

measure is called, rolling on its graceful, negligent *asonante*,¹⁴ whose continued repetition seems by its monotonous melody to prolong the note of feeling originally struck, is admirably suited by its flexibility to the most varied and opposite expression ; a circumstance which has recommended it as the ordinary measure of dramatic dialogue.

Nothing can be more agreeable than the general effect of the Moorish ballads, which combine the elegance of a riper period of literature, with the natural sweetness and simplicity, savouring

Its date and origin.

the Arabic. Conde has given a translation of certain Spanish-Arabian poems, in the measure of the original, from which it is evident, that the hemistich of an Arabian verse corresponds perfectly with the *redondilla*. (See his *Dominación de los Arabes*, passim.) The same author, in a treatise, which he never published, on the "poesia oriental," shows more precisely the intimate affinity subsisting between the metrical form of the Arabian and the old Castilian verse. The reader will find an analysis of his manuscript in Part. I. Chap. 8, Note 49, of this History.

This theory is rendered the more plausible, by the influence which the Arabic has exercised on Castilian versification in other respects, as in the prolonged repetition of the rhyme, for example, which is wholly borrowed from the Spanish Arabs ; whose superior cultivation naturally affected the unformed literature of their neighbours, and through no channel more obviously than its popular minstrelsy.

¹⁴ The *asonante* is a rhyme made by uniformity of the vowels, without reference to the consonants ; the regular rhyme, which obtains in other European litera-

tures, is distinguished in Spain by the term *consonante*. Thus the four following words, taken at random from a Spanish ballad, are consecutive *asonantes* ; *regozijo*, *pellico*, *luzido*, *amarillo*. In this example, the two last syllables have the assonance ; although this is not invariable, it sometimes falling on the antepenultima and the final syllable. (See Rengifo, *Arte Poética Española*, pp. 214, 215, 218.) There is a wild, artless melody in the *asonante*, and a graceful movement coming somewhere, as it does, betwixt regular rhyme and blank verse, which would make its introduction very desirable, but not very feasible, in our own language. An attempt of the kind has been made by a clever writer, in the *Retrospective Review*. (Vol. iv. art. 2.) If it has failed, it is from the impediments presented by the language, which has not nearly the same amount of vowel terminations, nor of simple uniform vowel sounds, as the Spanish ; the double termination, however full of grace and beauty in the Castilian, assumes, perhaps from the effect of association, rather a doggrel air in the English.

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sometimes even of the rudeness, of a primitive age. Their merits have raised them to a sort of classical dignity in Spain, and have led to their cultivation by a higher order of writers, and down to a far later period, than in any other country in Europe. The most successful specimens of this imitation may be assigned to the early part of the seventeenth century; but the age was too late to enable the artist, with all his skill, to seize the true coloring of the antique. It is impossible, at this period, to ascertain the authors of these venerable lyrics, nor can the exact time of their production be now determined; although, as their subjects are chiefly taken from the last days of the Spanish Arabian empire, the larger part of them was probably posterior, and, as they were printed in collections at the beginning of the sixteenth century, could not have been long posterior, to the capture of Granada. How far they may be referred to the conquered Moors, is uncertain. Many of these wrote and spoke the Castilian with elegance, and there is nothing improbable in the supposition, that they should seek some solace under present evils in the splendid visions of the past. The bulk of this poetry, however, was in all probability the creation of the Spaniards themselves, naturally attracted by the picturesque circumstances in the character and condition of the conquered nation to invest them with poetic interest.

Its high repute.

The Moorish *romances* fortunately appeared after the introduction of printing into the Peninsula, so that they were secured a permanent existence, in-

stead of perishing with the breath that made them, like so many of their predecessors. This misfortune, which attaches to so much of popular poetry in all nations, is not imputable to any insensibility in the Spaniards to the excellence of their own. Men of more erudition than taste may have held them light, in comparison with more ostentatious and learned productions. This fate has befallen them in other countries than Spain.¹⁵ But persons of finer poetic feeling, and more enlarged spirit of criticism, have estimated them as a most essential and characteristic portion of Castilian literature. Such was the judgment of the great Lope de Vega, who, after expatiating on the extraordinary compass and sweetness of the *romance*, and its adaptation to the highest subjects, commends it as worthy of all estimation for its peculiar national character.¹⁶ The modern Spanish writers have adopted a

¹⁵ This may be still further inferred from the tenor of a humorous, satirical old *romance*, in which the writer implores the justice of Apollo on the heads of the swarm of traitor poets, who have deserted the ancient themes of song, the Cids, the Laras, the Gonzalez, to celebrate the Ganzuls and Abderrahmans and the fantastical fables of the Moors.

"Tanta Zayda y Adalifa,
tanta Draguta y Daraxa,
tanto Azarque y tanto Adulce,
tanto Gazul, y Abenamar,
tanto alquizer y marlota,
tanto almayzar, y almalafa,
tantas emprasas y plumas,
tantas cifras y medallas,
tanta roperia Mora.
Y en vanderillas y adargas,
tanto mote, y tantas motas
muera yo sino me cansan."

* * * * *
"Los Alfonsos, los Henricos,
los Sanchos, y los de Lara,

que es dellos, y que es del Cid?
tanto olvido en glorias tantas?
ninguna pluma las buela,
ninguna Musa las canta?
Justicia, Apollo, justicia,
vengadores rayos lança
contra Poetas Moriscos."

Dr. Johnson's opinions are well known, in regard to this department of English literature, which, by his ridiculous parodies, he succeeded for a time in throwing into the shade, or, in the language of his admiring biographer, made "perfectly contemptible."

Petrarch, with like pedantry, rested his hopes of fame on his Latin epic, and gave away his lyrics, as alms to ballad-singers. Posterity, deciding on surer principles of taste, has reversed both these decisions.

¹⁶ "Algunos quieren que sean la cartilla de los Poetas; yo no lo

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similar tone of criticism, insisting on its study, as essential to a correct appreciation and comprehension of the genius of the language.¹⁷

Numerous editions of the ballads.

The Castilian ballads were first printed in the "Cancionero General" of Fernando del Castillo, in 1511. They were first incorporated into a separate work, by Sepulveda, under the name of "Romances sacados de Historias Antiguas," printed at Antwerp, in 1551.¹⁸ Since that period, they have passed into repeated editions, at home and abroad, especially in Germany, where they have been illustrated by able critics.¹⁹ Ignorance of their authors, and of the era of their production, has prevented any attempt at exact chronological arrangement; a circumstance rendered, moreover, nearly impossible, by the perpetual modification which the original style of the more ancient ballads has experienced, in their transition through successive generations; so that, with one or two exceptions, no earlier date

siento assi; antes bien los hallo capaces, no solo de exprimir y declarar qualquier concepto con facil dulzura, pero de proseguir toda grave accion de numeroso Poema. Y soy tan de veras Español, que por ser en nuestro idioma natural este genero, no me puedo persuadir que no sea digno de toda estimacion." (Coleccion de Obras Seltas, (Madrid, 1776-9,) tom. iv. p. 176, Prólogo.) In another place, he finely styles them "Iliads without a Homer."

¹⁷ See, among others, the encomiastic and animated criticism of Fernandez and Quintana. Fernandez, *Poesias Escogidas, de Nuestros Cancioneros y Romanceros Antiguos*, (Madrid, 1796,) tom. xvi.,

Prólogo.—Quintana, *Poesias Selectas Castellanas*, Introd. art. 4.

¹⁸ Nic. Antonio, *Bibliotheca Nova*, tom. ii. p. 10.—The Spanish translators of Bouterwek, have noticed the principal "collections and earliest editions" of the *Romances*. This original edition of Sepulveda has escaped their notice. See *Literatura Española*, pp. 217, 218.

¹⁹ See Grimm, Depping, Herder, &c. This last poet has embraced a selection of the *Cid* ballads, chronologically arranged, and translated with eminent simplicity and spirit, if not with the scrupulous fidelity usually aimed at by the Germans. See his *Sämmtliche Werke*, (Wien, 1813,) band iii.

should probably be assigned to the oldest of them, in their present form, than the fifteenth century.²⁰ Another system of classification has been adopted, of distributing them according to their subjects; and independent collections also of the separate departments, as ballads of the Cid, of the Twelve Peers, the Morisco ballads, and the like, have been repeatedly published, both at home and abroad.²¹

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The higher, and educated classes of the nation, were not insensible to the poetic spirit, which drew forth such excellent minstrelsy from the body of the people. Indeed Castilian poetry bore the same patrician stamp through the whole of the present reign, which had been impressed on it in its infancy.

Lyric
poetry.

²⁰ Sarmiento, *Memorias*, pp. 242, 243. — Moratin considers that none have come down to us, in their original costume, of an earlier date than John II.'s reign, the first half of the fifteenth century. (*Obras*, tom. i. p. 84.) The Spanish translators of Bouterwek transcribe a *romance*, relating to the Cid, from the fathers Berganza and Merino, purporting to exhibit the primitive, uncorrupted diction of the thirteenth century. Native critics are of course the only ones competent to questions of this sort; but, to the less experienced eye of a foreigner, the style of this ballad would seem to resemble much less that genuine specimen of the versification of the preceding age, the poem of the Cid, than the compositions of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

²¹ The principle of philosophical arrangement, if it may so be called, is pursued still further in the latest Spanish publications of the *romances*, where the Moorish minstrelsy is embodied in a separate volume, and distributed with reference to its topics. This system is

the more practicable with this class of ballads, since it far exceeds in number any other. See Duran, *Romancero de Romances Moriscos*.

The *Romancero* I have used is the ancient edition of Medina del Campo, 1602. It is divided into nine parts, though it is not easy to see on what principle, since the productions of most opposite date and tenor are brought into juxtaposition. The collection contains nearly a thousand ballads, which, however, fall far short of the entire number preserved, as may easily be seen by reference to other compilations. When to this is added the consideration of the large number which insensibly glided into oblivion without ever coming to the press, one may form a notion of the immense mass of these humble lyrics, which floated among the common people of Spain; and we shall be the less disposed to wonder at the proud and chivalrous bearing that marks even the peasantry of a nation, which seems to breathe the very air of romantic song.

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Fortunately the new art of printing was employed here, as in the case of the *romances*, to arrest those fugitive sallies of imagination, which in other countries were permitted, from want of this care, to pass into oblivion; and *cancioneros*, or collections of lyrics, were published, embodying the productions of this reign and that of John the Second, thus bringing under one view the poetic culture of the fifteenth century.

Cancionero
General.

The earliest *cancionero* printed was at Saragossa, in 1492. It comprehended the works of Mena, Manrique, and six or seven other bards of less note.²² A far more copious collection was made by Fernando del Castillo, and first published at Valencia, in 1511, under the title of "Cancionero General," since which period it has passed into repeated editions. This compilation is certainly more creditable to Castillo's industry, than to his discrimination or power of arrangement. Indeed, in this latter respect it is so defective, that it would almost seem to have been put together fortuitously, as the pieces came to hand. A large portion of the authors appear to have been persons of rank; a cir-

²² The title of this work was "Coplas de Vita Christi, de la Cena con la Pasion, y de la Veronica con la Resurreccion de nuestro Redemptor. E las siete Angustias e siete Gozos de nuestra Señora, con otras obras mucho provechosas." It concludes with the following notice, "Fue la presente obra emprentada en la insigne Ciudad de Zaragoza de Aragon por industria e expensas de Paulo Hurus de Constancia aleman. A 27 dias de Noviembre, 1492." (Mendez, *Typographia*

Española, pp. 134, 136.) It appears there were two or three other *cancioneros* compiled, none of which, however, were admitted to the honors of the press. (Bouterwek, *Literatura Española*, nota.) The learned Castro, some fifty years since, published an analysis with copious extracts from one of these made by Baena, the Jewish physician of John II., a copy of which existed in the royal library of the Escorial. *Bibliotheca Española*, tom. i. p. 265 et seq.

cumstance to which perhaps they were indebted, more than to any poetic merit, for a place in the miscellany, which might have been decidedly increased in value by being diminished in bulk.²³

The *works of devotion* with which the collection opens, are on the whole the feeblest portion of it. We discern none of the inspiration and lyric glow, which were to have been anticipated from the devout, enthusiastic Spaniard. We meet with anagrams on the Virgin, glosses on the creed and pater noster, canciones on original sin and the like unpromising topics, all discussed in the most bald, prosaic manner, with abundance of Latin phrase, scriptural allusion, and commonplace precept, unenlivened by a single spark of true poetic fire, and presenting altogether a farrago of the most fantastic pedantry.

Its literary
value.

The lighter, especially the amatory poems, are much more successfully executed, and the primitive forms of the old Castilian versification are developed with considerable variety and beauty. Among the most agreeable effusions in this way, may be noticed those of Diego Lopez de Haro, who, to borrow the encomium of a contemporary, was "the mirror of gallantry for the young cavaliers of the time." There are few verses in the collection

²³ Cancionero General, passim.
— Moratin has given a list of the men of rank who contributed to this miscellany; it contains the names of the highest nobility of Spain. (Orig. del Teatro Español, Obras, tom. i. pp. 85, 86.) Castillo's

Cancionero passed through several editions, the latest of which appeared in 1573. See a catalogue, not entirely complete, of the different Spanish Cancioneros in Bousterwek, *Literatura Española*, trad., p. 217.

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composed with more facility and grace.²⁴ Among the more elaborate pieces, Diego de San Pedro's "Desprecio de la Fortuna" may be distinguished, not so much for any poetic talent which it exhibits, as for its mercurial and somewhat sarcastic tone of sentiment.²⁵ The similarity of subject may suggest a parallel between it and the Italian poet Guidi's celebrated ode on Fortune; and the different styles of execution may perhaps be taken, as indicating pretty fairly the distinctive peculiarities of the Tuscan and the old Spanish school of poetry. The Italian, introducing the fickle goddess, in person, on the scene, describes her triumphant march over the ruins of empires and dynasties, from the earliest time, in a flow of lofty dithyrambic eloquence, adorned with all the brilliant coloring of a stimulated fancy and a highly finished language. The Castilian, on the other hand, instead of this splendid personification, deepens his verse into a moral tone, and, dwelling on the vicissitudes and vanities of human life, points his reflections with some caustic warning, often conveyed with enchanting simplicity, but without the least approach to lyric exaltation, or indeed the affectation of it.

This proneness to moralize the song is in truth a characteristic of the old Spanish bard. He rarely abandons himself, without reserve, to the frolic

²⁴ Cancionero General, pp. 83-89. — Oviedo, Quincuagenas, MS.

²⁵ Cancionero General, pp. 158-161. — Some meagre information of this person is given by Nic. Antonio, whose biographical notices

may be often charged with deficiency in chronological data; a circumstance perhaps unavoidable from the obscurity of their subjects. Bibliotheca Vetust, tom. ii. lib. 10, cap. 6.

puerilities so common with the sister Muse of Italy,

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“ Scritta così come la penna getta,
Per fuggir l' ozio, e non per cercar gloria.”

It is true, he is occasionally betrayed by verbal subtleties and other affectations of the age;²⁶ but even his liveliest sallies are apt to be seasoned with a moral, or sharpened by a satiric sentiment. His defects, indeed, are of the kind most opposed to those of the Italian poet, showing themselves, especially in the more elaborate pieces, in a certain tumid stateliness and overstrained energy of diction.

On the whole, one cannot survey the “Cancionero General” without some disappointment at the little progress of the poetic art, since the reign of John the Second, at the beginning of the century. The best pieces in the collection are of that date, and no rival subsequently arose to compete with the masculine strength of Mena, or the delicacy and fascinating graces of Santillana. One cause of this tardy progress may have been, the direction to utility manifested in this active reign, which led such as had leisure for intellectual pursuits to cultivate science, rather than abandon themselves to the mere revels of the imagination.

Low state
of lyric
poetry.

Another cause may be found in the rudeness of

²⁶ There are probably more direct puns in Petrarch's lyrics alone, than in all the Cancionero General. There is another kind of *niaiserie*, however, to which the Spanish poets were much addicted, being the transposition of the word in every variety of sense and combination; as, for example,

“ Acordad vuestros olvidos
Y olvida vuestros acuerdos
Porque tales desacuerdos
Acuerden vuestros sentidos,” &c.
Cancionero General, fol. 226.

It was such subtleties as these, *entricados razones*, as Cervantes calls them, that addled the brains of poor Don Quixote. Tom. i. cap. 1.

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the language, whose delicate finish is so essential to the purposes of the poet, but which was so imperfect at this period, that Juan de la Encina, a popular writer of the time, complained that he was obliged, in his version of Virgil's *Eclogues*, to coin, as it were, a new vocabulary, from the want of terms corresponding with the original, in the old one.²⁷ It was not until the close of the present reign, when the nation began to breathe awhile from its tumultuous career, that the fruits of the patient cultivation which it had been steadily, though silently experiencing, began to manifest themselves in the improved condition of the language, and its adaptation to the highest poetical uses. The intercourse with Italy, moreover, by naturalizing new and more finished forms of versification, afforded a scope for the nobler efforts of the poet, to which the old Castilian measures, however well suited to the wild and artless movements of the popular minstrelsy, were altogether inadequate.

Coplas of
Maurique.

We must not dismiss the miscellaneous poetry of this period, without some notice of the "Coplas" of Don Jorge Manrique,²⁸ on the death of his father, the count of Paredes, in 1474.²⁹ The elegy is of

²⁷ Velasquez, *Poesía Castellana*, p. 122. — More than half a century later, the learned Ambrosio Morales complained of the barrenness of the Castilian, which he imputed to the too exclusive adoption of the Latin upon all subjects of dignity and importance. *Obras*, tom. xiv. pp. 147, 148.

²⁸ L. Marineo, speaking of this accomplished nobleman, styles him

"virum satis illustrem. — Eum enim poetam et philosophum natura formavit ac peperit." He unfortunately fell in a skirmish, five years after his father's death, in 1479. Mariana, *Hist. de España*, tom. ii. p. 531.

²⁹ An elaborate character of this Quixotic old cavalier may be found in Pugar, *Claros Varones*, tit. 13.

considerable length, and is sustained throughout in a tone of the highest moral dignity, while the poet leads us up from the transitory objects of this lower world to the contemplation of that imperishable existence, which Christianity has opened beyond the grave. A tenderness pervades the piece, which may remind us of the best manner of Petrarch; while, with the exception of a slight taint of pedantry, it is exempt from the meretricious vices that belong to the poetry of the age. The effect of the sentiment is heightened by the simple turns and broken melody of the old Castilian verse, of which perhaps this may be accounted the most finished specimen; such would seem to be the judgment of his own countrymen,³⁰ whose glosses and commentaries on it have swelled into a separate volume.³¹

I shall close this survey with a brief notice of the drama, whose foundations may be said to have been laid during this reign. The sacred plays, or mysteries, so popular throughout Europe in the middle ages, may be traced in Spain to an ancient date. Their familiar performance in the churches, by the clergy, is recognised in the middle of the thirteenth century, by a law of Alfonso the Tenth, which, while it interdicted certain profane mum-

Rise of the
Spanish
drama.

³⁰ "Don Jorge Manrique," says Lope de Vega, "cuyas coplas Castellanas admiren los ingenios extranjeros y merecen estar escritas con letras de oro." *Obras Sueltas*, tom. xii. Prólogo.

³¹ *Coplas de Don Jorge Manrique*, ed. Madrid, 1779. — *Diálogo de las Lenguas*, apud Mayans y Siscar, Orígenes, tom. ii. p. 149. —

Manrique's *Coplas* have also been the subject of a separate publication in the United States. Professor Longfellow's version, accompanying it, is well calculated to give the English reader a correct notion of the Castilian bard, and, of course, a very exaggerated one of the literary culture of the age.

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meries that had come into vogue, prescribed the legitimate topics for exhibition.³²

The transition from these rude spectacles to more regular dramatic efforts, was very slow and gradual. In 1414, an allegorical comedy, composed by the celebrated Henry, marquis of Villena, was performed at Saragossa, in the presence of the court.³³ In 1469, a dramatic eclogue by an anonymous author, was exhibited in the palace of the count of Ureña, in the presence of Ferdinand, on his coming into Castile to espouse the infanta Isabella.³⁴ These pieces may be regarded as the

³² After proscribing certain profane mummeries, the law confines the clergy to the representation of such subjects as "the birth of our Saviour, in which is shown how the angels appeared, announcing his nativity; also his advent, and the coming of the three Magi kings to worship him; and his resurrection, showing his crucifixion and ascension on the third day; and other such things leading men to do well and live constant in the faith." (Siete Partidas, tit. 6, ley 34.) It is worth noting, that similar abuses continued common among the ecclesiastics, down to Isabella's reign, as may be inferred from a decree, very similar to the law of the Partidas above cited, published by the council of Aranda, in 1473. (Apud Moratin, Obras, tom. i. p. 87.) Moratin considers it certain, that the representation of the mysteries existed in Spain, as far back as the eleventh century. The principal grounds for this conjecture appear to be, the fact that such notorious abuses had crept into practice by the middle of the thirteenth century, as to require the intervention of the law. (Ibid. pp. 11, 13.)

The circumstance would seem compatible with a much more recent origin.

³³ Cervantes, *Comedias y Entremeses*, (Madrid, 1749,) tom. i. prólogo de Nasarre. — Velazquez, *Poesía Castellana*, p. 86. — The fifth volume of the *Memoirs of the Spanish Royal Academy of History*, contains a dissertation on the "national diversions," by Don Gaspar Melchor de Jovellanos, replete with curious erudition, and exhibiting the discriminating taste to have been expected from its accomplished author. Among these antiquarian researches, the writer has included a brief view of the first theatrical attempts in Spain. See *Mem. de la Acad. de Hist.*, tom. v. Mem. 6.

³⁴ Moratin, *Obras*, tom. i. p. 115. — Nasarre (Cervantes, *Comedias*, pról.), Jovellanos (*Mem. de la Acad. de Hist.*, tom. v. *Memor. 6.*), Pellicer (*Origen y Progreso de la Comedia*, (1804,) tom. i. p. 12.), and others, refer the authorship of this little piece, without hesitation, to Juan de la Encina, although the year of its representation corresponds precisely with that of his birth. The

earliest theatrical attempts, after the religious dramas and popular pantomimes already noticed; but unfortunately they have not come down to us. The next production deserving attention is, a "Dialogue between Love and an Old Man," imputed to Rodrigo Cota, a poet of whose history nothing seems to be known, and little conjectured, but that he flourished during the reigns of John the Second, and Henry the Fourth. The dialogue is written with much vivacity and grace, and with as much dramatic movement as is compatible with only two interlocutors.³⁵

A much more memorable production is referred to the same author, the tragicomedy of "Celestina," or "Calisto and Melibea," as it is frequently called. The first act, indeed, constituting nearly one third of the piece, is all that is ascribed to Cota. The remaining twenty, which however should rather be denominated scenes, were contin-

Tragicomedy of Celestina.

prevalence of so gross a blunder among the Spanish scholars, shows how little the antiquities of their theatre were studied before the time of Moratin.

³⁵ This little piece has been published at length by Moratin, in the first volume of his works. (See *Orígenes del Teatro Español*, Obras, tom. i. pp. 303 - 314.)

The celebrated marquis of Santiliana's poetical dialogue, "Comedieta da Ponza," has no pretensions to rank as a dramatic composition, notwithstanding its title, which is indeed as little significant of its real character, as the term "Commedia" is of Dante's epic. It is a discourse on the vicissitudes

of human life, suggested by a sea-fight near Ponza, in 1435. It is conducted without any attempt at dramatic action or character, or, indeed, dramatic development of any sort. The same remarks may be made of the political satire, "Mingo Revulgo," which appeared in Henry IV.'s reign. Dialogue was selected by these authors as a more popular and spirited medium than direct narrative for conveying their sentiments. The "Comedieta da Ponza" has never appeared in print; the copy which I have used is a transcript from the one in the royal library at Madrid, and belongs to Mr. George Ticknor.

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ued by another hand, some, though to judge from the internal evidence afforded by the style, not many years later. The second author was Fernando de Roxas, bachelor of law, as he informs us, who composed this work as a sort of intellectual relaxation, during one of his vacations. The time was certainly not misspent. The continuation, however, is not esteemed by the Castilian critics to have risen quite to the level of the original act.³⁶

Criticism on
it.

The story turns on a love intrigue. A Spanish youth of rank is enamoured of a lady, whose affections he gains with some difficulty, but whom he finally seduces, through the arts of an accomplished courtesan, whom the author has introduced under the romantic name of Celestina. The piece, although comic, or rather sentimental in its progress, terminates in the most tragical catastrophe, in which all the principal actors are involved.

³⁶ Tragicomedia de Calisto y Melibea, (Alcalá, 1586,) Introd. — Nothing is positively ascertained respecting the authorship of the first act of the Celestina. Some impute it to Juan de Mena; others with more probability to Rodrigo Cota el Tío, of Toledo, a person who, although literally nothing is known of him, has in some way or other obtained the credit of the authorship of some of the most popular effusions of the fifteenth century; such, for example, as the Dialogue above cited of "Love and an Old Man," the Coplas of "Mingo Revulgo," and this first act of the "Celestina." The principal foundation of these imputations would appear to be the bare assertion of an editor of the "Dialogue between Love and an Old Man," which appeared at Medina del Campo, in 1569, nearly a century, probably, after Cota's death; another example of the obscurity which involves the history of the early Spanish drama. Many of the Castilian critics detect a flavor of antiquity in the first act which should carry back its composition as far as John II.'s reign. Moratin does not discern this, however, and is inclined to refer its production to a date not much more distant, if any, than Isabella's time. To the unpractised eye of a foreigner, as far as style is concerned, the whole work might well seem the production of the same period. Moratin, Obras, tom. i. pp. 88, 115, 116. — Diálogo de las Lenguas, apud Mayans y Siscar, Orígenes, pp. 165-167. — Nic. Antonio, Bibliotheca Nova, tom. ii. p. 263.

The general texture of the plot is exceedingly clumsy, yet it affords many situations of deep and varied interest in its progress. The principal characters are delineated in the piece with considerable skill. The part of *Celestina*, in particular, in which a veil of plausible hypocrisy is thrown over the deepest profligacy of conduct, is managed with much address. The subordinate parts are brought into brisk comic action, with natural dialogue, though sufficiently obscene; and an interest of a graver complexion is raised by the passion of the lovers, the timid, confiding tenderness of the lady, and the sorrows of the broken-hearted parent. The execution of the play reminds us on the whole less of the Spanish, than of the old English theatre, in many of its defects, as well as beauties; in the contrasted strength and imbecility of various passages; its intermixture of broad farce and deep tragedy; the unseasonable introduction of frigid metaphor and pedantic allusion in the midst of the most passionate discourses; in the unveiled voluptuousness of its coloring, occasionally too gross for any public exhibition; but, above all, in the general strength and fidelity of its portraiture.

The tragicomedy, as it is styled, of *Celestina*, was obviously never intended for representation, to which, not merely the grossness of some of the details, but the length and arrangement of the piece, are unsuitable. But, notwithstanding this, and its approximation to the character of a romance, it must be admitted to contain within itself the essential elements of dramatic composition; and,

It opened the way to dramatic writing.

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as such, is extolled by the Spanish critics, as opening the theatrical career of Europe. A similar claim has been maintained for nearly contemporaneous productions in other countries, and especially for Politian's "Orfeo," which, there is little doubt, was publicly acted before 1483. Notwithstanding its representation, however, the "Orfeo," presenting a combination of the eclogue and the ode, without any proper theatrical movement, or attempt at developement of character, cannot fairly come within the limits of dramatic writing. A more ancient example than either, at least as far as the exterior forms are concerned, may be probably found in the celebrated French farce of Pierre Pathelin, printed as early as 1474, having been repeatedly played during the preceding century, and which, with the requisite modifications, still keeps possession of the stage. The pretensions of this piece, however, as a work of art, are comparatively humble; and it seems fair to admit, that in the higher and more important elements of dramatic composition, and especially in the delicate, and at the same time powerful delineation of character and passion, the Spanish critics may be justified in regarding the "Celestina" as having led the way in modern Europe.³⁷

³⁷ Such is the high encomium of the Abate Andres, (*Letteratura*, tom. v. part. 2, lib. 1.)—Cervantes does not hesitate to call it "libro divino"; and the acute author of the "Diálogo de las Lenguas" concludes a criticism upon it with the remark, that

"there is no book in the Castilian which surpasses it in the propriety and elegance of its diction." (*Don Quixote*, ed. de Pellicer, tom. i. p. 239.—Mayans y Siscar, tom. ii. p. 167.)

Its merits indeed seem in some degree to have disarmed even the

Without deciding on its proper classification as a work of art, however, its real merits are settled by its wide popularity, both at home and abroad. It has been translated into most of the European languages, and the preface to the last edition published in Madrid, so recently as 1822, enumerates thirty editions of it in Spain alone, in the course of the sixteenth century. Impressions were multiplied in Italy, and at the very time when it was interdicted at home on the score of its immoral tendency. A popularity thus extending through distant ages and nations, shows how faithfully it is built on the principles of human nature.³⁸

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Numerous
editions of it.

The drama assumed the pastoral form, in its early stages, in Spain, as in Italy. The oldest specimens in this way, which have come down to us, are the productions of Juan de la Encina, a contemporary of Roxas. He was born in 1469, and, after completing his education at Salamanca, was received into the family of the duke of Alva. He continued there several years, employed in the composition of various poetical works, among others, a version of Virgil's Eclogues, which he so altered as to accommodate them to the principal events in the reign of Ferdinand and Isabella. He visited Italy in the

Juan de la
Encina.

severity of foreign critics; and Signorelli, after standing up stoutly in defence of the precedence of the "Orfeo" as a dramatic composition, admits the "Celestina" to be a "work, rich in various beauties, and meriting undoubted applause. In fact," he continues, "the vivacity of the description of character, and faithful portraiture

of manners, have made it immortal." *Storia Critica de' Teatri Antichi e Moderni*, (Napoli, 1813,) tom. vi. pp. 146, 147.

³⁸ Bouterwek, *Literatura Española*, notas de traductores, p. 234. — Andres, *Letteratura*, tom. v. pp. 170, 171. — Lampillas, *Letteratura Spagnuola*, tom. vi. pp. 57-59.

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beginning of the following century, and was attracted by the munificent patronage of Leo the Tenth to fix his residence at the papal court. While there, he continued his literary labors. He embraced the ecclesiastical profession; and his skill in music recommended him to the office of principal director of the pontifical chapel. He was subsequently presented with the priory of Leon, and returned to Spain, where he died in 1534.³⁹

His dramatic eclogues.

Encina's works first appeared at Salamanca, in 1496, collected into one volume, folio.⁴⁰ Besides other poetry, they comprehend a number of dramatic eclogues, sacred and profane; the former, suggested by topics drawn from Scripture, like the ancient mysteries; the latter, chiefly amatory. They were performed in the palace of his patron, the duke of Alva, in the presence of Prince John, the duke of Infantado, and other eminent persons of the court; and the poet himself occasionally assisted at the representation.⁴¹

³⁹ Rojas, *Viage Entretenido*, (1614,) fol. 46. — Nic. Antonio, *Bibliotheca Nova*, tom. i. p. 684. — Moratin, *Obras*, tom. i. pp. 126, 127. — Pellicer, *Origen de la Comedia*, tom. i. pp. 11, 12.

⁴⁰ They were published under the title, "Cancionero de todas las Obras de Juan de la Encina con otras añadidas." (Mendez, *Typographia Española*, p. 247.) Subsequent impressions of his works, more or less complete, appeared at Salamanca in 1509, and at Saragossa in 1512 and 1516. — Moratin, *Obras*, tom. i. p. 127, nota.

⁴¹ The comedian Rojas, who flourished in the beginning of the following century, and whose

"*Viage Entretenido*" is so essential to the knowledge of the early histrionic art in Spain, identifies the appearance of Encina's Eclogues with the dawn of the Castilian drama. His verses may be worth quoting.

"Que es en nuestra madre España,
porque en la dichosa era,
que aquellos gloriosos Reyes
dignos de memoria eterna
Don Fernando e Ysabel
(que ya con los santos reynan)
de echar de España acabavan
todos los Moriscos, que eran
De aquel Reyno de Granada,
y entonces se dava en ella
principio a la Inquisicion,
se le dio a nuestra comedia.
Juan de la Encina el primero,
aquel insigne poeta,
que tanto bien empezo

Encina's eclogues are simple compositions, with little pretence to dramatic artifice. The story is too meagre to admit of much ingenuity or contrivance, or to excite any depth of interest. There are few interlocutors, seldom more than three or four, although on one occasion rising to as many as seven; of course there is little scope for theatrical action. The characters are of the humble class belonging to pastoral life, and the dialogue, which is extremely appropriate, is conducted with facility; but the rustic condition of the speakers precludes any thing like literary elegance or finish, in which respect they are doubtless surpassed by some of his more ambitious compositions. There is a comic air imparted to them, however, and a lively colloquial turn, which renders them very agreeable. Still, whatever be their merit as pastorals, they are entitled to little consideration as specimens of dramatic art; and, in the vital spirit of dramatic composition, must be regarded as far inferior to the "Celestina." The simplicity of these productions, and the facility of their exhibition, which required little theatrical decoration or costume, recommended them to popular imitation, which continued long after the regular forms of the drama were introduced into Spain.⁴²

de quien tenemos tres eglogas
Que el mismo represento
al Almirante y Duquesa
de Castilla, y de Infantado
que estas fueron las primeras
Y para mas honra suya,
y de la comedia nuestra,
en los dias que Colon
descubrio la gran riqueza
De Indias y nuevo mundo,
y el gran Capitan empieza
a sugetar aquel Reyno
de Napoles, y su tierra.

A descubrirse empozo
el uso de la comedia
porque todos se animassen
a emprender cosas tan buenas."
fol. 46, 47.

⁴² Signorelli, correcting what he denominates the "romance" of Lamiillas, considers Encina to have composed only one pastoral drama, and that, on occasion of Ferdinand's entrance into Castile. The critic

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Naharro.

The credit of this introduction belongs to Bartholomeo Torres de Naharro, often confounded by the Castilian writers themselves with a player of the same name, who flourished half a century later.⁴³ Few particulars have been ascertained of his personal history. He was born at Torre, in the province of Estremadura. In the early part of his life he fell into the hands of the Algerines, and was finally released from captivity by the exertions of certain benevolent Italians, who generously paid his ransom. He then established his residence in Italy, at the court of Leo the Tenth. Under the genial influence of that patronage, which quickened so many of the seeds of genius to production in every department, he composed his "Propaladia," a work embracing a variety of lyrical and dramatic poetry, first published at Rome, in 1517. Unfortunately, the caustic satire, levelled in some of the higher pieces of this collection at the license of the pontifical court, brought such obloquy on the head of the author as compelled him to take refuge in Naples, where he remained under the protection of the noble family of Colonna. No further particulars are recorded of him except that he embraced the

should have been more charitable, as he has made two blunders himself in correcting one. *Storia Critica de' Teatri*, tom. iv. pp. 192, 193.

⁴³ Andres, confounding Torres de Naharro the poet, with Naharro the comedian, who flourished about half a century later, is led into a ludicrous train of errors in controverting Cervantes, whose criticism

on the actor is perpetually misapplied by Andres to the poet. Velasquez seems to have confounded them in like manner. Another evidence of the extremely superficial acquaintance of the Spanish critics with their early drama. *Comp. Cervantes, Comedias y Entremeses*, tom. i. prólogo. — Andres, *Litteratura*, tom. v. p. 179. — Velazquez, *Poesía Castellana*, p. 88.

ecclesiastical profession; and the time and place of his death are alike uncertain. In person he is said to have been comely, with an amiable disposition, and sedate and dignified demeanor.⁴⁴

His "Propaladia," first published at Rome, passed through several editions subsequently in Spain, where it was alternately prohibited, or permitted, according to the caprice of the Holy Office. It contains, among other things, eight comedies, written in the native *redondillas*; which continue to be regarded as the suitable measure for the drama. They afford the earliest example of the division into *jornadas*, or days, and of the *intróito*, or prologue, in which the author, after propitiating the audience by suitable compliment, and witticisms not over delicate, gives a view of the length and general scope of his play.⁴⁵

His comedies.

The scenes of Naharro's comedies, with a single exception, are laid in Spain and Italy; those in the latter country probably being selected with reference to the audiences before whom they were acted. The diction is easy and correct, without much affectation of refinement or rhetorical orna-

⁴⁴ Nic. Antonio, *Bibliotheca Nova*, tom. i. p. 202. — Cervantes, *Comedias*, tom. i. pról. de Nasarre. — Pellicer, *Origen de la Comedia*, tom. ii. p. 17. — Moratin, *Obras*, tom. i. p. 48.

⁴⁵ Bartolomé Torres de Naharro, *Propaladia*, (Madrid, 1573.) — The deficiency of the earlier Spanish books, of which Bouterwek repeatedly complains, has led him into an error respecting the "Propaladia," which he had never seen. He states that Naharro was the

first to distribute the play into three *jornadas* or acts, and takes Cervantes roundly to task for assuming the original merit of this distribution to himself. In fact, Naharro did introduce the division into *five* *jornadas*, and Cervantes assumes only the credit of having been the first to *reduce them to three*. Comp. Bouterwek, *Geschichte der Poesie und Beredsamkeit*, band iii. p. 285. — and Cervantes, *Comedias*, tom. i. pról.

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ment. The dialogue, especially in the lower parts, is sustained with much comic vivacity; indeed Naharro seems to have had a nicer perception of character as it is found in lower life, than as it exists in the higher; and more than one of his plays are devoted exclusively to its illustration. On some occasions, however, the author assumes a more elevated tone, and his verse rises to a degree of poetic beauty, deepened by the moral reflection so characteristic of the Spaniards. At other times, his pieces are disfigured by such a Babel-like confusion of tongues, as makes it doubtful which may be the poet's vernacular. French, Spanish, Italian, with a variety of barbarous *patois*, and mongrel Latin, are all brought into play at the same time, and all comprehended, apparently with equal facility, by each one of the *dramatis personæ*. But it is difficult to conceive how such a jargon could have been comprehended, far more relished, by an Italian audience.⁴⁶

Naharro's comedies are not much to be commended for the intrigue, which generally excites but a languid interest, and shows little power or adroitness in the contrivance. With every defect, however, they must be allowed to have given the first forms to Spanish comedy, and to exhibit many of the features which continued to be characteristic of it in a state of more perfect developement under Lope de Vega and Calderon. Such, for instance,

⁴⁶ In the argument to the "Seraphina," he thus prepares the audience for this colloquial *olla podrida*.

"Mas haveis de estar alerta
por sentir los personajes

que hablan quatro lenguages.
hasta acabar su rehyerta
no salen de cuenta cierta
por Latin e Italiano
Castellano y Valenciano
que ninguno desconcierta."
Propaladis, p. 50.

Similar in
spirit with
the later
dramas.

is the amorous jealousy, and especially the point of honor, so conspicuous on the Spanish theatre; and such, too, the moral confusion too often produced by blending the foulest crimes with zeal for religion.⁴⁷ These comedies, moreover, far from blind conformity with the ancients, discovered much of the spirit of independence, and deviated into many of the eccentricities which distinguish the national theatre in later times; and which the criticism of our own day has so successfully explained and defended on philosophical principles.

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Naharro's plays were represented, as appears from his prologue, in Italy, probably not at Rome, which he quitted soon after their publication, but at Naples, which, then forming a part of the Spanish dominions, might more easily furnish an audience capable of comprehending them.⁴⁸ It is

Not acted in
Spain.

⁴⁷ The following is an example of the precious reasoning with which Floristan, in the play above quoted, reconciles his conscience to the murder of his wife Orfea, in order to gratify the jealousy of his mistress Seraphina. Floristan is addressing himself to a priest.

"Y por mas daño escusar
no lo quiero hora hazer,
sino que es menester.
que yo mate luego a Orfea
do Serafina lo vea
porque lo pueda creer.
Que yo bien me mataria,
pues toda razon me inclina;
pero se de Serafina
que se desesperaria.
y Orfea, pues que haria?
quando mi muerte supiesse:
que creo que no pudiesse
sostener la vida un dia.
Pues hablando aca entre nos
a Orfea cabe la suerte;
porque con su sola muerte
se escusaran otras dos:
de modo que padre vos
si llamar me la quereys,
a mi merced me hareys

y tambien servicio a Dios.

* * * * *
porque si yo la matare
morira christianamente;
yo morire penitente,
quando mi suerte llegare."

Propaladia, fol. 68.

⁴⁸ Signorelli waxes exceedingly wroth with Don Blas Nasarre for the assertion, that Naharro first taught the Italians to write comedy, taxing him with downright mendacity; and he stoutly denies the probability of Naharro's comedies ever having been performed on the Italian boards. The critic seems to be in the right, as far as regards the influence of the Spanish dramatist; but he might have been spared all doubts respecting their representation in the country, had he consulted the prologue of Naharro himself, where he asserts the fact in the most explicit manner. Comp. Propaladia, pról., and Signorelli,

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remarkable, that notwithstanding their repeated editions in Spain, they do not appear to have ever been performed there. The cause of this, probably, was the low state of the histrionic art, and the total deficiency in theatrical costume and decoration; yet it was not easy to dispense with these in the representation of pieces, which brought more than a score of persons occasionally, and these crowned heads, at the same time, upon the stage.⁴⁹

Low condition of the stage.

Some conception may be afforded of the lamentable poverty of the theatrical equipment, from the account given of its condition, half a century later, by Cervantes. "The whole wardrobe of a manager of the theatre, at that time," says he, "was contained in a single sack, and amounted only to four dresses of white fur trimmed with gilt leather, four beards, four wigs, and four crooks, more or less. There were no trapdoors, movable clouds, or machinery of any kind. The stage itself consisted only of four or six planks, placed across as many benches, arranged in the form of a square, and elevated but four palms from the ground. The only decoration of the theatre was an old coverlet, drawn from side to side by cords, behind which the musicians sang some ancient *romance*, without the guitar."⁵⁰ In fact, no further apparatus was employed than that demanded for the exhibition of

Storia Critica de' Teatri, tom. vi. pp. 171-179. — See also Moratin, Origenes, Obras, tom. i. pp. 149, 150.

⁴⁹ Propaladia; see the comedies of "Trofea" and "Tinellaria."—

Jovellanos, Memoria sobre las Diversiones Públicas, apud Mem. de la Acad. de Hist., tom. v.

⁵⁰ Cervantes, Comedias, tom. i. pról.

mysteries, or the pastoral dialogues which succeeded them. The Spaniards, notwithstanding their precocity, compared with most of the nations of Europe, in dramatic art, were unaccountably tardy in all its histrionic accompaniments. The public remained content with such poor mummeries, as could be got up by strolling players and mountebanks. There was no fixed theatre in Madrid until the latter part of the sixteenth century; and that consisted of a courtyard, with only a roof to shelter it, while the spectators sat on benches ranged around, or at the windows of the surrounding houses.⁵¹

A similar impulse with that experienced by comic writing, was given to tragedy. The first that entered on this department were professed scholars, who adopted the error of the Italian dramatists, in fashioning their pieces servilely after the antique, instead of seizing the expression of their own age. The most conspicuous attempts in this way were made by Fernan Perez de Oliva.⁵² He was born

Tragic
drama.

⁵¹ Pellicer, *Origen de la Comedia*, tom. ii. pp. 58-62. — See also *American Quarterly Review*, no. viii. art. 3.

⁵² Oliva, *Obras*, (Madrid, 1787.) — Vasco Diaz Tanco, a native of Estremadura, who flourished in the first half of the sixteenth century, mentions in one of his works three tragedies composed by himself on Scripture subjects. As there is no evidence, however, of their having been printed, or performed, or even read in manuscript by any one, they hardly deserve to be included in the catalogue of dramatic com-

positions. (Moratin, *Obras*, tom. i. pp. 150, 151. — Lampillas, *Literatura Spagnuola*, tom. v. dis. 1, sec. 5.) This patriotic *littérateur* endeavours to establish the production of Oliva's tragedies in the year 1515, in the hope of antedating that of Trissino's "Sophonisba," composed a year later, and thus securing to his nation the palm of precedence, in time at least, though it should be only for a few months, on the tragic theatre of modern Europe. *Literatura Spagnuola*, ubi supra.

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at Cordova, in 1494, and, after many years passed in the various schools of Spain, France, and Italy, returned to his native land, and became a lecturer in the university of Salamanca. He instructed in moral philosophy and mathematics, and established the highest reputation for his critical acquaintance with the ancient languages and his own. He died young, at the age of thirty-nine, deeply lamented for his moral, no less than for his intellectual worth.⁵³

Oliva's classic imitations.

His various works were published by the learned Morales, his nephew, some fifty years after his death. Among them are translations in prose of the *Electra* of Sophocles, and the *Hecuba* of Euripides. They may with more propriety be termed imitations, and those too of the freest kind. Although they conform, in the general arrangement and progress of the story, to their originals, yet characters, nay whole scenes and dialogues, are occasionally omitted; and in those retained, it is not always easy to recognise the hand of the Grecian artist, whose modest beauties are thrown into shade by the ambitious ones of his imitator.⁵⁴ But with all this, Oliva's tragedies must be admitted to be executed, on the whole, with vigor; and the diction, notwithstanding the national tendency to

⁵³ Nic. Antonio, *Bibliotheca Nova*, tom. i. p. 386. — Oliva, *Obras*, pref. de Morales.

⁵⁴ The following passage, for example, in the "*Venganza de Agamemnon*," imitated from the *Electra* of Sophocles, will hardly be charged on the Greek dramatist.

"Haded, yo os ruego, de mi compassion, no querais atapar con vuestros consejos los respiraderos de las hornazas de fuego, que dentro me atormentan." See Oliva, *Obras*, p. 185.

exaggeration above alluded to, may be generally commended for decorum and an imposing dignity, quite worthy of the tragic drama; indeed, they may be selected as affording probably the best specimen of the progress of prose composition during the present reign.⁵⁵

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Oliva's reputation led to a similar imitation of the antique. But the Spaniards were too national in all their tastes to sanction it. These classical compositions did not obtain possession of the stage, but were confined to the closet, serving only as a relaxation for the man of letters; while the voice of the people compelled all who courted it, to accommodate their inventions to those romantic forms, which were subsequently developed in such variety of beauty by the great Spanish dramatists.⁵⁶

Not popular.

We have now surveyed the different kinds of poetic culture familiar to Spain under Ferdinand and Isabella. Their most conspicuous element is the national spirit which pervades them, and the exclusive attachment which they manifest to the primitive forms of versification peculiar to the Peninsula. The most remarkable portion of this body

National
spirit of the
literature of
this epoch.

⁵⁵ Compare the diction of these tragedies with that of the "Centon Epistolario," for instance, esteemed one of the best literary compositions of John II.'s reign, and see the advance made, not only in orthography, but in the verbal arrangement generally, and the whole complexion of the style.

⁵⁶ Notwithstanding some Spanish critics, as Cueva, for example, have vindicated the romantic forms of the drama on scientific principles, it is apparent that the most

successful writers in this department have been constrained to adopt them by public opinion, rather than their own, which would have suggested a nearer imitation of the classical models of antiquity, so generally followed by the Italians, and which naturally recommends itself to the scholar. See the canon's discourse in Cervantes, *Don Quixote*, ed. de Pellicer, tom. iii. pp. 207-220, — and, more explicitly, Lope de Vega, *Obras Sueltas*, tom. iv. p. 406.

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of poetry may doubtless be considered the Spanish *romances*, or ballads; that popular minstrelsy, which, commemorating the picturesque and chivalrous incidents of the age, reflects most faithfully the romantic genius of the people, who gave it utterance. The lyric efforts of the period were less successful. There were few elaborate attempts in this field, indeed, by men of decided genius. But the great obstacle may be found in the imperfection of the language and the deficiency of the more exact and finished metrical forms, indispensable to high poetic execution.

The whole period, however, comprehending, as it does, the first decided approaches to a regular drama, may be regarded as very important in a literary aspect; since it exhibits the indigenous peculiarities of Castilian literature in all their freshness, and shows to what a degree of excellence it could attain, while untouched by any foreign influence. The present reign may be regarded as the epoch which divides the ancient from the modern school of Spanish poetry; in which the language was slowly but steadily undergoing the process of refinement, that "made the knowledge of it," to borrow the words of a contemporary critic, "pass for an elegant accomplishment, even with the cavaliers and dames of cultivated Italy;"⁵⁷ and which

⁵⁷ "Ya en Italia, assi entre Damas, como entre Caballeros, se tiene por gentileza y galania, saber hablar Castellano." *Diálogo de las Lenguas*, apud Mayans y Sis-car, Orígenes, tom. ii. p. 4.

I have had occasion to advert more than once in the course of this chapter, to the superficial acquaintance of the Spanish critics with the

finally gave full scope to the poetic talent, that raised the literature of the country to such brilliant heights in the sixteenth century.

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early history of their own drama, authentic materials for which are so extremely rare and difficult of access, as to preclude the expectation of any thing like a satisfactory account of it out of the Peninsula. The nearest approach to this within my knowledge, is made in an article in the eighth number of the *American Quarterly Review*, ascribed to Mr. Ticknor, late Professor of Modern Literature in Harvard University. This gentleman, during a residence in the Peninsula, had every facility for replenishing his library with the most curious and valuable works, both printed and manuscript, in this department; and his essay embodies in a brief compass the results of a well-directed industry, which he has expanded in greater detail in his lectures on Spanish literature, delivered before the classes of the University. The subject is discussed with his usual elegance and perspicuity of style; and the foreign, and indeed Castilian scholar, may find much novel information there, in the views presented of the early progress of the dramatic and the histrionic art in the Peninsula.

Since the publication of this article, Moratin's treatise, so long and anxiously expected, "*Origenes del Teatro Español*," has made its appearance under the auspices of the Royal Academy of History, which has enriched the national literature with so many admirable editions of its ancient authors. Moratin states in his Preface, that he was employed from his earliest youth in collecting notices, both at home and abroad, of whatever might illustrate the origin of the Spanish drama. The results have

been two volumes, containing in the First Part an historical discussion, with ample explanatory notes, and a catalogue of dramatic pieces from the earliest epoch down to the time of Lope de Vega, chronologically arranged, and accompanied with critical analyses, and copious illustrative extracts from pieces of the greatest merit. The Second Part is devoted to the publication of entire pieces of various authors, which from their extreme rarity, or their existence only in manuscript, have had but little circulation. The selections throughout are made with that careful discrimination, which resulted from poetic talent combined with extensive and thorough erudition. The criticisms, although sometimes warped by the peculiar dramatic principles of the author, are conducted in general with great fairness; and ample, but not extravagant, commendation is bestowed on productions, whose merit, to be properly appreciated, must be weighed by one conversant with the character and intellectual culture of the period. The work unfortunately did not receive the last touches of its author, and undoubtedly something may be found wanting to the full completion of his design. On the whole, it must be considered as a rich repository of old Castilian literature, much of it of the most rare and recondite nature, directed to the illustration of a department, that has hitherto been suffered to languish in the lowest obscurity, but which is now so arranged that it may be contemplated, as it were, under one aspect, and its real merits accurately determined.

Moratin's
dramatic
criticism.

PART SECOND.

1493—1517.

THE PERIOD WHEN, THE INTERIOR ORGANIZATION OF THE MON-
ARCHY HAVING BEEN COMPLETED, THE SPANISH NATION
ENTERED ON ITS SCHEMES OF DISCOVERY AND CONQUEST;
OR THE PERIOD ILLUSTRATING MORE PARTICULARLY THE
FOREIGN POLICY OF FERDINAND AND ISABELLA.