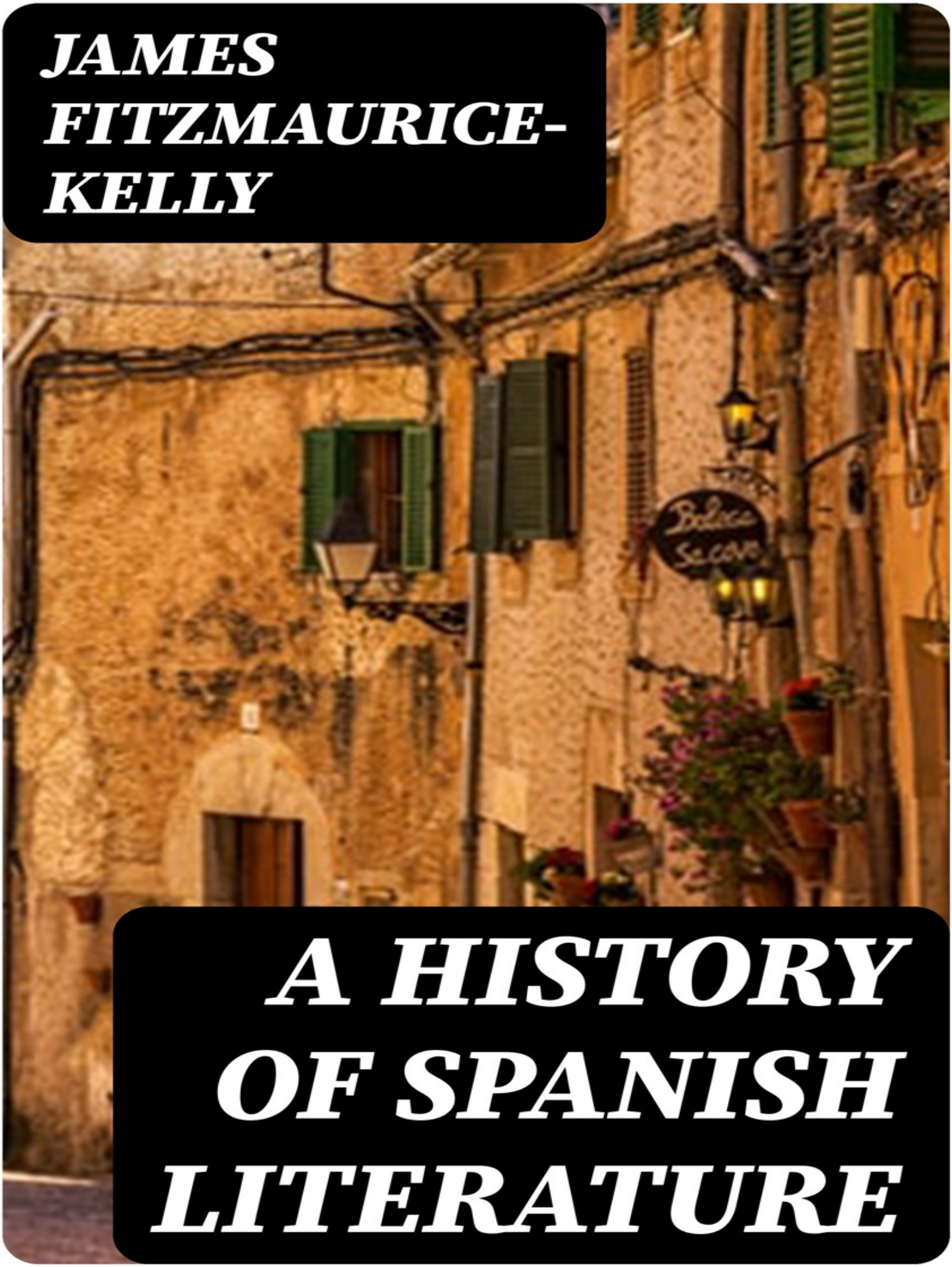

JAMES FITZMAURICE-KELLY

A HISTORY OF SPANISH LITERATURE

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PREFACE

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Spanish literature, in its broadest sense, might include writings in every tongue existing within the Spanish dominions; it might, at all events, include the four chief languages of Spain. Asturian and Galician both possess literatures which in their recent developments are artificial. Basque, the spoiled child of philologers, has not added greatly to the sum of the world's delight; and even if it had, I should be incapable of undertaking a task which would belong of right to experts like Mr. Wentworth Webster, M. Jules Vinson, and Professor Schuchardt. Catalan is so singularly rich and varied that it might well deserve separate treatment: its inclusion here would be as unjustifiable as the inclusion of Provençal in a work dealing with French literature. For the purposes of this book, minor varieties are neglected, and Spanish literature is taken as referring solely to Castilian—the speech of Juan Ruiz, Cervantes, Lope de Vega, Tirso de Molina, Quevedo, and Calderón.

At the close of the last century, Nicolas Masson de Morvilliers raised a hubbub by asking two questions in the *Encyclopédie Méthodique*:—"Mais que doit-on à l'Espagne? Et depuis deux siècles, depuis quatre, depuis six, qu'a-t elle fait pour l'Europe?" I have attempted an answer in this volume. The introductory chapter has been written to remind readers that the great figures of the Silver Age—Seneca, Lucan, Martial, Quintilian—were Spaniards as well as Romans. It further aims at tracing the stream of literature

from its Roman fount to the channels of the Gothic period; at defining the limits of Arabic and Hebrew influence on Spanish letters; at refuting the theory which assumes the existence of immemorial *romances*, and at explaining the interaction between Spanish on the one side and Provençal and French on the other. It has been thought that this treatment saves much digression.

Spanish literature, like our own, takes its root in French and in Italian soil; in the anonymous epics, in the *fableaux*, as in Dante, Petrarch, and the Cinque Cento poets. Excessive patriotism leads men of all lands to magnify their literary history; yet it may be claimed for Spain, as for England, that she has used her models without compromising her originality, absorbing here, annexing there, and finally dominating her first masters. But Spain's victorious course, splendid as it was in letters, arts, and arms, was comparatively brief. The heroic age of her literature extends over some hundred and fifty years, from the accession of Carlos Quinto to the death of Felipe IV. This period has been treated, as it deserves, at greater length than any other. The need of compression, confronting me at every page, has compelled the omission of many writers. I can only plead that I have used my discretion impartially, and I trust that no really representative figure will be found missing.

My debts to predecessors will be gathered from the bibliographical appendix. I owe a very special acknowledgment to my friend Sr. D. Marcelino Menéndez y Pelayo, the most eminent of Spanish scholars and critics. If I have sometimes dissented from him, I have done so with

much hesitation, believing that any independent view is better than the mechanical repetition of authoritative verdicts. I have to thank Mr. Gosse for the great care with which he has read the proofs; and to Mr. Henley, whose interest in all that touches Spain is of long standing, I am indebted for much suggestive criticism. For advice on some points of detail, I am obliged to Sr. D. Ramón Menéndez Pidal, to Sr. D. Adolfo Bonilla y San Martín, and to Sr. D. Rafael Altamira y Crevea.

A HISTORY OF
SPANISH LITERATURE

CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTORY

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The most ancient monuments of Castilian literature can be referred to no time later than the twelfth century, and they have been dated earlier with some plausibility. As with men of Spanish stock, so with their letters: the national idiosyncrasy is emphatic—almost violent. French literature is certainly more exquisite, more brilliant; English is loftier and more varied; but in the capital qualities of originality, force, truth, and humour, the Castilian finds no superior. The Basques, who have survived innumerable onsets (among them, the ridicule of Rabelais and the irony of Cervantes), are held by some to be representatives of the Stone-age folk who peopled the east, north-east, and south of Spain. This notion is based mainly upon the fact that all true Basque names for cutting instruments are derived from the word *aitz* (flint). Howbeit, the Basques vaunt no literary history in the true sense. The *Leloaren Cantua* (*Song of Lelo*) has been accepted as a

contemporary hymn written in celebration of a Basque triumph over Augustus. Its date is uncertain, and its refrain of "*Lelo*" seems a distorted reminiscence of the Arabic catchword *Lā ilāh illā 'llāh*; but the *Leloaren Cantua* is assuredly no older than the sixteenth century.

A second performance in this sort is the *Altobiskarko Cantua* (*Song of Altobiskar*). Altobiskar is a hill near Roncesvalles, where the Basques are said to have defeated Charlemagne; and the song commemorates the victory. Written in a rhythm without fellow in the Basque metres, it contains names like Roland and Ganelon, which are in themselves proofs of French origin; but, as it has been widely received as genuine, the facts concerning it must be told. First written in French (*circa* 1833) by François Eugène Garay de Monglave, it was translated into very indifferent Basque by a native of Espelette named Louis Duhalde, then a student in Paris. The too-renowned *Altobiskarko Cantua* is therefore a simple hoax: one might as well attribute *Rule Britannia* to Boadicea. The conquerors of Roncesvalles wrote no triumphing song: three centuries later the losers immortalised their own overthrow in the

***Chanson de Roland*, where the disaster is credited to the Arabs, and the Basques are merely mentioned by the way. Early in the twelfth century there was written a Latin *Chronicle* ascribed to Archbishop Turpin, an historical personage who ruled the see of Rheims some two hundred years before his false *Chronicle* was written. The opening chapters of this fictitious history are probably due to an anonymous Spanish monk cloistered at Santiago de Compostela; and it is barely possible that this late source was utilised by such modern Basques as José María Goizcueta, who retouched and "restored" the *Altobiskarko Cantua* in ignorant good faith.**

However that may prove, no existing Basque song is much more than three hundred years old. One single Basque of genius, the Chancellor Pero López de Ayala, shines a portent in the literature of the fourteenth century; and even so, he writes in Castilian. He stands alone, isolated from his race. The oldest Basque book, well named as *Linguæ Vasconum Primitiæ*, is a collection of exceedingly minor verse by Bernard Dechepare, curé of Saint-Michel, near Saint-Jean Pied de Port; and its date is modern (1545). Pedro de Axular is the

first Basque who shows any originality in his native tongue; and, characteristically enough, he deals with religious matters. Though he lived at Sare, in the Basses Pyrénées, he was a Spaniard from Navarre; and he flourished in the seventeenth century (1643). It is true that a small knot of second-class Basque—the epic poet Ercilla y Zúñiga, and the fabulist Iriarte—figure in Castilian literature; but the Basque glories are to be sought in other field—in such heroic personages as Ignacio Loyola, and his mightier disciple Francisco Xavier. Setting aside devotional and didactic works, mostly translated from other tongues, Basque literature is chiefly oral, and has but a formal connection with the history of Spanish letters. Within narrow geographical limits the Basque language still thrives, and on each slope of the Pyrenees holds its own against forces apparently irresistible. But its vitality exceeds its reproductive force: it survives but does not multiply. Whatever the former influence of Basque on Castilian—an influence never great—it has now ceased; while Castilian daily tends to supplant (or, at least, to supplement) Basque. Spain's later invaders—Iberians, Kelts, Phœnicians, Greeks, Carthaginians, Alani,

Suevi, Goths, and Arabs—have left but paltry traces on the prevailing form of Spanish speech, which derives from Latin by a descent more obvious, though not a whit more direct, than the descent of French. So frail is the partition which divides the Latin mother from her noblest daughter, that late in the sixteenth century Fernando Pérez de Oliva wrote a treatise that was at once Latin and Spanish: a thing intelligible in either tongue and futile in both, though held for praiseworthy in an age when the best poets chose to string lines into a polyglot rosary, without any distinction save that of antic dexterity.

For our purpose, the dawn of literature in Spain begins with the Roman conquest. In colonies like Pax Augusta (Badajoz), Cæsar Augusta (Zaragoza), and Emerita Augusta (Mérida), the Roman influence was strengthened by the intermarriage of Roman soldiers with Spanish women. All over Spain there arose the *odiosa cantio*, as St. Augustine calls it, of Spanish children learning Latin; and every school formed a fresh centre of Latin authority. With their laws, the conquerors imposed their speech upon the broken tribes; and these, in turn, invaded the capital of Latin

politics and letters. The breath of Spanish genius informs the Latinity of the Silver Age. Augustus himself had named his Spanish freedman, Gaius Julius Hyginus, the Chief Keeper of the Palatine Library. Spanish literary aptitude, showing stronger in the prodigious learning of the Elder Seneca, matures in the altisonant rhetoric and violent colouring of the Younger, in Lucan's declamatory eloquence and metallic music, in Martial's unblushing humour and brutal cynicism, in Quintilian's luminous judgment and wise sententiousness.

All these display in germ the characteristic points of strength and weakness which were to be developed in the evolution of Spanish literature; and their influence on letters was matched by their countrymen's authority on affairs. The Spaniard Balbus was the first barbarian to reach the Consulship, and to receive the honour of a public triumph; the Spaniard Trajan was the first barbarian named Emperor, the first Emperor to make the Tigris the eastern boundary of his dominion, and the only Emperor whose ashes were allowed to rest within the Roman city-walls. And the victory of the vanquished was complete when the

Spaniard Hadrian, the author of the famous verses—

> **"*Animula vagula blandula,***
> **Hospes comesque corporis,**
> **Quæ nunc abibis in loca,**
> **Pallidula rigida nudula,**
> ***Nec, ut soles, dabis jocos?*"—**

himself an exquisite in art and in letters—became the master of the world. Gibbon declares with justice that the happiest epoch in mankind's history is "that which elapsed from the death of Domitian to the accession of Commodus"; and the Spaniard, accounting Marcus Aurelius as a son of Córdoba, vaunts with reasonable pride, that of those eighty perfect, golden years, three-score at least were passed beneath the sceptre of the Spanish Cæsars.

Withal, individual success apart, the Spanish utterance of Latin teased the finer ear. Cicero ridiculed the accent—*aliquid pingue*—of even the more lettered Spaniards who reached Rome; Martial, retired to his native Bilbilis, shuddered lest he might let fall a local idiom; and Quintilian, a sterner purist than a very Roman, frowned at the intrusion of his native

provincialisms upon the everyday talk of the capital. In Rome incorrections of speech were found where least expected. That Catullus should jeer at Arrius—the forerunner of a London type—in the matter of aspirates is natural enough; but even Augustus distressed the nice grammarian. *A fortiori*, Hadrian was taunted with his Spanish solecisms. Innovation won the day. The century between Livy and Tacitus shows differences of style inexplicable by the easy theory of varieties of temperament; and the two centuries dividing Tacitus from St. Augustine are marked by changes still more striking. This is but another illustration of the old maxim, that as the speed of falling bodies increases with distance, so literary decadences increase with time.

As in Italy and Africa, so in Spain. The statelier *sermo urbanus* yielded to the *sermo plebeius*. Spanish soldiers had discovered "the fatal secret of empire, that emperors could be made elsewhere than at Rome"; no less fatal was the discovery that Latin might be spoken without regard for Roman models. As the power of classic forms waned, that of ecclesiastical examples grew. Church Latin of the fourth century shines at its best in the

verse of the Christian poet, the Spaniard Prudentius: with him the classical rhythms persist—as survivals. He clutches at, rather than grasps, the Roman verse tradition, and, though he has no rhyming stanzas, he verges on rhyme in such performances as his *Hymnus ad Galli Cantum*. Throughout the noblest period of Roman poetry, soldiers, sailors, and illiterates had, in the *versus saturnius*, preserved a native rhythmical system not quantitative but accentual; and this vulgar metrical method was to outlive its fashionable rival. It is doubtful whether the quantitative prosody, brought from Greece by literary dandies, ever flourished without the circle of professional men of letters. It is indisputable that the imported metrical rules, depending on the power of vowels and the position of consonants, were gradually superseded by looser laws of syllabic quantity wherein accent and tonic stress were the main factors.

When the empire fell, Spain became the easy prey of northern barbarians, who held the country by the sword, and intermarried but little with its people. To the Goths Spain owes nothing but eclipse and ruin. No books, no inscriptions of Gothic origin survive; the

Gongoristic letters ascribed to King Sisebut are not his work, and it is doubtful if the Goths bequeathed more than a few words to the Spanish vocabulary. The defeat of Roderic by Tarik and Mūsa laid Spain open to the Arab rush. National sentiment was unborn. Witiza and Roderic were regarded by Spaniards as men in Italy and Africa regarded Totila and Galimar. The clergy were alienated from their Gothic rulers. Gothic favourites were appointed to non-existent dioceses carrying huge revenues; a single Goth held two sees simultaneously; and, by way of balance, Toledo was misgoverned by two rival Gothic bishops. Harassed by a severe penal code, the Jew hailed the invading Arabs as a kindred, oriental, circumcised race; and, with the heathen slaves, they went over to the conquerors. So obscure is the history of the ensuing years that it has been said that the one thing certain is Roderic's name. Not less certain is it that, within a brief space, almost the entire peninsula was subdued. The more warlike Spaniards,

> **"*Patient of toil, serene among alarms,***

Inflexible in faith, invincible in arms,"

foregathered with Pelayo by the Cave of Covadonga, near Oviedo, among the Pyrenean chines, which they held against the forces of the Berber Alkamah and the renegade Archbishop, Don Opas. "Confident in the strength of their mountains," says Gibbon, these highlanders "were the last who submitted to the arms of Rome, and the first who threw off the yoke of the Arabs." While on the Asturian hillsides the spirit of Spanish nationality was thus nurtured amid convulsions, the less hardy inhabitants of the south accepted their defeat. The few who embraced Islamism were despised as Muladíes; the many, adopting all save the religion of their masters, were called Muzárabes, just as, during the march of the reconquest, Moors similarly placed in Christian provinces were dubbed Mudéjares.

The literary traditions of Seneca, Lucan, and their brethren, passed through the hands of mediocrities like Pomponius Mela and Columella, to be delivered to Gaius Vettius Aquilinus Juvencus, who gave a rendering of the gospels, wherein the Virgilian hexameter is

aped with a certain provincial vigour. Minor poets, not lacking in marmoreal grace, survive in Baron Hübner's *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinorum*. Among the breed of learned churchmen shines the name of St. Damasus, first of Spanish popes, who shows all his race's zeal in heresy-hunting and in fostering monkery. The saponaceous eloquence that earned him the name of *Auriscalpius matronarum* ("the Ladies' Ear-tickler") is forgotten; but he deserves remembrance because of his achievement as an epigraphist, and because he moved his friend, St. Jerome, to translate the Bible. To him succeeds Hosius of Córdoba, the mentor of Constantine, the champion of Athanasian orthodoxy, and the presiding bishop at the Council of Nicæa, to whom is attributed the incorporation in the Nicene Creed of that momentous clause, "*Genitum non factum, consubstantialem Patri*."

Prudentius follows next, with that savour of the terrible and agonising which marks the Spagnoletto school of art; but to all his strength and sternness he adds a sweeter, tenderer tone. At once a Christian, a Spaniard, and a Roman, to Prudentius his birthplace is ever *felix Tarraco* (he came from Tarragona);

and he thrills with pride when he boasts that Cæsar Augusta gave his Mother-Church most martyrs. Yet, Christian though he be, the imperial spirit in him fires at the thought of the multitudinous tribes welded into a single people, and he plainly tells you that a Roman citizen is as far above the brute barbarian as man is above beast. Priscillian and his fellow-sufferer Latrocinius, the first martyrs slain by Christianity set in office, were both clerks of singular accomplishment. As disciple of St. Augustine, and comrade of St. Jerome, Orosius would be remembered, even were he not the earliest historian of the world. Like Prudentius, Orosius blends the passion of universal empire with the fervour of local sentiment. Good, haughty Spaniard as he is, he enregisters the battles that his fathers gave for freedom; he ranks Numancia's name only below that of the world-mother, Rome; and his heart softens towards the blind barbarians, their faces turned towards the light. Cold, austere, and even a trifle cynical as he is, Orosius' pulses throb at memory of Cæsar; and he glows on thinking that, a citizen of no mean city, he ranges the world under Roman jurisdiction. And this vast union of diverse races, all speaking

one single tongue, all recognising one universal law, Orosius calls by the new name of Romania.

Licinianus follows, the Bishop of Cartagena and the correspondent of St. Gregory the Great. A prouder and more illustrious figure is that of St. Isidore of Seville—"*beatus et lumen noster Isidorus*." Originality is not Isidore's distinction, and the Latin verses which pass under his name are of doubtful authenticity. But his encyclopædic learning is amazing, and gives him place beside Cassiodorus, Boëtius, and Martianus Capella, among the greatest teachers of the West. St. Braulius, Bishop of Zaragoza, lives as the editor of his master Isidore's posthumous writings, and as the author of a hymn to that national saint, Millán. Nor should we omit the names of St. Eugenius, a realist versifier of the day, and of St. Valerius, who had all the poetic gifts save the accomplishment of verse. Naturalised foreigners, like the Hungarian St. Martin of Dumi, Archbishop of Braga, lent lustre to Spain at home. Spaniards, like Claude, Bishop of Turin and like Prudentius Galindus, Bishop of Troyes, carried the national fame abroad: the first in writings which prove the permanence of

Seneca's tradition, the second in polemics against the pantheists. More rarely dowered was Theodolphus, the Spanish Bishop of Orleans, distinguished at Charlemagne's court as a man of letters and a poet; nor is it likely that Theodolphus' name can ever be forgotten, for his exultant hymn, *Gloria, laus, et honor*, is sung the world over on Palm Sunday. And scarcely less notable are the composers of the noble Latin-Gothic hymnal, the makers of the *Breviarum Gothicum* of Lorenzana and of Arévalo's *Hymnodia Hispanica*.

Enough has been said to show that, amid the tumult of Gothic supremacy in Spain, literature was pursued—though not by Goths—with results which, if not splendid, are at least unmatched in other Western lands. Doubtless in Spain, as elsewhere, much curious learning and insolent ignorance throve jowl by jowl. Like enough, some Spanish St. Ouen wrote down Homer, Menander, and Virgil as three plain blackguards; like enough, the Spanish biographer of some local St. Bavo confounded Tityrus with Virgil, and declared that Pisistratus' Athenian contemporaries spoke habitually in Latin. The conceit of ignorance is a thing eternal. Withal, from the age of

Prudentius onward, literature was sustained in one or other shape. For a century after Tarik's landing there is a pause, unbroken save for the *Chronicle* of the anonymous Córdoban, too rashly identified as Isidore Pacensis. The intellectual revival appears, not among the Arabs, but among the Jews of Córdoba and Toledo; this last the immemorial home of magic where the devil was reputed to catch his own shadow. It was a devout belief that clerks went to Paris to study "the liberal arts," whereas in Toledo they mastered demonology and forgot their morals. Córdoba's fame, as the world's fine flower, crossed the German Rhine, and even reached the cloister of Roswitha, a nun who dabbled in Latin comedies. The achievements of Spanish Jews and Spanish Arabs call for separate treatises. Here it must suffice to say that the roll contains names mighty as that of the Jewish poet and philosopher Ibn Gebirol or Avicebron (d. ? 1070), whom Duns Scotus acknowledges as his master; and that of Judah ben Samuel the Levite (b. 1086), whom Heine celebrates in the *Romanzero*:

"***Rein und wahrhaft, sonder Makel***
War sein Lied, wie seine Seele."

In one sense, if we choose to fasten on his favourite trick of closing a Hebrew stanza with a romance line, Judah ben Samuel the Levite may be accounted the earliest of known experimentalists in Spanish verse; and an Arab poet of Spanish descent, Ibn Hazm, anticipated the Catalan, Auzías March, by founding a school of poetry, at once mystic and amorous.

But the Spanish Jews and Spanish Arabs gained their chief distinction in philosophy. Of these are Ibn Bājjah or Avempace (d. 1138), the opponent of al-Gazāli and his mystico-sceptical method; and Abū Bakr ibn al-Tufail (1116-85), the author of a neo-platonic, pantheistic romance entitled *Risālat Haiy ibn Yakzān*, of which the main thesis is that religious and philosophic truth are but two forms of the same thing. Muhammad ibn Ahmad ibn Rushd (1126-98), best known as Averroes, taught the doctrine of the universal nature and unity of the human intellect, accounting for individual inequalities by a fantastic theory of stages of illumination. Arab though he was, Averroes was more reverenced by Jews than by men of his own race; and his permanent vogue is proved by the fact that Columbus cites him three centuries afterwards, while his teachings

prevailed in the University of Padua as late as Luther's time. A more august name is that of "the Spanish Aristotle," Moses ben Maimon or Maimonides (1135-1204), the greatest of European Jews, the intellectual father, so to say, of Albertus Magnus and St. Thomas of Aquin. Born at Córdoba, Maimonides drifted to Cairo, where he became chief rabbi of the synagogue, and served as Saladin's physician, having refused a like post in the household of Richard the Lion-hearted. It is doubtful if Maimonides was a Jew at heart; it is unquestioned that at one time he conformed outwardly to Muhammadanism. A stinging epigram summarises his achievement by saying that he philosophised the Talmud and talmudised philosophy. It is, of course, absurd to suppose that his critical faculty could accept the childish legends of the *Haggadah*, wherein rabbis manifold report that the lion fears the cock's crow, that the salamander quenches fire, and other incredible puerilities. In his *Yad ha-Hazakah* (The Strong Hand) Maimonides seeks to purge the Talmud of its *pilpulim* or casuistic commentaries, and to make the book a sufficient guide for practical life rather than to leave it a dust-heap for intellectual scavengers.

Hence he tends to a rationalistic interpretation of Scriptural records. Direct communion with the Deity, miracles, prophetic gifts, are not so much denied as explained away by means of a symbolic exegesis, infinitely subtle and imaginative. Spanish and African rabbis received the new teaching with docility, and in his own lifetime Maimonides' success was absolute. A certain section of his followers carried the cautious rationalism of the master to extremities, and thus produced the inevitable reaction of the *Kabbala* with its apparatus of elaborate extravagances. This reaction was headed by another Spaniard, the Catalan mystic, Bonastruc de Portas or Moses ben Nahman (1195-1270); and the relation of the two leaders is exemplified by the rabbinical legend which tells that the soul of each sprang from Adam's head: Maimonides, from the left curl, which typifies severity of judgment; Moses ben Nahman from the right, which symbolises tenderness and mercy.

On literature the pretended "Arab influence," if it exist at all, is nowise comparable to that of the Spanish Jews, who can boast that Judah ben Samuel the Levite lives as one of Dante's masters. Judah ranks

among the great immortals of the world, and no Arab is fit to loosen the thong of his sandal. But it might very well befall a second-rate man, favoured by fortune and occasion, to head a literary revolution. It was not the case in Spain. The innumerable Spanish-Arab poets, vulgarised by the industry of Schack and interpreted by the genius of Valera, are not merely incomprehensible to us here and now; they were enigmas to most contemporary Arabs, who were necessarily ignorant of what was, to all purposes, a dead language—the elaborate technical vocabulary of Arabic verse. If their own countrymen failed to understand these poets, it would be surprising had their stilted artifice filtered into Castilian. It is unscientific, and almost unreasonable, to assume that what baffles the greatest Arabists of to-day was plain to a wandering mummer a thousand, or even six hundred, years ago. There is, however, a widespread belief that the metrical form of the Castilian *romance* (a simple lyrico-narrative poem in octosyllabic assonants) derives from Arabic models. This theory is as untenable as that which attributed Provençal rhythms to Arab singers. No less erroneous is the idea that the entire assonantic

system is an Arab invention. Not only are assonants common to all Romance languages; they exist in Latin hymns composed centuries before Muhammad's birth, and therefore long before any Arab reached Europe. It is significant that no Arabist believes the legend of the "Arab influence"; for Arabists are not more given than other specialists to belittling the importance of their subject.

In sober truth, this Arab myth is but a bad dream of yesterday, a nightmare following upon an undigested perusal of the *Thousand and One Nights*. Thanks to Galland, Cardonne, and Herbelot, the notion became general that the Arabs were the great creative force of fiction. To father Spanish *romances* and Provençal *trobas* upon them is a mere freak of fancy. The tacit basis of this theory is that the Spaniards took a rare interest in the intellectual side of Arab life; but the assumption is not justified by evidence. Save in a casual passage, as that in the *Crónica General* on the capture of Valencia, the Castilian historians steadily ignore their Arab rivals. On the other hand, there is a class of *romances fronterizos* (border ballads), such as that on the loss of Alhama, which is based on