

HISTORY OF A BARBER OF MIGUEL ESTEVAN.

I was born in the town of Manzanares in Sa Mancha. My father was porter to the Dominican Convent there, and my mother was laundress in the house of the Duque de San Carlos, who owned them, and, for anything I know to the contrary, still owns all the town of Manzanares, and the neighbouring vineyards. As for me, I led the merriest of lives till I was fourteen years of age. Idolized by both my parents, I spent my time about equally in the kitchen of the Duke, and of the Dominicans. In the one, I tasted the most savoury stews, and in the other the most delicious fruits; and nothing was farther from my thoughts than to leave so agreeable a mode of life, when one day my father called me to him, and said, "Lazaro, it is time that thou shouldst think of bettering thy fortune!" For my part, I felt no inclination towards bettering my condition, which appeared to me the most agreeable in the world; ditto thought my mother; but my father's picture of my future prospects was so flattering, that even I was anxious to commence my new mode of life. The opening was this:—A certain stranger, who lately died in the house of the curate of San Salvador, in Manzanares, had left to the church money for eight thousand masses to get his soul out of purgatory; and the curate, willing to receive the legacy without the condition of saying a mass every day for twenty-two years, resolved to apply to the Archbishop of Toledo, as the head of the church, for permission to say eight, in place of eight thousand masses. The curate applied to the Dominicans to find a trusty messenger; they selected my father, and he delegated the mission to me.

"This other letter," said my father, "is for the Padre Cirillo, curate of San Pasqual; it recommends thee to his protection; he may take thee into his service, and who knows but that thou mayest, by and by, be transferred to the service of the Archbishop, whose stews are no doubt as far superior to those of the Duque de San Carlos as the melon you are eating is to a turnip?" My mouth watered for the Archbishop's stews, and I set out the same day with an honest muleteer, who was charged with wine for some of the canons; on the second evening we entered Toledo; and scarcely allowing myself time for dispatching part of the puchero, which the muleteer generally divided with me, I enquired the way to the Curate Cirillo.

"Thou shalt enter my service," said the cura, when he had read the letter. I fancied I scented the savour of the Archbishop's kitchen.

My duties were simple—to sweep the church, and clean the ornaments used at mass; all the rest of my time was at my own disposal; but the reverend curate, who fed upon dainties every day, shared them only with his housekeeper; and, far from finding myself any nearer the Archbishop's stews, I was only permitted to smell those of the cura. My allowance was a small loaf of bread, and a

string of onions every four days, with a scanty puchero on Sunday ; and the cura would say, "Lazaro, you rogue, thou livest better than the pope."

But hunger sharpens the wits : I set my ingenuity to work, and speedily discovered a method of bettering my fare. All my master's provisions were kept in a closet—hunger devised a means of opening the door ; but I resolved that the theft should lie at another door than mine ; and every night I nibbled round my master's bread and cheese and bacon, so the rats and mice got all the blame, and I secured a double portion ; for the cura never failed to pare off the nibbled parts, and hand them to me, with "Lazaro, you rogue, eat, rats are clean things."

One day, after I had been employed in cleaning the ornaments on the major altar in the church, I stole on tiptoe into the sacristy ;—God forgive me for my intention—a slice of salted cod at breakfast had made me thirsty, and the sacramental cup I knew was brimful. I had scarcely entered the sacristy when I heard the footsteps of the cura pass through the church, and I had only time to hide myself under the petticoats of the Virgin of St. Pilar, when my master entered, accompanied by a pilgrim, who, after the door had been shut, produced a small wooden box, which he opened, and put into my master's hand.

"You perceive," said he, "that it is withered as the ear of an antediluvian ass ; it would deceive the very devil."

"Hush !" said the cura ; "recollect where you are ?" at the same time glancing towards the Virgin of St. Pilar, whose dress slightly moved, and crossing himself—"it is not necessary to deceive the devil, if it but deceive the superior of the Carthusian Convent."

"How much am I to get for it ?" said the pretended pilgrim.

"That must depend upon the value the superior puts upon it ; put up the ass's ear, and we will go to the convent ; surely an ear of the ass that made the triumphal entry into Jerusalem, must be worth half the convent treasury !"

He turned towards the virgin, as was his usual custom on leaving the sacristy, made his genuflection, and crossed himself.

Whether it was the ludicrous contrast between my master's face, when, from habit, he paid his respects to the virgin, and the smile and rogueish wink with which he received the box from the pilgrim, that roused my risible faculties, I am not able to tell ;—I burst into a fit of laughter. Master trembled from head to foot, and crossed himself as fast as thumb could move,—but common sense soon dispelled superstition ; for, if the virgin had thought fit to shew her displeasure, by laughing, the laughter would certainly not have proceeded from under her petticoats. In short, the cura discovered all ; and dragging me from my hiding place, and telling me to remain in the sacristy till he returned, he went out and locked the door.

I expected nothing else when my master returned, than an unmerciful beating ; I was, therefore, greatly surprised when, again

entering the sacristy, he said, "Lazara, thou art an ingenious as well as gluttonous youngster, for thou not only makest the rats and mice hide thy delinquencies, but even the petticoats of the Virgin of St. Pilar cover both thee and them; thou hast heard what passed between me and the pilgrim?" "I heard," said I, "and saw"—— "No matter what thou sawest," interrupted he, "I may have occasion for thy services; be discreet and secret; henceforth thou shalt dine at my table every day!" So saying, he walked out of the sacristy. This was the most agreeable change; the cura's stews, though not equal to those of the Duque de San Carlos, were delicious to one who had been obliged to nibble like mice for six months. My master loaded me with kindness, and one day, when we were in the sacristy, made me his confidant. "The monks of the Carthusian Convent," said he, "are collecting relics; the superior '*tiene mas dinero qui ingenio*' has more money than brains, and we who are poorer, diminish his treasury and stock his relicary. Harkee, Lazaro," said he, "the fool is not satisfied yet; thou art not wanting in art—mine is nigh exhausted; the ass's ear was a last effort, and proved a hit; but if thou canst think of anything new, half the profits shall descend into thy pockets."

I set my brains to work forthwith. One day, passing through one of the streets, I saw a cock standing on the wall of the Franciscan Convent garden;—a happy thought struck me. When it was dark, I stole from my master's house, and making my way to the garden of the convent, I surprised the cock in the henroost; and the next day, finding myself alone with my master, I produced the cock's tongue, and said it might be the tongue of the cock that crew to St. Peter.

"Tis too fresh and red," said the cura. "Put it in the stew-pan," said I; "'twill frizzle as dry as if it had not crowed for a century." The cura was satisfied with the excellence of my contrivance—the experiment succeeded to admiration. The cura found a half-starved wretch to personate a pilgrim from Judea, and carry the relic to the convent. All this day my master treated me as a canon; his words slipped out like oil; and so savoury was his stew, that it might have been prepared in the Archbishop's kitchen, and the most delicate morsels were put into my plate. "Lazara," said the cura, "thou art a promising young fellow; and thy ingenuity will fill thy pockets. As for thy first essay, thou art not to blame for the avarice of the superior of the Carthusians, who has valued the relic less high than we expected; next time we'll make a better bargain. Here is thy share, Lazaro," putting four duros* into my hand, and closing my fingers fast upon them; "thou never possessed so much money in all thy life before!" I had sense enough to submit to this trick, and appear delighted, for just at that moment, casting my eye towards the corridors, I perceived the messenger who had been sent to the Carthusian Convent, hastening

* A duro is worth rather more than five francs French.

towards our gate, and evidently concealing something bulky under his habit. Feigning some sudden cause for absenting myself, I invented an excuse to the cura, whose eyes seemed as if they were already beginning to acknowledge the power of a suspect; I hastened to receive the pilgrim. "Friend," said I, "my master, who is asleep, enjoined me that if you should return before he awoke, I might receive what you brought, and give you one-tenth part as your recompense." He was rejoiced at receiving a sum so much larger than he expected, and put into my hand a purse containing 1,200 reales of gold.* I gave him one-tenth, and then addressed him thus:—"Friend pilgrim, of all the money thou hast given me in this purse, I do not intend one single piesta shall ever enter my master's pocket. Now, either you or I must leave Toledo, and it depends upon thyself, whether thou remainest in Toledo to be hanged, or leave it with something added to what thou hast already got; here are four pieces of eight for thee. *Va te con Deos* (go in the name of God,) and so saying, I shut the convent gate and returned to my master, whom I found, as I thought, asleep. I hastened to my garret, bolted the door, and spread out the money before me; while I was contemplating my riches, the door was attempted,—but was too firm—when I heard the key turned on the outside. After the key turned in the lock, I could hear some one step lightly away. This person I knew could be no other than my master. Then I sat on the floor, hour after hour, till dark; and the cura took care to have a more savoury stew than usual for supper, that the scent of it might rise to my garret; at length, hungry and exhausted, I fell asleep, and dreamed of ragouts and rich sauces. I awoke at day-light, and sat till dinner, when I heard my master ascend the stairs; he stopped at my door, and called me. "Master!" said I. "Listen to me, Lazaro," said he, "I'll starve thee to death, as sure as thy name is Lazaro; I'll have thee dried when thou art dead, and sell thy carcass to the Carthusians as a relic; but if thou wilt push the pieces of money one by one below the door, and if, when I reckon on them, I find thou hast fairly accounted to me, thou shalt dine upon the most savoury stew that ever descended into thy stomach." I heard him leave the door, and in a few minutes he returned. "Now, Lazaro," said he, "I have brought thy dinner; here is beef, and pork, and rich gravy, and garbonzos, and bread. I will make this agreement, I will give thee it in spoonfuls, underneath the door; and for every spoonful thou shalt pass me one piece of the money." At the same instant, I saw the spoon filled with steaming stew, pushed towards me. "This first spoonful thou shalt have for nothing," said Cirillo, but if thou wouldst have a second, it must be paid for." The temptation was not to be resisted; one scanty spoonful after another, descended into my stomach, and an equal number of pieces into the cura's pocket; and so outrageous was my appetite, that I was soon

* £120 sterling.

eased of the greater part of my treasure; in fact, so long as a piece remained, there was a bait ready to tempt it from me; and when not one duro was left, "Mr. Cura," said I, "we are now quits—you have filled my stomach, I have filled your pockets; now pray unfasten the door?" "Lazaro," said he, "my boy, I never intended to injure or defraud thee; I did but keep back part of thy share till thou shouldst have attained a riper age; but, if thou wilt have it now, here are ten duros for thee! So let us forget the past, and exercise our wits at the expense of the Carthusian Convent;" at the same time my master undid the door, put ten pieces into my hand, and conducted me down stairs, where, seeing which way his interest lay, he loaded me with kindness. But I had discovered that I should never grow rich under the roof of Cirillo; and seeing no reason for doubting, that if my invention could fill his pocket, it might do the same good office for my own pocket, I resolved to leave his service; so I took advantage of my master's siesta, and carrying nothing more with me than what belonged to me, I sallied into the street.

It so happened that this day chanced to be the feast of the Immaculate Conception; and when I descended into the street, the procession was just issuing from the cathedral. It chanced also that the person who carried the image was short, and as he ran along, the people shouted and cried, "checo" (little fellow.) I was among the tallest of the crowd, and a Franciscan, who saw how awkwardly the miracle was managed, snatched the image from the little man, who was standing on tiptoe, and yet, with all his might and all his stretching, was unable to touch the spring of the beast, and putting it into my hands, told me to show it no mercy, and I should be rewarded with a good supper. So well did I perform my duty, that when the procession was over, the Franciscan took me to the convent, and after having given me as much as I could eat, he carried me to the superior, telling his reverence that I was a clever youth, and might be serviceable, and might be made even to fill the place that was vacant at the time. "Please, your reverence," said I, "what are the duties, and what is the office for which you design me? for my art is small, and my knowledge is still smaller."

"The office," replied the friar, "is that of barber to the convent!" "If the emoluments be considerable," said I, "I willingly accept it, for, judging by the length of your reverences beards, I should take it to be the next thing to a sinecure; and I shall, no doubt, have time to learn the art, before I be required to practice it." "Tis not so much of a sinecure," said the superior, "as it may seem to you; but, if thou canst be contented to spend all thy days within the convent, the office is thine; thou shalt have good food, and sufficient wages besides; these can be of no use to thy body, because thou shalt have all that it requires within the convent, and, therefore, thy wages will be best laid out in the purchase of masses for thy soul!" I had no great desire to live always in a convent, and as for the wages, I saw that it would be only taking with one hand

and giving with the other; but trusting to my ingenuity to terminate my engagement when I became weary of it, and knowing that the Franciscans kept a good table, I accepted the conditions. The friar who had conducted me to the convent, now took charge of me, and leading me to the cloisters, where I walked by his side, "Lazaro," said he, "for such I think you told me your name was, I will explain to thee the duties of thy new office; the beard which thou seest that I wear, is not a real beard; and neither are those of my brethren. When we go out of the convent, or into the church to celebrate our services, where we may be seen by the people, we are bearded; but at meals, and other inconvenient times, we throw these incumbrances aside; twice a week, therefore, thou wilt have seventy-five real beards to shave, and seventy-five false beards to put into order; thou shalt begin with the novices, who can afford to lose some blood, and will be all the better for it." And so I found myself barber of the Franciscan Convent. Well may I bless the day that led me there; otherwise I should never have known the adventure of the renowned Don Quixote, nor have ever followed the calling of my ancestors in the village of Miguel Estevan.

I observed that no one was so studious as the friar who had brought me to the convent: a book was never out of his hand. There was only one occasion upon which he ever interrupted his studies, and that was when his chin was under my management; but one day so deeply engaged was he (as I thought) with his devotions, that he placed the book upon his knee, and with downcast eyes continued to read, while I performed my duties; and, judge of my surprise,—nay, even of my affright, when, just as I was putting the last polish upon his chin, the friar burst into the most immoderate fit of laughter ever heard within the walls of a convent; and so ungovernable was his mirth, that even the sight of his own blood appeared rather to increase than diminish his risibility. "In the name of God, Reverend Father, what has befallen thee?" "Canst read?" said he, "then read there;" and he put into my hands the book which had fallen. That moment opened to me the treasure of knowledge and delight that is contained in the work of Cervantes.

WRITTEN ON THE TIBER.

Say classic river, whose brown waters glide
 By tow'ring temples and through flowry mead;
 Why throbs my heart, as lingering at thy side,
 I feel communion only with the dead?
 Above thy eternal margin proudly shines
 The peerless Colosseum high in air!
 And Egeria's grot, half hid by vines
 Gleams like the eye of beauty 'neath her hair,
 And O! bright Vesta's temple! what a soul
 Of beauty, poetry and love is thine!
 Thy fire no longer burns, but thy controul
 Still warmly breathes on such deep hearts as mine.—ALCEST.

ON THE THEATRICAL ADDRESSES FOR THE ROYAL CITY THEATRE.

THERE is no better characteristic of a people than their places of public amusement, indeed the remains of ancient theatres present even at this day the most magnificent monuments left of the former grandeur of the people who erected them. We consider the opening of another theatre in Sydney, at the present time, an event of much interest—to the philosopher, perhaps more even than to either the politician or the poet. But we can follow the ancients no further in alluding to them with reference to the City Theatre, or the addresses, this theatre being one of private speculation only. It is, however, consolation to find that an additional theatre has been required—and that it is likely to be a good speculation even in these times. Pass we on to consider the subject philosophically, and then to estimate critically the productions to which it has already given birth.

In new countries, we mean at the commencement of new communities of civilized people, if it be indeed fair to reason thus, on this peculiar colony, there is a melancholy want of the poetry and music of life, perhaps owing to the newness of locality, or the want of leisure, or both. Hence too, perhaps that want of enthusiasm, formerly remarked in the Americans, and of national song—of all the romance, in short, associated with national traditions. *Poeta nascitur non fit*. The poet has to be born, who is still to clothe in expressive language—the pastoral, the heroic, or the amatory fascinations of the newly adopted land. He is not only still to be born himself, but the traditions; the very incidents of romance are still in the womb of time, and, therefore our intellectual resources can only be drawn from the literature of the mother country. We consider the theatre as being, in some sort, the intellectual warehouse for retailing the most fascinating and attractive delicacies, for the gratification and refreshment of the popular mind. In short, a well-regulated theatre is to our nature mentally what a tavern, club-house, or restaurant, is physically; for it amuses and refreshes the care-worn mind, fills the empty one; nay, more than does the tavern, the stage corrects the vicious mind, by the exhibition of salutary example and morals therefrom deduced, by reflections easiest made when the mind is amused. The theatre serves to feed—or even awaken that enthusiasm which is necessary to fix the public mind in a good cause, or to render it susceptible of the influence of oratory on suitable occasions.

In ancient times (we *must* revert to them,) the mental and physical properties of man were both developed in their theatres, and brought in close connection. The *gymnasium* served to establish the important truth, that the soundest mental faculties were derived from the soundest physical powers, *mens saná in corpore sano*—and there

can be no doubt that the powers of mind and body depend very much on each other. And so of states—and so we learn from their history. How interesting then is the subject now before us, in the commencement of this country's history! We shall begin at the beginning, and, fortunately, we have not far to go—nevertheless nearly half-a-century has elapsed since a theatrical address was first submitted to a Sydney audience, as stated by Barrington. This was on the 16th January, 1796, when a prologue to a play performed by convicts, was spoken. This address, (which appeared lately in a daily journal,) we consider one of the most characteristic relics of that period of this colony's history. In rhyme, not less than in wit, it is superior to any of those recently published, whether as accepted or rejected; and we really entertain doubts whether that address, and Lord Byron's Drury-lane address, are not the two best productions of the kind ever written. For both of these, the alpha and the omega of addresses, perhaps, the histrionic world is indebted to Mother Drury. Both will live in the history or literature of the respective countries, which is more than we will venture to predict for those which have been just brought before the public—and yet these are from the pens of the "Australian Literati," in a population of 130,000 souls, or twenty times the number of the clever old convict colony of 1796. *O tempora! O mores!* that we cannot now produce a bit of rhyme sufficiently piquant and poetical to serve still like the former, as a bead in the rosary of our history.

The prize address on the occasion of opening the Royal City Theatre, which was adopted on "the adjudication of a committee of gentlemen, whose names could not but inspire general satisfaction," according to the words of an advertisement, (but which names have not yet appeared for that purpose,) is written in the measure of "Colman's Broad Grins," and was spoken by a tragedian! It consists of questions whether the audience are "comfortably seated"—and half-a-dozen others, respecting which they are told "they're right!" but on which question or what point does not appear;—a tirade against monkeys, dogs, *horses*, scaramouches, mountebanks, but nothing at all of the poetic, the historical, or the local;—on the contrary, this address is so general that it might suit the opening of any small "theatre," provided it had "galleries," which the Royal City Theatre, of Sydney, unfortunately for the metre, has not.

Another address commences with the old song of "Advance Australia," and ends with the comfortable conclusion, that "England will say *Australia does advance*:" towards England, we must presume—that is downwards through the centre of the earth—where some geologists say indeed she has been going for ages past.

After all, these "addresses" must be taken as "holding the mirror up to nature," as shewing—

—"The very body of the time;
Its form and pressure."

One other address concludes in words rather expressive of our present helpless state, as colonists—

—————“ Well, then my task is o'er;—
Ladies and Gentlemen,—*thank you, we can no more.*”

But we question whether some *mask* had not been desirable in these times—were it but to puff the colony a little by placing it in an interesting light to our friends in England. We are still ignorant as to the rule by which the unexceptionable adjudicating committee have been guided, in awarding the prize. If only to ask the audience if their “seats were comfortable;” in rhyme was the object, surely the call to the “Australian Literati” was no more necessary than that they should be requested to compete in rhyme, on the merits of Patent Blacking, Lord's Cloths, or Rankin's Cheese.

The following, however, is the one which we consider best, both in poetry and composition, and possessing considerable dramatic effect and fire:—

When Carthage' Queen on Afric's Northern shore
Her City founded whose first columns bore
The Drama's lofty pile *—that state arose
Arm'd like Minerva; strong to friends and foes:
Would you, my friends! to this new state apply
The poet's tale of Dido's colony?
Begin as men, not children, to advance
In all that makes men rational at once!
Not in a scratching way, but down with rocks!
Leave no old stumps, but lay the solid blocks
And be as British as your herds and flocks.

And what were Britons who could leave behind
Their stage and Shakspeare! whose immortal mind
Warms the historic Muse, and still inspires
The sons to emulate adventurous sires.
Bold hearts, strong arms, unless the Muse inspire,
Will still fall short,—mere fuel without the fire—
One generous flame must animate the whole
And for a purpose vast, nerve each enthusiast soul.
The Comic Muse, to nature ever true,
Even in her smiles some moral holds to view;
Whether great Brinsley's wit our woes beguile,
Or the broad farce excite a laugh the while—
Ascetics now must own the Drama's power
To teach wise lessons in an idle hour;
Nor longer practice that hypocrisy
That damns the Stage, yet cannot tell for why!
The Poet's witchery—we but invest
With light and music—Genius gives the rest—
Genius! that from their consecrated shroud
Of ages past, can call the sceptre crowd—
Or pour o'er ocean vast a living stream—
The seeds of Nations—on the wings of Steam!

*————— *hic alta theatris*

Fundamenta locunt alii, immanesque columnas
Rupibus excidunt, scenis decora alta futuris.—*Æn.* lib. I.

PLEASE NOTE

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