be considered as a romance. This author did not speak like a philosopher, when he said the massacres committed by the Spaniards were so many means made use of by God to convert the infidels. However partial the reader may be to Fernando Cortes, the hero of the history, and to the Spanish nation, he cannot peruse the work of Solis without shuddering with horror.

The conquest of Peru, by Garcilasso de la Vega, is dry and uninteresting; but more exact than the former.

The general history of the Indies, by captain Gonzalo Hernández de Oviedo y Valdes, governor of the fortress of Saint Domingo, printed at

Seville in 1535, is written with an admirable simplicity, of which there is no other example in the same century. The fourteenth chapter of his history begins with these remarkable words :

“ Since a great part of the gold of the Indies  
“ has been carried into Italy and France, and  
“ some of it fallen into the hands of the Moors,  
“ and the enemies of Spain, it is but just that,  
“ after having profited by the sweat of our brows,  
“ they should partake of our pains and fatigues,  
“ to the end that, whether because of gold, or  
“ by means of their sufferings, they may not  
“ forget to return thanks to God, and that either  
“ in pain or the midst of pleasures, they may  
“ have recourse to the patience of Job, who  
“ when rich was not proud, nor impatient  
“ when sick and poor, but always gave his hum-  
“ ble thanks to God his Sovereign Lord. I fre-  
“ quently laughed, when, in Italy, I heard the  
“ Italians speak of the French disease, and the  
“ French of the Neapolitan; they would have  
“ given it its true name by calling it the disease of  
“ the Indies.”\*

\* Pues que tanta parte del oro de estas Indias ha pasado a Italia, y Francia, y aun a poder assi mesmo de los Moros, y enemigos de Espana, y por todas las otras partes del mundo ; bien es que como han gozado de nuestros sudores les alcance parte de nuestros dolores y fatigas, por que de todo o alo menos por la una, o por la otra manera del oro, o del trabajo, se

A very curious work is that intituled, *De los veinte y un libros rituales, y monarchia Indiana con el origen, y guerras de los Indios Occidentales, de sus poblaciones, descubrimiento, conquista, conversion, y otras cosas maravillosas de la misma tierra.* i. e. Twenty-one books of Indian rites, and the monarchy of the Indies, with the origin and wars of the West Indians; and the population, discovery, conquest, conversion, and other wonderful things of the same country. This work is by F. Jean de Torquemada, of the order of Saint Francis. It is in three volumes folio, and is extremely curious on account of its treating of the Dynasties anterior to the conquest, and of the Mexican kings who preceded Montezuma. If we possess but little knowledge of that interesting and long unknown part of mankind, the fault rests with the monks, and the first bishop of Mexico, Don Juan de Cumarraga, who burned the Indian hieroglyphical books which were taken by these ignorant priests for the depositories of idolatry.

acuerden a dar muchas gracias a Dios. Y en lo que le diere plazero o pesar se abracen con la paciencia de Job; que ni estando rico fue sobervio, ni seyendo pobre y clagado impaciente: siempre dio gracias a aquel soborano Dios nuestro. Muchas vezes en Italia me reya, oyendo a los Italianos dezir el mal Francez, y a los Francezes clamar el mal de Napoles: y en la verdad los unos, y los otros le acertaran el nombre si le dixeran el mal de las Indias.

The number of mystical authors which Spain has produced is prodigious; one of the most esteemed of these is Fray Luis, of Granada. All these pious reveries were collected in Holland under the following title; *Dialectica y Eloquencia de los Salvages de Europa*: Logic and Rhetoric of the Savages of Europe.

The Spaniards have been particularly successful in compositions of gallantry, in fables, and ingenious fictions. The Arabians taught them the art of narration, and their imagination supplied the rest; they excelled before we did in this kind of writing, which we have since improved, whilst they have made no further progress. Don Quixote will be read with pleasure as long as men possess wit, taste, and judgment.

Spain has produced many poets, but most of them are unknown, because their works were never printed, and those which have been published are become very scarce. The most esteemed amongst the poetical writers of this country are, Ercilla, Garcilasso de la Vega, Fray Luis de Leon, Quevedo, Lopes de Vega, and Villegas.

The most ancient Castilian poet known is Gonzalo Berceo, born at Berceo, and a monk in the monastery of Saint Millan; he flourished in 1211. The subject of one of the poems he has left us, is the life of the glorious confessor Saint

Dominic of Silos. His style may be judged of by the two first stanzas of this poem.

*En el nombre del padre, que fizo toda cosa,  
El de Don Jesu-Christo, fi de la Gloriosa,  
El del Spiritu-Santo que egual dellos, posa  
De un confessor sancto quiero fer una prosa.*

*Quiero fer una prosa en Roman Paladino,  
En qual suele el pueblo hablar a su vecino,  
Ca no son tan lettrado por fer otro Latino,  
Bien valdra, come creo, un vaso de buen vino.\**

Valasquez, and the famous father Sarmiento, wrote on the origin of Castilian poetry, and have left, on that subject, some curious details. I shall give an account of them when I come to treat of Spanish literature at large, the productions of which are considerable in quantity, and display perhaps more imagination than that of other European nations, but little reasoning, taste, or profundity: these necessarily depend upon a certain degree of liberty and will return with it.

\* In the name of the Father who made all things, and of Jesus Christ, Son of the Virgin, and of the Holy Ghost, who is equal to them, I will make verses on a holy confessor.

I will make verses in the style of the romance, the same as is used in speaking in the city, for I am not scholar enough to employ other Latin, and for this purpose I think a glass of good wine will be sufficient.

## OF THE SPANISH THEATRE.

---

THIS theatre was the first which had any success in Europe; the Italians, the French, and the English imitated and pillaged it for a considerable time, without indicating the source whence they drew improvement. The Spaniards had about twenty-four thousand comedies: it is true they laid sacred and profane history, miracles, fable, and prodigies, all under contribution. Every thing beneath the pen of their authors, but little confined by taste or rules, became a subject for comedy. The least probable incidents, the whole life of a hero, sieges, battles, gallantry, and the means it inspires in a jealous nation to enjoy the beloved object, furnish the subject of most of the Spanish theatrical pieces. The Spaniards are commendable for having represented on the stage the principal events of their history; a merit they have in common with the English, but which the rules of the French theatre prevent that nation from imitating.

The Spaniards have felt and expressed all the

degrees of most of the great passions ; they have described ambition, anger, jealousy, and revenge in the most energetic manner. But they had too much imagination to speak the language of love ; to this passion they have mostly substituted gallantry, and we owe to them the insipidities which for a long time have vitiated our theatre ; those love scenes which disfigure Corneille, and sometimes Racine. The language of their lovers is mere jargon, a confused heap of ridiculous figures and comparisons, equally cold and exaggerated. Their tender declarations are besides, in general, of such a length as to exhaust the most exemplary patience.

The artlessness and variety of their intrigues, and some of their *dénouements*, have been justly admired ; these *Imbrogljos* are the result of ancient Spanish manners. The imagination of comic authors must have been exhausted in bringing two lovers together, and uniting them in a country where women were very difficult of access ; whilst in France, where society is in general more at liberty, authors have employed their whole art in prolonging delicate and tender conversations. The difference of manners, therefore, has produced too much action and intrigue in Spanish comedy, and too many words without action in that of France. A Spanish woman of quality reading the romance of Calprenede, and

fatigued by the too long and languishing conversations, said, throwing down the book, *What a deal of wit ill employed! To what purpose is all this dialogue, since they are together?*

The father of the Spanish theatre was Lopes de Rueda, a native of Seville, and a gold-beater by profession. Cervantes, who in his youth had seen him perform, speaks highly of his pieces. "My taste," says he, "was not then sufficiently formed to judge of his verses; but by those which have remained in my memory, and upon which I reflected at a maturer age, I am not afraid to assert, that Lopes was as good an author as he was an actor. We were not then acquainted with the machinery now necessary, nor with the challenges the Moors gave to the Christians, and which are now so common; we saw no figures rise from under ground, by means of a hole in the stage, nor angels borne upon clouds, to come to visit us; the simple ornament of the theatre was an old curtain, behind which, two or three musicians sung with accompaniments some ancient romance."

Lopes de Rueda imitated, in his pieces, the satirical manner of Plautus, and the simplicity of Terence; he was highly applauded by his cotemporaries, and dying at Cordova, was interred, as a man of distinguished talents, in the cathedral of that city. I have four of his come-

dies printed in 1567: the editor observes, that several passages, which gave offence by their freedom, have been erased from them; which, with some other circumstances, seems to prove this impression of his works to have been given a few years after his death.

There was but little art in these first pieces of the Spanish theatre; but the language is natural, and is remarkable for a pleasing softness and simplicity.

The titles of the four comedies of Lopes de Rueda are, *Eufemia*, *Armelina*, *Los Enganados*, (the deceived) and *Medora*. The same volume contains dialogues and pastorals, the place of which is now occupied by what is called *el entre-mes*, or the interlude.

Juan Timoneda, and Alonso de la Vega, were the successors and imitators of Lopes de Rueda. They also wrote with simplicity, but admitted too much intrigue, and too large a portion of the marvellous, into their comedies. Timoneda introduced several allegorical persons into his *Marie*, in which he treats of the birth of Christ, and the conception of the Virgin. The poet Vega employed enchantments. Their works are very scarce, and those I saw of them were imperfect.

The four comedies entitled, *Florinea*, *Selvagia*, *Celestina*, and *Eufrosine*, had already appeared.

The two last I have read, the others are very scarce. *Celestina* has been translated into Latin, and into French under the title of *Calisté et Melibée*. These pieces were not written for representation; *Celestina* has twenty-one acts, and contains scenes admirable for their simplicity, truth of character, and morality; the latter would be excellent were it not sometimes expressed in too free a manner. *Eufrosine* was translated from the Portuguese into Castilian; the edition I saw was of 1735, in which the piece is corrected. It wearied me by the great number of proverbs with which it is filled. The best edition is that of 1566, and extremely scarce.

After Lopes de Rueda, Cervantes names Naharro, a native of Toledo, as one of the restorers of the theatre. He was especially famous in the character of a poltroon or a knave. He added a variety of embellishments to the stage, and brought the music from behind the curtain by which it was hidden, and placed it in front of the theatre; he made the actors lay aside their masks, and the false hair and beards with which they covered their heads and chins; he invented machinery, decorations, clouds, thunder and lightning, and was the first who introduced battles and challenges into theatrical representations. Comedy then lost its primitive simplicity. Cervantes acknowledges that he himself was one of

the first to adopt this vitiated taste; he had, nevertheless, written several pieces which might have served as models to his countrymen, and were more perfect than any by which they were preceded. Complicated intrigues, and an unexpected *dénouement*, were the delight of the people, and Cervantes saw, when it was too late, that a corrupted taste had taken very deep root.

He had corrected his nation of its eagerness for extravagant adventure, and by his *Don Quixote* had thrown an indelible ridicule upon the knights of chivalry: perhaps he may be reproached with having enervated the heroic sentiments, energy of character and greatness of mind, by which the Spanish nation was distinguished. It is sometimes a misfortune to open the eyes of a people and deprive them of their enthusiasm. He wished to correct the theatre also. He composed several pieces quite unconnected, and without the least regard to the rules which probability requires, but so similar in every thing to the pieces which were then represented, that they were received with applause. The irony and instruction were lost to the age in which he lived. The theatre was, at that time, in high reputation, and the poets in vogue had such powerful protectors, that Cervantes dared not to explain himself in terms less equivocal; he was already persecuted for possessing sense and judgment, and so poor

that he was afraid truth, too frequently repeated, should aggravate his misfortunes.

The theatre is no unimportant object; it is a general and national taste which, on one hand, is furiously attacked; and, on the other, obstinately defended. We have seen music at first produce witticisms, and afterwards libels and abuse. Sounds, more or less grave or acute, have filled the too susceptible mind of a philosopher with bitterness, and produced endless disputes. There is not an Englishman who would not defend Shakspeare as he would his household gods; and the French, worthy of eulogium, for the good reception they have always given to strangers, did not receive, as they ought to have done, this hero of the English stage, when he appeared amongst them, clothed in all the graces of the French language, to take his place by the side of their tragic poets. Our tastes and pleasures are a part of our manners: they must be suffered to sink into disuse before they can be successfully combated, and then they are no longer dangerous.

Cervantes seeing that his indirect attack had not succeeded, chose rather to palliate what he could not correct. He introduced in one of his pieces two allegorical personages, Comedy and Curiosity. A part of the dialogue between these was as follows: