

THE
L I F E
OF
CERVANTES.

THE
L I F E
OF
C E R V A N T E S.

NOTHING perhaps is more difficult than to ascertain, with any thing like precision, the truth of any detail of a man's life. The events themselves, unless they be of a more prominent and marked nature, and the character of the man himself either notorious or held in estimation, very soon become enveloped in doubt and obscurity; and, when the motives of them are endeavoured to be investigated, our knowledge can hardly ever be more than conjectural. The motives of a man's actions are seldom apparent to others, and often either unknown or disregarded by himself.

That eager desire to inquire into the life of any one, whose writings have afforded either instruction or amusement, inherent as it is in the human breast, has often given rise to very interesting biographical productions; but in many of which, could they be analysed by the touchstone

of truth, fiction, too probably, would form a very striking feature. Nor are their authors to be blamed on this account. They must take the facts as they come to their hands, and infer the motives as a knowledge of the human heart directs. But the various and often contradictory ways, in which different people will relate, as fact, any event of perhaps only yesterday, make the uncertainty of such accounts too probable, and justify the severe satire in the quarrel about Sir Peter Teazle's wound, whether it was "a thrust *en second* through the small guts, or a bullet lodged in the thorax."

The lives, also, of literary men are not often fertile in incidents; such at least as are likely to be remembered long after they happened. Passing their time within the walls of their own study, free from the bustle of the world, what happens to them is often unimportant, beyond the circumference of their own circle. When, therefore, the long space of more than two hundred years has elapsed, since he, of whom our inquiry is made, lived, our information must, in general, be both scanty and uncertain. In the present instance, however, there are two circumstances, which will render this account more varied; Cervantes was a soldier, and he was a captive: not merely a prisoner of war to an European nation, but a slave to the Moors.

Amongst the learned and ingenious men of

Spain, none deserve greater praise than our Author. This illustrious writer, who would have graced a more enlightened age, and whose valour, talents, and virtue entitled him to every reward, passed his life in poverty and neglect. He was even despised by his own nation, whose peaceful days he had dignified by his works, and in whose victories he shed his blood. The singular and unfortunate destiny of Cervantes was such, that his cotemporaries persecuted him while living, and were equally unjust to his memory. They even neglected to publish any account of his life, while the events of it were recent, and they might have executed it with ease and fidelity. Hence the principal actions of it are involved in the confusion and obscurity of those times: hence the difficulty of the present attempt.

Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra was the son of Rodrigo Cervantes by Donna Leonora de Cortinas, his wife: he was born at Alcala de Henares on the ninth of October, one thousand five hundred and forty-seven. The place, however, of his birth, like that of Homer's, has been questioned.

His parents carried him very early to Madrid, where he was educated under the care of the learned professor, Juan Lopez. As theology, jurisprudence, and medicine, were at that time the only lucrative professions, it was natural that his parents should have wished him to have

chosen one of them. But the inclination, which, like Ovid, Petrarch, and Tasso, he owns to have had almost from his cradle for poetry, induced him to prefer this pleasant, though unprofitable, occupation to one, by which he might have acquired greater wealth. It does not however appear, that his father thwarted this passion, nor can he, like them, complain of being compelled to a profession he disliked. It is thus that Ovid lamented:

At mihi jam puero cœlestia sacra placebant,
 Inque suum furtim Musa trahebat opus.
 Sæpe pater dixit—Studium quid utile tentas?
 Mæonides nullas ipse reliquit opes.
 Motus eram dictis; totoque Helicone relicto
 Scribere conabar verba soluta modis.
 Sponte suâ carmen numeros veniebat ad aptos,
 Et quod tentabam dicere, versus erat.

While yet a boy, sweet verse my genius fir'd,
 The secret Muse her pleasing task inspir'd;
 My sire oft cried: "This useless trade give o'er;
 For Homer left behind no golden store."
 Mov'd at his words, I Pindus' hill resign'd;
 And strove to write by metre unconfin'd.
 In vain—the Muse spontaneous verse bestow'd,
 And all I wrote in tuneful numbers flow'd.

Ariosto too, in one of his beautiful satires, exclaims:

Ahi lasso! quando ebbi al Pegaseo melo
 L'è à disposta, e che le fresche guancie
 Non si vedeano ancor fiorir d'un pelo;
 Mio padre mi cacciò con spiedi e lancie,
 (Non che con sproni) a volger testi e chiose;
 E m'occupo cinque anni in quelle ciancie.

Ere yet my cheeks were fledg'd with rising down,
 When, smit with love of verse, I sought renown
 On sweet Parnassus' hill; my sire's command
 Compell'd me to forsake that happy land,
 And chain'd me five long years to hear disputes
 Of brawling lawyers and litigious suits.

While he was still a boy, he assisted at the dramatic representations of Lope de Rueda, who possessed the singular talent both of writing comedies, and reciting them with a natural grace. This amusement was consonant to the disposition of Cervantes, and, most probably, still farther induced him to dedicate his time to this species of study.

Our author continued at the school, or rather under the tuition, of Juan Lopez, till the year 1568, when he was twenty-one years of age, and was much beloved by him: he considered him as the best and most forward of his pupils; and in a description of the funeral of Queen Donna Isabel de la Paz, published by him in that year, he inserted a small poem, by Cervantes, on her death, whom he calls his dear and beloved disciple: and also an elegy in the name of the whole

school, which was dedicated to Cardinal Don Diego de Espinosa. It is most probable, that the first of these poems was a school exercise in Latin, as the elegy is particularly mentioned to have been composed in the *vulgar tongue*.

This first effort of Cervantes did not possess much merit: for though poetry was the pursuit, of which he was most fond, he was by no means warmed with the true poetic fire, and his prose works consequently are by far the most excellent. Men are too often guilty of the folly of neglecting to cultivate the talents they possess, and endeavour to shine in those, they have no pretensions to: at least they are not satisfied within their proper sphere, but are ambitious of gaining credit in those subjects, to which the taste of their age most inclines. The species of writing most esteemed in those days were romances, and amatory poems, in which the authors concealed themselves and their mistresses, under some fictitious or allegorical name. Though the Spanish nation at that period produced men, who were skilful in various arts and sciences, it abounded also with innumerable poets and romance-writers; and Cervantes himself, hurried away by the prevailing taste, or fascinated at that early age by the graces of poetry, united all his efforts in compositions of this nature, without paying the least attention to the cultivation of that singular genius for prose, in which his in-

vention and wit afterwards rendered him so famous. Besides the verses published by Juan Lopez, he composed a great number of romances, sonnets, and poems of various sorts; amongst which was the "Filena," a species of the pastoral. Cervantes himself owns, in his "Viage del Parnaso," that all these were his, and they were most likely the first productions of his pen, by which he acquired the title of a poet, even before his captivity.

Hence arose the distress and poverty, in which our Author was afterwards involved. An early and violent inclination for books of amusement and poetry, particularly the latter, generally absorbs all the energies of the mind. And a taste for this kind of literature, though noble, disinterested, and even useful to society, is, for this very reason, the more flattering, seductive, and pernicious to the individual interest of a literary man; nay more so than some other passions much more common, although less decorous.

Such was the taste of Cervantes. His passion for poetry absorbed him to that degree, that he had neither the power, nor even the wish, of seeking a remedy for that poverty, in which he was involved from his cradle. He left his means of living to chance, and dedicated himself to the Muses. His application was so great, that he read even the ballads, that were hung up in the streets and alleys; and he thus acquired that

great degree of information, which is apparent in all his writings, particularly in his "Canto de Caliope," in the account of Don Quixote's library, and in the "Viage del Parnaso." The knowledge he thus obtained was indeed singular, but on this very account so injurious to our Author; who, to obtain it, left his true genius uncultivated, and employed the most useful years of his life, which should have been dedicated to the pursuit of some lucrative profession.

The veil was at length drawn from before his eyes, and he determined to leave Spain. The vexation of finding himself grown up without any means of living according to his rank, added to a secret regret and disgust, that his works did not obtain an approbation equal to his wishes, were sufficient motives to a young man of such talents to induce him to leave his country, through the hopes of improving his fortune. In 1569 he went to Italy with this idea, and first obtained an establishment at Rome as valet, or rather chamberlain, to Cardinal Julio Aquaviva. He remained there till the war, which broke out against the Turks in 1570, presented him with the means of engaging in a more noble profession, and one better adapted to his birth and enterprising mind.

The island of Cyprus gave rise to the war. The Sultan Selim, wishing to take it from the Venetians, sent a large army to attack it. The latter sought the aid of almost every Christian

prince, especially of Pius V. who appointed Marco Antonio Colona, Duke of Paliano, commander in chief of both army and navy. Cervantes instantly enlisted under him, and served in the campaign, which began towards the end of 1570 with the relief of Cyprus, and an attempt to raise the siege of Nicosia. The dissensions of the different generals, and consequent inactivity of the army, did not, however, prevent the Turks from taking Nicosia by assault.

The year 1571 is memorable for the victory obtained over the Turks in the gulf of Lepanto. In this action Cervantes gave many proofs of his valour, and lost also his hand and part of his left arm, of which he boasts in many parts of his works. After this action the army retired and wintered in Messina. Cervantes of course went there also, but most likely did not serve in the campaign of 1572, on account of his wound, although he often refers to it in the novel of "The Captive," as if he had been present. The honour Cervantes thus acquired determined him to continue in the army, notwithstanding the loss of his hand; and he often boasted in his writings, that he had no other profession than that of a soldier. With this view, on his recovery, he joined the Neapolitan army under Philip II. and remained with it till 1575.

As he was going into Spain in the beginning of this year in a galley, called the Sun, he was

taken by the famous corsair, Arnautè Mami, on the 26th of September; and on the division of the captives he fell to the captain's lot. An African captivity, a misfortune in those times so much dreaded by the Spaniards, is certainly capable of some degree of alleviation, if the master happen to be both rich and humane. But even this consolation was denied to Cervantes. Arnautè Mami was an Albanian renegado, so cruel to the Spaniards, and hostile to Christians, that we must pass over the account of his bloody atrocities, nor shock humanity by the recital. It is sufficient to observe, that his tyranny was the most severe and insupportable of any in Argel. This situation would have broken the spirit of any one but Cervantes; on him it produced a different effect, and his mind was always employed in some daring attempt to escape from his oppressor. It is difficult to believe, that a slave should be able to form and encounter such dangerous and extraordinary enterprises, under the very eye of a barbarous and sanguinary master: but the event proves, that Cervantes even owed his safety to the boldness, with which, though in vain, he constantly endeavoured to escape.

The Alcayda Hassan, a Greek renegado, had a garden about three miles from Argel, and near the sea, which was taken care of by a Christian slave, who had made a very deep cave in the most secret part of it. In February 1577, Cer-

vantes escaped from the house of his master, and concealed himself in this cave; and had also the generosity to offer it as an asylum to others. Their number in a few months amounted to fifteen, all men of some consequence. The subsistence and regulation of this subterraneous community depended entirely upon Cervantes, who risked more than the rest in performing this office. The gardener was of course acquainted with the secret; and it was necessary to intrust it to another captive, called El Dorador, depending for his prudence on the hopes they gave him of obtaining his own liberty.

They resided many months in this voluntary dungeon before an opportunity for flight offered itself. But, on the 1st of September, a native of Majorca, called Viana, being ransomed, they agreed with him to arm a brigantine, and send it to the coast, from whence they might embark for Spain. This man was brave, active, and well acquainted with the coast. He equipped a vessel as soon as he arrived at Majorca, and sailed for Barbary. When night came on he approached the shore near the garden, having previously examined the place. But at the very moment of landing, some Moors happened to pass by, who distinguished, though it was night, both the Christians and the vessel, and began immediately to call so loudly for assistance, that Viana thought it most prudent to put to sea again, in order to

prevent a discovery. In the mean time, Cervantes and his companions, ignorant of what had passed, were consoling themselves with the hopes of a happy and almost immediate escape. These hopes, however, were too soon blasted, and in a way impossible to have been prevented, because unforeseen.

The slave El Dorador, to whom Cervantes had intrusted so much, was a man of a most malignant disposition. He concealed, under the appearance of good faith and candour, the deepest dissimulation and most depraved intentions. Interest was his ruling passion: this made him a renegado, when he was young; this again induced him to become a Catholic; and a third time to change to a renegado; for with this pretext he presented himself to the King, discovered to him the secret of the slaves, the situation of the cave, and the skill, with which Cervantes managed the whole enterprize. The King instantly ordered a detachment of soldiers, and sending the informer for their guide, he commanded them to secure the gardener, and the other slaves, particularly Cervantes, as being most guilty. The soldiers executed their orders, and brought them to the King, who confined them all in his bath, which is a sort of prison, except Cervantes, whom he kept in his palace, in order to ascertain the author of this attempt.

When an ambitious or avaricious man thinks

he has it in his power to gratify his ruling passion, no one is more cunning. It happened, that there was, at that time, in Argel, a person called Father George Olivar, commander of Valencia, who was a particular friend of Cervantes : and the King, in order to get this man into his power, and obtain a considerable sum for his ransom, endeavoured to make it be believed, that he was the principal author of the plot. With this view he examined Cervantes very often, but could never draw from him, either by promises or threats, any other account, than that he himself was the sole contriver of the plot, and therefore alone to blame. The King at length gave up the attempt, but appropriated all the captives, not omitting Cervantes, to his own use.

Interest triumphed over vanity in the mind of the King ; hence Cervantes and the other slaves escaped with their lives ; because the King hoped to obtain a considerable sum by their ransom. He was, however, obliged to return some of them to their old masters, and Cervantes became once more the property of Arnautè Mami. Scarcely had he got back, when he was again impelled, by the misery he suffered, to make fresh attempts. Four times by failure he endangered his life, yet he neither despaired nor desisted ; and he at last formed a project, the magnitude and difficulty of which do credit to his courage and perseverance.

To escape by flight had been hitherto his only object; but the misfortunes, which he had experienced from the repeated failure of these attempts, made him determine upon the bold and daring enterprise of raising an insurrection in Argel; and at one blow to destroy the power of these pirates in the Mediterranean. This conspiracy was also unsuccessful from the pusillanimity of a few, who were engaged in it. Cervantes, however, conducted it with so much skill, that, when the Argellines discovered it, they began both to respect and fear him. "The better this lame Spaniard is guarded," said the King, "the safer will be my capital, my slaves, and my ships." Fear took such strong possession of this prince, that at last he did not think himself secure, unless Cervantes was in his own power. But as he had been obliged to restore him after the discovery of the first plot to Arnautè Mami, no other means of obtaining him now remained but by purchase: and he in fact gave five hundred crowns for him. The King immediately sent him to the bath and loaded him with irons, but at the same time treated him with a degree of kindness, he had not hitherto experienced. Cervantes himself, in "The Captive," after mentioning the tyranny and cruelty, with which the slaves were in general treated, adds: "One Spanish soldier only, called such a one de Saavedra, happened to be in his good graces: and though

he did things which will remain in the memory of those people for many years, and all towards obtaining his liberty, yet he never gave him a blow, nor ordered one to be given him, nor even reproached him with so much as a hard word: and for the least of many things he did, we all feared he would be impaled alive, and he feared it himself more than once.”

Such is the respect and estimation, in which an heroic spirit and a daring soul are held even by barbarians, that Arnautè Mami, nay the King himself, distinguished Cervantes from the other captives by a benignity and mildness so opposite to their natural character.

These various attempts to obtain his liberty did not prevent his applying to Spain for his ransom. And in order to effect it, his mother, now a widow, went with Donna Andrea de Cervantes, his sister, from Alcala to Madrid in July 1579, and paid into the hands of Father Juan Gil, and Father Antonio de la Vella Trinitarios, three hundred ducats for that purpose. These Fathers arrived in Argel in May 1580, and began to treat for the ransom of the different slaves. It was more difficult to obtain that of Cervantes, because he belonged to the King, who asked a thousand crowns for his freedom. This was the cause of long delay, and he probably never might have been redeemed, had not the King, Hassan, been ordered by the Grand Signior to resign his

kingdom to Jaffa Paza, on whom it had been lately bestowed. Upon this he decreased his demand to five hundred crowns in gold, and threatened, if he did not immediately receive that sum, to take Cervantes with him to Constantinople, and had already put him on board his galley. At length, through compassion and the fear of losing every future opportunity, by borrowing some money, and employing part of that, which he had for the ransom of other captives, Father Gil procured Cervantes his liberty in 1580; and in the beginning of the following year he arrived in Spain.

On his return from Africa our Author again dedicated himself to the study of polite literature and to the Muses. As the sacrifice he had made of this early inclination had not proved favourable to his interest, he embraced with delight the tranquillity and calmness, which he supposed attached to a literary life. He recommenced author, and passed his time in the composition of ingenious and useful works. He considered the pleasure he derived from this kind of life, as more than equal to the hardships he had undergone, and as a recompense for the disgrace he had suffered.

The first work he published was "Galatea;" a pastoral novel, well suited to the reigning taste, and adapted to display his agreeable and rich style of writing. It was published at Madrid in 1584.

Love, the ruling passion of that age, was the foundation, on which all the poetry and novels were raised; and by making use of feigned names the writers of those times could avow their passion in a secret and mysterious manner, at once the most flattering, and least dangerous to those women, who were the objects of it. Cervantes followed this plan in the *Galatea*, in which he described the customs and manners of the shepherds, whom he supposes to inhabit the banks of the *Tagus* and the *Henares*. He himself had not yet arrived at that period of life, when love ceases to inflame the human breast; and this, together with his poetic enthusiasm, and the example of his cotemporaries, induced him to follow this plan. And it is not improbable, that the shepherdess *Amaryllis*, the mistress of *Damon* (by whom Cervantes meant himself), was not an ideal personage; and that our Author availed himself of this mode of celebrating his passion, and at the same time of showing her the most delicate attention and greatest respect. However this might have been, Cervantes, not long after he had published this work, was married at *Esquivias* to *Donna Catalina Palacios de Salazar*, who was of one of the first families in that town. She had been educated under the roof of her uncle, *Don Francisco de Salazar*, from whom she took her last title, either an account of a legacy he left her, or because she was brought up

by him ; it being the custom at that time in Spain to take the names of those, from whom they derived any fortune, or by whom they were educated. This marriage did not lessen the expenses, nor consequently the difficulties of Cervantes, for it added but little to his fortune. And in order still to gratify his passion for poetry, he applied himself to the theatre, and wrote several comedies, which were performed at Madrid with considerable applause; and procured both support to his family, and gratification to himself.

As he wrote thirty comedies, we may fairly conjecture, that he was at least ten years connected with the stage. He took up this employment from the time of his marriage, that is, directly after he had published the *Galatea*; and on his secession, from being engaged in other works, Lope de Vega supplied his place. This was about 1594.

Although Cervantes is said to have written thirty comedies in ten years, there are only eight now extant. The merits however of those, that remain, excite no regret for what are lost. There is neither interest, plot, spirit, nor probability, in them. The plot of the "Happy Russian" is this: the hero, after having been in the first act the greatest rascal in Seville, in the second becomes a Jacobin friar in Mexico. Being called, in this character, to the bed of a sick woman, he is unable to make her confess, because she

thinks herself too culpable to obtain pardon. The Friar, however, is so anxious to save her, that he proposes an exchange of situations, he taking her sins upon himself, and she his merits. The bargain is made, and contract signed: the dying woman confesses, and her soul is received by angels, while devils seize upon the Friar, whose body becomes covered with incurable ulcers.

What the employment of Cervantes was on leaving the drama, is now entirely involved in obscurity. It probably was such as afforded him a more comfortable, as well as a more certain, support than he derived from the stage. Probably, too, it was connected with the court, as he was obliged to relinquish writing for the stage, though he derived so much applause and profit from it. From this time, till the death of Philip II. in 1598, he lived in Seville.

The magnificent spectacle, which took place in that city on this account, must not be passed over in silence, from its connexion with our Author. On one of the days appointed for the celebration of high mass, a quarrel arose between the court and the Inquisition, because the Regent, not regarding the solemnity of the occasion and place, had covered his seat with black cloth. They thundered out excommunications on each other; the priest was obliged to retire, and the celebration was suspended above a month, in hopes that the

King would settle this important point. The excessive bombast, with which the Sevillians praised the costliness of these preparations, and the length of time the various ceremonies lasted, provoked the wit and satiric vein of our Author, who ridiculed these events in some lines, that show, from the warmth of expression, and correct minuteness, with which the facts are related, that they were written by an eye-witness. The knowledge, that Cervantes had of the genius and manners of the Sevillians, is apparent in this and other descriptions, which he gives of that city. These are so marked and circumstantial, that nothing but personal knowledge could have produced them. Such is the description he gives of the various classes of citizens in his novel, called "Rinconete y Cortadillo," which he composed before the Quixote, and probably while he lived in Seville, where he remained from the time the Licentiate, Don Juan Sarmiento Valladares, was appointed "Assistente," till he was upon the point of resigning it to Count Punonrostro; that is, from the time he left the theatre to the year 1599.

At this period Cervantes went to Toledo, where he pretends to have discovered the original manuscript of the Arabian Benengeli. He had been also at Cordova in his way to Seville, and has noticed many peculiarities of that capital in some of his other works.

This minuteness may appear, perhaps, at first trifling; but nothing surely ought to be withheld from the public, that relates to a man of such wonderful abilities, especially when the account must, on the whole, be defective. One of the most important events, at least from its effects, was his residence in La Mancha on his return from Seville; because we are indebted to this circumstance for the ingenious fable of the Quixote, which he projected and completed in that province. While living there, he accurately observed the most remarkable places in it, such as the lakes of Ruydera, the cave of Montesinos, the situation of the fulling-mills, the pass of Lapice, and other places, which he afterwards made the theatre of Don Quixote's adventures. He was resident there probably on account of some government commission; and the inhabitants of the place, to which he was sent, arrested, imprisoned, and otherwise ill-treated him, but from what cause is now wholly unknown. In the solitude, confinement, and inconvenience of a prison, without any other assistance than his own astonishing genius, he wrote this inimitable work; the difficulty of executing which, required great length of time, mature reflection, and continued labour. And from this it may be inferred, that his residence within the walls of a prison was not of short duration. The name of the town, where this happened, was Argamasilla, which he, on this

account, pretended to have been the native place of Don Quixote. He indeed omits mentioning it at the beginning of the work, either through moderation or anger; or, as he himself says, at the end of the fourth volume, "that all the towns and villages of La Mancha might contend among themselves, and each adopt him for their own, as the seven cities of Greece contended for Homer." He has, however, sufficiently revenged himself of the inhospitality of the Manchegans by immortalizing their name, and fixing it for ever in the memory of posterity.

This was the origin of the first part of Don Quixote. It was published at Madrid in 1605, and dedicated to the Duke de Bejar, whose protection Cervantes solicited in a dedication, and in some verses, which he prefixed to the work under the signature of "Urganda, the Unknown." The want of money was not the principal reason for seeking so illustrious a patron; but knowing the nature of his work, he was aware of the risk he run in beginning such an undertaking.

Almost the only books of amusement among the idle and illiterate in Spain were those of chivalry; and though they were at the same time censured by the wise and more enlightened, even they did not altogether cease from the perusal of them. The confession of the learned author of the "Dialogue on Languages" is alone sufficient evidence of these facts. That sagacious critic,

who, when age and study had matured his judgment, censured with so much just severity this sort of composition, at the same time acknowledges, that he wasted the best part of his life in this pernicious reading. Being, when young, in some employment about the court, he devoured, as it were, every romance with such singular pleasure, that if by chance he took up a volume of genuine history, it was so disgusting to him, that he could not continue its perusal. Under these circumstances it is natural to suppose, that the Quixote, which by its title announced the adventures of a Knight-errant, would not, at first, be thought highly of by serious and well-informed men; nor indeed be admired by the mass of readers, as they would not meet with such wonderful and extraordinary events, as they had been accustomed to in other works of chivalry, and were unable to discover that delicate and pointed satire, which this book contains. Cervantes, feeling the merits of his own performance, and aware of the difficulty, which, from these circumstances, it would cost him to make it known, availed himself of so learned and illustrious a patron, whose testimony would be its first recommendation, and a kind of stimulus to others to read and praise it. The success of this plan evinced the solidity of our Author's judgment.

When the Duke de Bejar first heard the title and apparent object of the Quixote, he refused

to have it dedicated to himself, fearing that his reputation would suffer, if he permitted his name to be affixed to any book of chivalry. Cervantes did not plague him with petitions, which most probably would have been useless; he submitted to his wishes, but only requested, that he would permit him to read one chapter of *Don Quixote* to him. Cervantes had foreseen the event of this stratagem. The diversion and entertainment, which that chapter afforded the whole audience, was such, that the Duke requested him to read the whole of the work. He was so delighted with its singular pleasantry and humour, which had overcome all his prejudices, that he bestowed the warmest approbation on its ingenious author, and gladly gave his consent to a dedication, which he had before denied. Notwithstanding, however, the protection the *Quixote* received from the Duke de Bejar, and the public applause it met with from all, who heard it read, it could not escape the asperity of a friar, who lived with the Duke. He attacked it in various ways, without even perusing it, and circulated a thousand falsehoods both of it and its author. It is more than probable, that this friar had such a power over the Duke, as to influence his conduct towards Cervantes, which certainly was not distinguished by a generosity equal to his rank, nor in the way that the necessities of so deserving an author merited. Cervantes had always been remarkable for his

gratitude, and the great praise, not to say flattery, that he always bestowed upon his benefactors; yet he in no one instance mentions the Duke. It has, however, been supposed, that in the ecclesiastic, who in the second part of the Quixote accompanies the Duke, he has taken this friar as his model.

It is certain, that the Quixote, on its first publication, was received by the public in the same manner it had been in manuscript by the Duke de Bejar. Even its title was an object of ridicule and contempt with the half-learned. Nor did the obscurity, in which the Author lived, raise the curiosity of the wiser class: and thus one of the greatest efforts of literature Spain ever produced, was, for a considerable time, regarded with indifference.

Cervantes, well knowing, that those, who read his work, did not understand it, and that those, who could understand it, did not read it, endeavoured to excite the attention of all by publishing a small anonymous book, called the "Busca piè." This little work, which is now extremely rare, contains a critique upon the Quixote, replete with ingenuity and humour: insinuating that it was a delicate satire upon a variety of distinguished and well-known people, but without giving the slightest hint for discovering them. This critique was so well managed, that it excited universal curiosity. Every body in-

stantly read the Quixote, which, for the first time, acquired a high reputation, and all, who now perused it, found they could trace the satire, so ingeniously pointed out in the "Busca piè."

Nothing can be a greater proof of the genius of Cervantes, and his knowledge of mankind, than the method he employed to make his work known. Almost every mind is open to satire, and the public in general are always charmed with it. There is no surer snare, by which to entrap its good will. Hence the popularity of the "Busca piè," which led every one to the perusal of the Quixote, and thus its merits became known. The enemies of our Author read it in hopes of finding some excuse for blasting his rising fame, and others to satisfy their curiosity. Two things resulted from it. The general and particular satire, hinted at in the "Busca piè," could neither be confuted nor confirmed; and the superior merit of the Quixote was acknowledged with secret envy, or with genuine applause. It was, however, so universally read, that editions were multiplied without number, and all Europe joined in its praise. This of course roused the enemies of good taste, who assailed both the book and its Author, with satire, abuse, and persecution in abundance. All these productions, however, disappeared with the age, that gave them birth, while the cause of them will ever live in the annals of literature.

Cervantes notices some of these satires, particularly one, which was enclosed to him in a letter, when he was at Valladolid; and from this incident we may conclude, that he possessed some place about the court. Philip III. for some reason or other, removed his court to that city in January 1601, and continued to hold it there till February 1606, when it returned to Madrid. The Quixote was published in 1605, and in the same year Philip IV. was born; at which time it appears, that Cervantes lived at Valladolid. The peculiarity of this satire, which was a sonnet against the Quixote, shows, that it was written immediately on the publication of that work, and consequently while the court was there. It is most probable that he returned to Madrid along with the court. The manners, indeed, of this place were best suited to his habits of life; and it was also at no great distance from Alcala and Esquivias, where his relations resided.

Subsequent to this period no certain information remains as to his place of residence; but it is most likely, that he continued at Madrid till his death, which is recorded to have taken place in the parish of St. Sebastian.

Whether Cervantes ever possessed any permanent lucrative place under government, is now uncertain. He might, perhaps, only like to live near the court, from the hopes of obtaining some preferment, and in order to secure the pro-

tection and interest of some patron. And during the latter part of his life we are assured, that he received considerable assistance from the Count de Lemos and the Archbishop of Toledo.

The misfortunes, which our Author had encountered in his more active life, had a considerable share in determining him to return to the cultivation of his talents, and to that quiet and retirement adapted to his confined income, his habits of application, and his advanced age. We may therefore consider him in the latter part of his life as a learned man, whose actions require no other monumental record than his works, in the composition and publication of which he was chiefly engaged. While he lived at Madrid he dedicated himself entirely to literature: he cultivated it with the ardour of youth, and the circumspection of age. His fertile and exuberant imagination was employed on many more works than have been before the public: but good sense would not suffer him to print any but what he had put the finishing hand to. He preferred the merit of publishing those, which his judgment thought worthy of posterity, to the emolument he might have derived from more numerous, but consequently more hasty productions.

The acquisition of posthumous fame, so common to eminent men, was his ardent wish; and this increased as he advanced in years: he there-