ART. IX.—1. *Gomez Arias; or the Moors of Alpujarras.* 3 Volumes. Hurst. 1828.

2. *The Castilian.* A Spanish Tale. 3 Volumes. Colburn. 1829.

SPAIN is generally considered to be the land of romance. The peculiarities of the Spanish character, the high-toned enthusiasm, the fervent devotion, the chivalrous disposition, even of the lowest classes, afford very varied topics of inquiry for the philosopher, and an extensive field for the excursions of the poet and the novelist. True it is, that the national features of that people have undergone very considerable alteration in these later times, yet much of their original character remains unchanged. In high and middle life, the duenna and the escudero have totally disappeared—the Moorish blind and the grated window have been exchanged for the open balcony, where the fair inhabitant of a warm climate displays her charms more frequently and freely than our northern habits would seem to warrant—and the serenades of a gallant have sunk into silence since the doors of the drawing-room were thrown open for his admission. In the humble ranks of society, however, the national manners are still preserved; and the guitar is even now often heard breaking the silence of the night—while the cloak serves to conceal the deadly weapon, which, under the excitement of fierce passions, and without the restraint of an efficient police, proves but too often a deadly instrument by which the enemy or the rival may be removed. But if the Spaniards, even of the present day, possess some claim to the attention of the lover of the romantic, far more attractive are the claims of their less civilized ancestors, and elevated is the position they are entitled to occupy in that modern and favourite department of literary composition, the historical novel. The ancient history of Spain, in addition to all the incidents distinguishing the feudal ages, abounds with events of no common character—an unremitting intestine war raging in the bosom of the country, through many centuries, between two nations entirely dissimilar in their religion, political institutions, manners, and habits; yet by the vicissitudes of the contest, constantly mixing and communicating to each other many of their peculiarities; religious animosity, on the one hand, embittered by political hatred, and, on the other, softened by daily intercourse, these circumstances combine to impart a strong and peculiar nationality to the people, among whom the traces both of their Gothic and their Oriental origin may be distinctly recognized, though at the same time they are found not inharmoniously blended. Prodigies and miracles are not wanting to heighten the colouring of this picture of contrasts. Saints are seen

charging at the head of the Christian cavalry, bloody battles are fought, where one and two hundred thousand men fall on one side, and but twenty or thirty on the other—heroes of gigantic dimensions arise, by whom even the preux of Charlemagne are thrown into the shade—Don Pelayo, Bernardo del Carpio, the Cid, and many more of inferior renown, though of equal prowess, occupy prominent places in the grand display. Each of these fabulous or half-fabulous personages would be a fit subject for a romantic poem; though we doubt whether the little we know of them, and the scanty materials we possess respecting the age when they lived, or are supposed to have lived, would be sufficient to furnish materials for an historical novel, which should bring home a conviction of their identity. If we come down to more recent periods, when the scene, though no less splendid, is illumined by glimmerings of historical light, subjects will be found of great interest if properly treated. Amongst others, we may mention San Fernando, a conqueror and a legislator, the contemporary of St. Louis, equal to him as a warrior and a knight, and much his superior in wisdom; Alphonso the sage, as remarkable for his learning, as for his errors and misfortunes; Pedro the Cruel, and his boisterous times, during which, to borrow the happy phraseology of Quintana, the men of Castile seemed to possess arms only to destroy, and hearts only to hate: the reign of Don Juan II, alike distinguished by the taste for literature prevailing in his court, and by the factious spirit of his nobility; the brilliant epoch of Fernando and Isabella, when Granada was conquered, the whole of Spain united under one sway, a new world discovered, the Inquisition established, and the Spanish monarchy moulded into the form which it preserved during the two succeeding centuries; the war of the Comunidades under Charles V, and the revolt of the Moriscoes of Granada under Philip II, an occurrence to which we are indebted for one of the finest odes, and one of the best historical compositions in the Spanish language. We marvel that sir Walter Scott has not thought of venturing upon so rich a ground. That he has a smattering of Spanish scholarship may be deduced from the circumstance of there being now and then some scraps of that language thrown into his works. The Vision of Don Rodrigo, though not one of his best poetical effusions, shows that he once looked towards the Peninsula. We should like to see him upon Spanish territory, in his character of a novelist. His excursion to France was not infelicitous. Let him cross the Pyrenees, and let his genius brood upon the vicissitudes of Spanish history. The scented breeze of the Guadalquivir will, we venture to predict, recruit his wearied spirits, and infuse into his mind the

vividness and the elasticity which distinguished the most brilliant period of his writings.

A Spaniard, evidently one of the many disciples of the Scotch novelist, has undertaken to fill the vacuum which we have pointed out, by presenting us with novels upon subjects drawn from the chronicles of his country. Don Telesforo de Trueba y Cosio (we love, with the Vicar of Wakefield, to give the whole name) has had a difficult task to perform: yet some circumstances were highly in his favour. The subject of his works was both novel and attractive—the country and manners he professed to describe were not yet familiar to the English reader—vague associations of chivalry and heroism were connected with the very name of Spain—while, as a foreigner, and especially a Spaniard, he was sure of a sympathising auditory among the people of this country. He found from the same circumstance a decent apology for the defects of his English style. But he trod upon ground where many had stumbled, and but one (we mean Mr. Cooper) partially succeeded; he had to deal with a public become more fastidious, and somewhat satiated, with works of this class; habituated to the manner of one popular author, and fond even of his faults. The materials which our author possessed respecting the men and the things he intended to describe were not very numerous, and he had to write in a language not his own, a great difficulty to all authors, but one of particular magnitude to the novelist and to the dramatist: yet he has undoubtedly succeeded in exciting the attention of the public. His two novels have been eagerly read, and, as appears to us, very indulgently judged. After making a due allowance for the liberality which he has experienced from the critical department of the press, still something remains of real, though not of very distinguished, merit.

The subject of his first work (Gomez Arias) does not possess any general interest. There is a Spanish play upon it from the pen of Calderon, marked by all the peculiarities of that author, and of the Spanish writers in general; some parts of it are exceedingly touching, others disgustingly affected. The hero himself is represented as a consummate villain, very ill calculated to impress us with a high idea of a proud Castilian knight. The connection of the plot with a rebellion of the Moors of Granada against their merciless persecutors, for such their Christian masters were, seemed to point out a very obvious course to render a novel upon such a subject, not only interesting as a popular story, but characteristic of the age and country with which it was associated. How far Gomez Arias is to be thought deserving of the title which it claims, will appear from a summary review of its principal incidents.

The scene opens in Granada, where Isabel of Castile, a woman so illustrious in history, is represented as holding her court. Don Alonso de Aguilar, the brother of the celebrated Gonzalvo de Cordova, afterwards called the Great Captain, and one of the first lords in that court, has betrothed his daughter Leonor to Don Lope Gomez Arias, an accomplished and high-born knight, but an unprincipled courtier, and a profligate libertine. The lady had another suitor, Don Rodrigo de Cespedes, upon whom Don Lope has inflicted a severe wound, in a quarrel growing out of their competition for the hand of the disdainful beauty. This circumstance keeps Gomez Arias from the court, though the favourable reports of the wounded knight's state of health lead to a hope that his absence will not last long. At this time, information reaches Granada of a general revolt of the Moors in the mountains of Alpujarra, and Don Alonso is appointed to the command of the forces destined to put down the rebellion. A tournament is celebrated, which is somewhat heavily described and over-encumbered with chivalric mottoes and common-places. Don Lope, as was to be expected, attends *incognito*, and wins the prize; but he withdraws unrecognised, except by his mistress. A second pageant takes place, of a different sort, and of a character peculiar to the Spaniards, where Don Lope does not appear, and the prize is carried by young Don Antonio de Leyva, a knight not altogether unacceptable to Leonor, who, in the vulgar phrase, has discovered the advantages of having two strings to her bow. As Gomez Arias has thought it proper to abscond, and Leyva stood next to him on the first day, and above all the rest on the second, the triumph is awarded to him by the queen, who presents him with a portrait hanging from a chain which she herself throws round his neck. This gift is to be considered as a gage of Isabel's royal word, to grant any boon the wearer may think proper to demand. The games being over, Don Alonso departs upon his military expedition. The scene is shifted, and we are introduced to Don Lope Gomez Arias and his valet Roque, a cowardly, talkative, impudent personage, in whom we recognise the Gracioso of the Spanish plays. Their conversation turns upon the master's libertinism, and the servant presumes to moralise and give advice; he is, in consequence, beaten by his master. From their conversation, we learn that the principal reason of Don Lope's concealment is, his being engaged in a love intrigue with young Theodora de Monteblanco, the daughter of Don Manual de Monteblanco, an old gentleman living in retirement in some small town. This young damsel, a sort of

boarding-school lady, loves Gomez Arias to distraction, and expects that he will espouse her, an event, of which, as we have seen, there is not the least probability; for though Don Lope is rather fond of the girl, his ambition aims at higher objects. After many uninteresting incidents, Don Lope prevails upon the girl to run away with him, and leaves her in the woods while asleep, to shift for herself. A party of the rebel Moors come to the spot, and seize upon the forlorn beauty. The scene is again changed, and we are carried into the presence of Cañeri, one of the rebel chiefs, an indolent and vicious fellow, impatient of his brief authority, to which his birth alone has given him a title. Near him is a Christian renegade, called Bermudo, or Alagraf, one of the principal actors in this novel, who, some time before, had been grievously wronged by Gomez Arias; this unprincipled man having seduced Bermudo's mistress, and caused her death by brutal treatment. Upon the character of this renegade, considerable labour has been bestowed. He is a sort of Zanga, ferocious and vindictive, ranting and raving, in short, a perfect villainous bravado; but though a copy of a thousand originals, he is well drawn upon the whole. Before these gentlemen the captive beauty is brought; her attractions produce such an effect upon Cañeri the sensualist, as might be anticipated; and the Moor, after trying every possible expedient to render himself amiable in her eyes, decides upon offering her violence, when he is sudddenly stopped by the unexpected arrival of a stranger who finds his way into his tent. This visitor proves to be El Feri de Benastepar, the hero of the Moorish insurgents, and the first amongst their chiefs. While he is reproving Cañeri, who seems to acknowledge his superiority, they hear the sound to arms, find themselves to have been surprised, and are completely defeated by Don Alonso de Aguilar. The wandering Theodora is left behind by the fugitive Moors, and she falls into the hands of the Christian general, who takes her to his own house in Granada, there to live with his daughter till means are found to restore her to her aged father. Thus Gomez Arias and Theodora meet at the house of Aguilar just at the moment when the nuptials of the former are to be celebrated. The unfortunate Theodora is soon acquainted with this circumstance, and while her seducer is still ignorant of her presence, she steals unperceived into his bed-room, raises her hand to stab him to the heart, drops the dagger, and hesitates till Gomez Arias awakes. An altercation ensues, and as he fears a disclosure by which his ambitious projects would undoubtedly be baffled, he promises to make amends for his

past misconduct; she is easily induced to trust him, and an elopement is soon planned for the next day. Don Lope leaves her, and is sorely puzzled to devise some means to extricate himself from his very embarrassing situation. To delay his marriage with Leonor, which ought to take place on that very day, is all important, and to this end he makes use of a very clumsy expedient. The haughty coldness with which his proposals are met by Aguilar and his daughter, is very well described. As yet, nothing has been done, because Gomez Arias finds no practicable means to get rid of Theodora. While he is discussing this subject with his tiresome servant, a Moor intrudes himself upon them, and suggests a plan to dispose of the young lady, by delivering her into the hands of a powerful Moorish nobleman who is struck with her charms. This scene is one of the best in Gomez Arias, though a severe critic might well object to the facility with which the crafty courtier admits a perfect stranger to a knowledge of his most important secret. A pledge is asked by the Moor—a valuable ring which the queen gave to Don Lope—and he, after some resistance, consents to deliver it. The deed of horror is soon after performed, and Theodora falls into the hands of Cañeri, and the renegade, who, as our readers must have guessed, is the intruding Moor. The chapter in which this incident is related, is forcibly written. Just after Don Lope concludes his odious bargain, he is informed of a circumstance which strikes him with terror; the Moor to whom he has given up Theodora, is Cañeri, the rebel chief, and death is the punishment lately denounced against all those who should have the least intercourse with him. Gomez Arias's fearful anticipations are, however, soon dispelled as he approaches Granada, and visions of future grandeur begin to dance in his eyes. But no sooner has he entered the house of Aguilar, than he finds the scene changed. Suspicion attaches to him, which the sudden disappearance of Theodora has given rise to. The haughty Leonor is resolved to put off the nuptials for a whole month; her suitor remonstrates in vain, he finds he must submit, and he resigns himself to his fate. Meanwhile, tidings arrive of a new rebellion of the Moors: El Feri de Benastepar conquered, and supposed to have been slain by Don Alonso, makes his appearance in Sierra Bermeja. Aguilar marches against him, and Don Lope has a separate command in the expedition. During this time, Theodora has been liberated by the mysterious renegade, and conducted to the house of her father, who, after a severe reprimand, and upon full consideration of all the circumstances of her case, is determined to seek redress from the queen. While he journeys to Gra-

nada, events of great importance occur. Don Alonso falls by the hands of El Feri in an engagement, very well told by the author, who had before him the simple and affecting narration of this event given by Don Diego de Mendoza, in his history of the rebellion of the Moriscoes. Don Lope, on his side, retrieves the honour of the Christian arms, by defeating the rebels in many encounters, so that the victorious Feri is at last deserted and driven from Spain—Cañeri killed in a mutiny of his own soldiers—and the rebellion quelled. When he enters Granada as a conqueror, amidst the shouts of the surrounding multitudes, he finds old Monteblanco and his daughter in the presence of the queen; who, after listening to their complaints, decides that Don Lope should marry Theodora without delay. Gomez Arias sullenly assents, and the inauspicious ceremony is performed. But he is soon placed in a situation of extreme peril, for at this moment the renegade comes forward to impeach him of treason, as having had intercourse with the rebels. His guilt is brought home to him by the evidence of the ring; his trial follows, and he is condemned to die the death of a traitor. His deportment during his trial, and after his condemnation, is well described. Vain are the intreaties of his wife to obtain a pardon from the offended queen; and Gomez Arias would have undergone the fate which he so richly deserved, were it not for the timely assistance of Don Antonio de Leyva. This knight, as has been related, is in possession of a precious gift of the queen, by presenting which, his demands should be granted. He accordingly waits upon Theodora, into whose hands he deposits the valuable trinket; she flies—obtains access to the queen, returns with a free pardon, and reaches the place of execution just at the moment when her guilty husband is about to ascend the fatal steps. They are both conducted before the queen, attended by an immense crowd, and by the friars who in Spain are wont to attend the culprits to the scaffold. When Gomez Arias is thanking his royal mistress for her mercy, and showing some symptoms of returning love to his devoted bride, one of the friars advances and plunges a poinard into his bosom. This friar is the renegade, who, very improbably indeed, had found means to introduce himself to Gomez Arias under that disguise, to enjoy the pleasure of revenge in its fullest extent, by witnessing his execution and embittering the last moments of his life. No skill can subdue the effects of the wound—the dagger is poisoned — Gomez Arias dies — the renegade is put to death—Leonor is married to De Leyva—and Theodora returns to the house of her father, where she dies of a broken heart.

From the foregoing extract, it will be seen that the plot or story of the novel under our consideration, is not badly conceived—that it abounds in incident, and its component parts are brought together with skill and industry. But this, although a merit, is not one of a very superior order.

To the title of an historical novel, Gomez Arias can lay but a very inconsiderable claim. And yet the author had before him very splendid materials, had he known how to avail himself of them. There is something poetic and striking in the very name of Granada. The age of the Catholic king and his queen is a very remarkable era, and abounds with eminent characters, in the description of which the fancy of the poet and the learning of the erudite, the genius which creates and the judgment which selects, might have been displayed with advantage. Isabel, that lofty, ambitious, and talented woman, jealous of her husband's influence, and yet never acting in opposition to him; fond of uncontrolled power, though submitting her actions to the dictates of her ghostly advisers, might have been represented with great effect. Her husband, close and crafty, is a very dramatic character. Cardinal Ximenez, the meddling, fierce, and master-spirit, who flattered the pride of the Castilian nobility, kindled the flames of religious persecution, was the creator of a standing army, and an efficient police in Spain, ought to have been introduced in a representation of that court, where he at that time began to render himself conspicuous. The discoverer of the new world, Columbus, could, without violence, have been brought to enliven the scene. We dislike the clumsy contrivances, by which all the learning which the writer is master of, is thrown pellmell into his work. Still a book, pretending to be an historical novel, ought to give us a representation of the manners, of the personages of the era it means to describe. We do not think sir Walter Scott perfect in this respect, yet it would be downright absurdity to make a comparison between him and Señor Trueba. After reading Gomez Arias, we are not at all acquainted with the period to which it refers. The story might remain untouched, with all its good and bad qualities adhering to it, were the names of the actors to be changed, and the scene to be placed in other countries and times.

As a romance, and this may be properly supposed to be the title which belongs to this production, Gomez Arias is not destitute of merit. The plot is well linked together. In the portraiture of characters we find much to praise: that of Don Lope stands foremost; he is a scoundrel and a despicable one. Yet he possesses some dazzling qualities, which render him not an amiable,

but a dramatic personage. Bermudo is delineated with ability, and, on some occasions, with power, though often exaggerated. Cañeri is a happy conception, and so is Leonor de Aguilar. Of the comic characters we are less fond. Roque is frequently tedious; the duenna altogether intolerable. Peregil is a meaner sort of Roque. As for the host of knights, Christian and Moor, de Leyva, Cespedes, El Feri, and the rest, they are all alike, all vague and insipid.

In the pathetic parts of his novel, Señor Trueba has often succeeded, though he affords pretty frequent instances of vapid sentimentality, and conceited exaggeration. His descriptive powers are by no means considerable. He has no distinct idea of the objects he intends to describe, but he borrows words and phrases from other books. His castles, his mountains, his woods, his battles and tournaments, his men and women, have nothing to distinguish them, or stamp them with a particular physiognomy.

His attempts at wit and humour are very frequent, and for the most part, extremely infelicitous. In his explanations of the motives of the actions which he relates, Señor Trueba seems to intend to follow Fielding, but far, far indeed is the follower away from the leader.

Hitherto we have only spoken of Señor Trueba's first effort. His second is of a bolder cast. The Castilian is really an historical novel. The events which form the story are in themselves a very important and highly interesting part of Spanish history, and by the share which our Black Prince and the famous French warrior du Guesclin took in them, stand connected with the history of France and of England. The reign of Peter or Pedro *the Cruel*, is, indeed, one of the most dramatic periods in the annals of mankind. Never were the fierce passions of the feudal ages more energetically at work, or their effects more terribly displayed.

Respecting the character of Pedro great diversity of opinion has prevailed. By several, or almost all the Spanish historians, he has been stigmatized as a monster. The historical scepticism of Voltaire led him to doubt such exaggerated accounts, and we find accordingly, that in the chapter devoted to his reign, in the *Essai sur les Mœurs et l'Esprit des Nations;* that lively and keen-sighted writer has endeavoured to palliate the faults of the Castilian tyrant. Not contented with this, he made Pedro the subject of one of his worst tragedies, which is now totally forgotten. In Spain, apologists have not been wanting to Don Pedro, and Señor Trueba mentions some of them in his introductory chapters.

But a fact which deserves to be noticed is, that the poets of Old Spain have been in general more favourable to Peter the Cruel, than the historians. Tradition had probably handed down to them many of his good qualities, which the courtly chroniclers of the usurper, and their indiscriminating copyists had tried to obscure. We have in one of the Cancioneros an historical ballad, which begins by

"A los pies de Don Enrique,
Yace muerto el Rei Don Pedro,"

in which the arguments for and against both brothers respectively, are brought forward and canvassed, with a visible leaning towards the murdered king. The Spanish dramatists have taken the same side. Many are the Spanish plays, where Don Pedro is represented under the character of a brave and generous, though severe king; the haughty and cruel master of his nobles, but the protector of the humblest classes of his subjects. Amongst those dramas one entitled—"*Rey valiente y justiciero y Rico Hombre de Alcalá,*"* is worthy of particular attention. The Rico Hombre is a feudal tyrant, the oppressor of his vassals, and the undutiful subject of his lord the king. Don Pedro being informed of his misdeeds, visits him under a false name, and brings himself acquainted with his acts of violence, and his contempt of the royal authority. Returned to his palace, the king summons the proud nobleman, who, upon his attending, is very much surprised and vexed to find in the monarch his quondam guest *good Aguilera.* Don Pedro upbraids him with his transgressions and inflicts upon him a summary punishment, by knocking his head against the wall of the presence chamber with his own royal hands. Imprisonment ensues, the Rico Hombre is condemned, and in his anger he is heard to declare, that the king who so humbles him as a sovereign, would not dare to meet him as a man. The chivalrous disposition of Don Pedro cannot brook this taunt; he assumes a disguise—repairs to the prison—and sets his captive at liberty without being known by him; but before they part, he seeks to engage him in a quarrel. This is no difficult task with a man of so violent a temper. They dispute, draw their swords, fight in the dark, and the rebellious subject is conquered, disarmed, and overthrown by his unknown master. At this moment attendants rush into the place with lights, and upon their asking—*what is this?—The Rico Hombre de Alcalá,* (replies the monarch) *at the feet of king Don Pedro*"

The different point of view under which the actions of this

* The valiant and severe king, and the nobleman of Alcalá.

monarch appeared in the eyes of his subjects, may well account for this diversity of opinion. The unruly nobles could ill bear the yoke even of wholesome authority, while to the oppressed many, acts of despotism and tyranny, of which their own oppressors and tyrants were the victims, must have afforded a sort of compensation for their multiplied grievances. The epochs in the reign of *El Cruel* ought also to be distinguished. In his earlier years Pedro, though violent and rash, must be allowed to have possessed some virtues; but it would be preposterous to deny, that, in his latter times, his ferocious and vindictive temper, soured by misfortune, and provoked by rebellion, led him to acts of wanton and unjustifiable despotism. The age in which he lived was also fruitful in crimes. We have often expressed our disbelief of the virtues supposed to be characteristic of the age of chivalry. Had we not supported our incredulity by the most uncontrovertible evidence, the history of Castile under Pedro el Cruel, would bear us out in our assertion. Yet that was the golden period of knightly virtue. Now that "*the age of chivalry is gone,*" (a fact which, however it may be considered by some as a source of regret, and by others of congratulation, all seem disposed to admit;) no individual pretending to be looked upon as a gentleman, would speak or act as the proud knights of those times were not ashamed to do. The decency of our manners forbids us to employ the words with which Trastamara saluted his brother when he was preparing to murder him; or the no less coarse, though more just retort of Pedro to the bastard. No second in a modern duel would act as du Guesclin did between the royal brothers.

But let our opinion of Don Pedro be what it may, his character must stand confessed to be highly poetic. Both his good and bad points arose from violent and uncontrolled passions. As a lover, as a judge, as a warrior and as a king, he scorned the dictates of prudence, and set all restraint at defiance. He would have been a fit subject for the pen of lord Byron. Let us see what he is become under the hands of Señor Trueba.

Pedro el Cruel is not, however, the first personage in "The Castilian." This post of honour is held by his faithful and loyal follower Don Ferran de Castro, a Castilian knight, full of prowess and chivalrous qualities. He loves the fair Costanza daughter of Don Eyas de Vargas, a courtly nobleman, with some grains of pride in his composition, but fickle and time-serving, and, above all, determined to be upon good terms with the ruling powers, which under frequent changes of government is, after all, no easy matter. The beautiful Costanza has also

another suitor in the person of Don Alvar de Lara, a nobleman of Trastamara's party, whom the author intends to draw as a high-minded knight, though in the sequel he represents him as guilty of the meanest actions. The story commences at the moment when Castile is in open rebellion against Don Pedro, and Trastamara, attended by the French forces under du Guesclin, is in full advance upon Seville, then the metropolis of the kingdom of Castile. Don Ferran, after a parting interview with his mistress, repairs under disguise to a fisherman's hut upon the banks of the Guadalquivir where his master lies in concealment. The castle of Costanza's father is entered by some stragglers belonging to Trastamara's army whom Don Eyas de Vargas endeavours to restrain by fruitless professions of his zeal for the cause of their master. Upon this we are introduced to old Pimiento, an Escudero of the house of Vargas, one of the author's best efforts, though partaking strongly of the nature of a caricature. He is a loyal man, true to his king Don Pedro, zealous for the honour of the house to which he belongs, and highly indignant at his master's prevarication. His imprudent provocations excite the rage of the intruding soldiers, whose insults are carried to such lengths as to awake Don Eyas's dormant feelings of pride. The old knight gives vent to his resentment, a scuffle ensues, Costanza sees the swords of the invaders directed against her father's bosom, throws herself between them, and receives a wound which we imagined to be very desperate, though it is wholly forgotten by the author, so it may be taken for granted it was not so bad as we fancied. At the moment when Costanza falls, her admirer, Don Alvar, makes his appearance, dismisses the marauders, and is welcomed by Don Eyas, who foresees the advantages of a connexion with a favourite of the new king.

Leaving the inhabitants of the castle to attend to their own affairs, we are transported to Seville, where the mob rise against Don Pedro and his partizans. The description of the riot is lively and amusing. The author may have witnessed some of the late commotions in Spain, and have copied from nature. But this tumultuous rising is only connected with the plot, inasmuch as the rioters proceed to burn the house of a shoemaker devoted to Don Pedro. Crispin is a dark and mysterious being, who, a little before, has made his appearance in company with de Castro; and he is one of the best delineated characters in this novel, though his style of speaking is wholly unsuited to his station. After the tumult is somewhat subdued, Don Enrique enters Seville, while Don Pedro flies to Guienne, to put himself under the protection of the prince of Wales. The

court, or rather the camp, of this young hero, is then represented, and a conversation between him and his knights is given in that quaint phraseology, which passes with the ill-informed for a faithful copy of the colloquial style of the age, but which is merely a combination of incongruous and grotesque phrases, belonging to old writers of different epochs; and, when put together, forming a dialect which was never heard by mortal ears. The Castilian Ferran de Castro is introduced before the prince, and asks his assistance to replace his master upon his throne. After a short consultation, the boon is granted by Edward, who enters Spain with his army. Some of the military movements are then reported—we use the word, because the descriptions of them are more in the style of Gazette details, than of those animated narrations which enliven the pages of the poet, the novelist, and the historian. About this time, old Pimiento joins Don Ferran, his loyalty to Don Pedro having prevailed over his affection to the family of Vargas. The battle of Najara is fought, where victory declares for the English and Don Pedro, whom the successes of the day put in possession of the whole kingdom of Castile. He re-enters Seville in triumph, and gives multiplied proofs of his merciless disposition. Vain are the efforts of Edward to check the ferocious propensities of his royal ally, who, regardless of the duties of gratitude, not only treats his benefactors with cold neglect, but fails to fulfil the stipulations upon which he obtained their assistance. A heavier blow is in preparation for de Castro. He flies to the castle of Vargas, finds his Costanza true, and Don Eyas desirous to connect himself with those who are uppermost. They all repair to court, where the marriage of the two lovers is to be solemnized; but Don Pedro, whose amorous disposition is no less remarkable than his ferocity, is enamoured of the charms of Don Eyas's daughter, and hesitates to give his consent to the celebration of the nuptials. About this time, the mysterious shoemaker (whom the author always calls Zapatero, merely because he likes to make a frequent use of Spanish words) is put upon his trial before the king himself, as accused of having murdered a canon of the chapter of Seville. It seems that the deed was an act of revenge for a murder committed by the canon upon the shoemaker's father. Don Pedro inquires into the case, and is informed that the canon had been punished by being interdicted from saying mass for the term of a whole year, a visitation which, in those times, was frequently employed as a check on the irregularities of the members of the Roman Catholic priesthood. After hearing this, the king condemns the shoemaker to abstain from shoemaking for the same space of time. The original story is told

in the Floresta Española,* and Señor Trueba has spoiled it by amplifications in very bad taste. This decision, though it was an act affording protection to the poor against the privileged classes of the community is represented as injurious to the king's cause, by making him appear a contemner of religion; a heinous sin in those days, and still more in the eyes of the Spaniards. But heavier matters press upon the reader's consideration. The king's love for Costanza manifests itself openly, and old Don Eyas does not view it with dislike, not that he would consent to see his daughter degraded into prostitution, but that the hopes of a royal marriage (no uncommon thing at that time, when high-born private ladies were often raised to thrones) begin to flutter about his easily-deluded imagination. Conspiracy meantime is silently at work. Trastamara's partisans meet in Seville, and Don Alvar de Lara comes to join them from France, bringing with him a papal bull, by which Don Pedro is deposed from his kingly dignity. This bull must be publicly notified to Don Pedro, a dangerous business, which no one would take upon himself. A ludicrous discussion amongst the conspirators (most of whom are churchmen) follows, respecting the person who shall venture upon this rash experiment. It is but the old story of the mice deciding who shall tie the bell round the cat's neck; it is given in the author's most infelicitous manner. The festivities of the marriage of the duke of Lancaster with Pedro's daughter are described in lively colours; and the circumstance of the reading of the bull (an incident related by Mariana), and his throwing himself into the river to punish the daring reader is told with some animation. All these things combine to make the king odious. His ally, the Black Prince, withdraws in disgust, and Ferran de Castro is alienated by the attempt to deprive him of his mistress. The Castilian resolves upon a desperate expedient; he is privy to a plan by which Costanza withdraws from Seville. While thinking of the consequences of this act, in the darkness of the night he is accosted by a stranger, who puts

* In the Floresta the king himself is said to have advised the shoemaker to commit the murder, after knowing the inadequate punishment inflicted upon the murderer of his father. The guilty canon (archdeacon he is styled) was stabbed to the heart, while walking in the procession of Corpus Christi (the Fête Dieu of the French) the greatest pageant of the Roman Catholic church. The sentence was such as Señor Trueba relates. In an old Spanish play which has for its title, "El Primer Asistente de Sevilla y Montanes Juan Pascual," (we presume this is the play alluded to by Señor Trueba in his Note 2nd. 2nd vol.,) the sentence is said to have been given by Juan Pascual, and confirmed by the king. The archdeacon is very absurdly transformed into an organist, which makes the sentence (not to play the organ for a twelvemonth) improbable,

a letter into his hands, inviting him to abandon the cause of the tyrant, and join the party of Trastamara, to avenge at once his own and the public wrongs. Don Ferran pays little attention to this letter, and waits upon the king; who, having been informed of Costanza's flight, gives himself up to a fit of the most ungovernable passion. This is, perhaps, one of the best parts of the novel, and we are tempted to insert it as the most favourable specimen of the author's style.

'"Well met, Ferran," said the king, striving to conceal his rage, "we have something extraordinary for your ear, and it is fortunate you are come, we should else have summoned you to our presence."

'Don Pedro fixed a keen scrutinizing look on the Castilian, who made no comment, but seemed to expect the king to proceed. A pause ensued, when Don Pedro, no way re-assured by the steady composure of the Castilian, continued, "A most untoward occurrence has taken place, and I marvel that you, being a party so intimately interested, have not yet received information." He again stopt, but again the Castilian preserved his wonted silence. Don Pedro unable any longer to restrain the ebullition of his feelings, exclaimed—

'"By Santiago, this is either rare hypocrisy in thee, or an example of philosophy. Say if by chance thou art really ignorant that Costanza is flown? But," he added, with a dark sneer, "what foolery is it to tell you, Sir, what you know full well."

'He resumed his walk with folded arms, and an abrupt step, that plainly bespoke the agitation of his mind. He again stopt, and stamping fiercely on the ground, "By my faith this is a case closely to be looked at, its manifest open and daring opposition against our goodwill and pleasure. Costanza never would have taken such a measure of her own accord. No, some traitorous villain has been tampering with her, and right glad would I be to be made acquainted with his name."

'"Señor," said the Castilian, "your wish may easily be satisfied, though I must premise that Costanza's counsellor is no traitorous villain, for I was the man."

'"You, Sir! you!" exclaimed the king, his eyes flashing fire, "and dare you make a boast of the nefarious proceeding?"

'"Nefarious proceeding? Heaven help us!"

'"Yes! Sir, yes! a treacherous, a vile contrivance, to decoy a female from the protection of her parent. But let me tell you Don Ferran, you have presumed too much on the foolish regard which the king has ever shown you, you have misjudged the extent of his favour when you supposed that so glaring a transgression would be suffered to pass with impunity."

'"Transgression!" exclaimed the Castilian with warmth, "Señor I am not conscious of any. The situation in which I am placed with Costanza amply justifies a measure we have thought it proper to adopt."

'"God-a-mercy! Señor," quoth the king, with a bitter banter, "I give you much credit for your prudence; but, let me tell you, very

cautious cavaliers are sometimes apt to be overreached in their excessive solicitude. But I marvel, that the same prudence that serves you thus well, has not taught you likewise to avoid the danger of giving offence to one who has the power to punish as well as to reward."

'"Señor," replied the Castilian, "with all due respect to your majesty, I must express my surprise at this singular accusation. I cannot conceive how the king can take offence at a measure in which the interest and happiness—"

'"Enough, Sir! enough!" cried Don Pedro, haughtily, "you have tried our forbearance too long; know, Sir, we had our reasons for opposing your nuptials, and it was solely to thwart our intention, and to baffle our sovereign will, that you have traitorously and rebelliously devised this contrivance. But your project will not be accomplished; no, by Heaven, you shall learn better how to respect our mandates, and now, Sir, immediately acquaint us with the place of Costanza's retreat!"

'Ferran de Castro underwent a fearful revulsion of feelings at these words; his generally calm demeanour was ruffled by the violence of Don Pedro, and the gross and bitter rebukes with which he was so liberally favoured, severely wounded his pride. His situation was exceedingly critical; he knew the extent of his danger, the dreaded moment had arrived, but he had firmly resolved to stand the shock. He braced his nerves up to the task, and stood prepared for the worst consequences of his resolution.

'"Señor," he said, in a firm tone, "I cannot comply with your majesty's wish. I am bound by my word not to disclose the retreat of Doña Costanza, it is according to her own desire it should be so."

'"By hell, this presumptuous insolence is unparalleled. Villain forgettest thou who I am?"

'"You are the king of Castile," replied the cavalier, with becoming pride, and *I* am Don Ferran de Castro."

'"Let Don Ferran de Castro comport himself as becomes a subject towards his king, or by God he shall rue the result of his temerity."

'"Señor, I am not conscious of shewing contumely to my king."

'"Enough, and begone, rebel, to execute our orders, Costanza must be at court to-morrow."

'"Señor Don Pedro, if she returns to court, it must be to receive your royal assurance that her union with myself will no longer be opposed."

'"Never," said the king.

'"Then never shall Costanza return to court," undauntedly replied Don Ferran. The king was thunderstruck at the cavalier's intrepidity. But uncontrollable rage soon superseded every other emotion. He darted a tremendous look on Ferran, and furiously approached him with his hand on the hilt of his rapier. The Castilian, however, did not stir; but unmoved, and firm as a rock, he stood there ready to encounter the violence of the storm. The king was provoked to still greater rage, his eyes sparkled, his hand shook, and a hard heaving breathing, declared the frightful agitation of his breast. He raised his arm, and haughtily beckoned Ferran to depart. The Castilian

made a humble bow, and was about to retire, when Don Pedro seized him by the arm ;—

'"Thou knowest our orders, Señor," he said, with frantic passion.

'The Castilian, with a resolute expression of countenance, calmly replied, "My mind is fixed, inflict on me the penalty you may deem just." He again bowed, and made a movement to retire. The king, no longer able to restrain himself, rushed against the cavalier, and aimed a blow at his face. Ferran, who held his hat in his hand, seasonably guarded against the intended affront, and his hat rolled on the ground. The noble Castilian's indignation was now aroused to the highest pitch. He forgot all difference as to their relative position, in the indignant sense of the insult which had been offered to his person. His eyes flashed fire, a deadly paleness covered his face, and in a voice broken by convulsive passion, "Tyrant!" he bitterly cried, "complete your work, I am well repaid for my foolish fidelity to a monster destitute of the noble attributes of man."

'The vehemence of this speech maddened the king, he furiously drew his weapon; Ferran de Castro at the same moment baring his bosom with fearful intrepidity.

'"Strike," he cried, "strike, for after the insult, the degradation you would have heaped upon me, death is the best apology you can offer. Strike, Don Pedro, consummate the work of ingratitude, and let those who spill their life-blood in defence of your crown, learn what is the guerdon they are to expect for so many services and sacrifices."

'The noble and indignant resolution of Don Ferran, and his energetic apostrophe, checked the arm of the king. The Castilian, however, did not change his posture, the frenzy of passion had subsided, yet his eyes told the load of agony that pressed upon his bosom, and a starting tear gave testimony how deeply his inmost feelings had been lacerated.

'"Don Pedro," he then resumed, with sad emphatic voice, "to recount my loyalty, my sufferings, in your cause, would be a needless task, alike unworthy of my character, and unavailing to move your hardened and selfish disposition, yet here I repeat, unarmed as I am, strike, it will be a severe lesson to those who blindly and faithfully serve a king."

'"No," contemptuously replied the king, "not from my arm, you shall prepare in due time to defend yourself for your rebellious insolence, and if you must die, be assured it will be the death of a vile traitor, not that of a Castilian cavalier."

'As he said this, he cast a proud and scornful glance on Don Ferran, and haughtily left the place. This last instance of wanton and unprovoked insult again excited the irritated feelings of the Castilian. He suddenly started from his position, resolutely replaced his hat, and took two or three strides along the place in a mood of desperation and revenge.

'"'Tis well," he sullenly said, "he is a tyrant, no human feeling can touch his callous heart." A bitter smile curled his lip, he halted

and fixed his eyes intently on the ground, the conflict of his passions was appalling, some overpowering thought seemed to strive for mastery in his bosom. It was a moment of real agony, and the fidelity of years seemed in a moment destroyed. One terrible look was cast towards the apartment whither the king had withdrawn, and turning to retire, he exclaimed in a bitter tone of indescribable emotion, "Farewell, tyrant, Trastamara I am thine." '—*Castilian,* vol. ii, pp. 191-201.

This last resolution is a mere ebullition of resentment, and the Castilian returns to his sentiments of loyalty. He is, however, suddenly arrested and thrown into prison, while the king (in a scene tolerably well narrated) goes to consult an astrologer. De Castro is visited in jail by a nobleman, who declares himself to have been the person who gave him the mysterious letter; and induces him to fly with him, because the king, besides hating him as a rival, is in possession of that fatal document, and from him no mercy can be expected. Far from yielding to these suggestions, Don Ferran desires to convey information of the ripening rebellion into the ears of his sovereign. Some way or other Don Ferran is restored to liberty, and the king is reconciled to him, and gives his assent to his marriage with Costanza. At this time the insurrection has broken out. Pedro's cause assumes a very unpromising aspect. Trastamara and du Guesclin enter Spain, and most of the cities and nobles embrace their party. The king takes the field, and through the chivalrous folly of old Pimiento, who allows a spy to escape (in a chapter the best of Señor Trueba's comic efforts), falls into an ambuscade, where his party are put to rout. Thanks to the devoted bravery of the wayward shoemaker, who is captured in this affair, the king narrowly escapes into the castle of Don Eyas de Vargas. This old knight is by no means pleased with his visitors, and his vexation increases, when a party of Trastamara's troops, under the command of de Lara, come to the castle at the dawn of the next morning, to summon him to deliver the tyrant into their hands. De Vargas does not carry his meanness so far as to comply, and he contrives to allow the king to escape through a subterraneous passage, leading into the adjoining fields. The monarch succeeds in his attempt, but his follower, Don Ferran, is left behind and taken, and de Lara, no less enraged at his disappointment than incited by jealousy, does not conceal his determination to put his rival to death. Costanza saves him, by resorting to the stale expedient of devoting herself, and becoming the wife of de Lara, who, though he has been represented as a man of noble mind, is not ashamed to reduce her to that dilemma—an act which has been imputed to several

of the worst tyrants. The Castilian joins his master, to partake of his misfortunes. These are very heavy indeed. Every where the people rise in arms against him, and his partizans are devoted to the popular fury. The odious shoemaker is murdered by a mob, under circumstances of great horror, which are tolerably well described, with the exception of the comic part which the alcalde takes in these proceedings. At last a decisive battle is fought near Montiel, where Pedro is overthrown. Ferran, though belonging to the unsuccessful party, is avenged upon de Lara, whom he mortally wounds; and a scene of ridiculous sentimentality takes place, where they become friends again. The Castilian leaves him, and follows his master, with whom he shuts himself up in the castle of Montiel. This fortress is soon beleaguered by the victorious enemy. Don Pedro, reduced to the last extremities, enters into a sort of treaty with du Guesclin —is deceived by the cunning Frenchman, and decoyed into his tent, where he meets Trastamara. The chapter entitled The Catastrophe, is devoted to the private fight between the brothers, which terminates in Pedro's murder. The author had little to do but to follow the historians in their narratives of this event, to render it striking. But he has treated this part of his subject in an able manner, and the catastrophe is described with effect. After the king's death, the Castilian refuses to accept king Don Enrique's proffered favour; and having married Costanza, withdraws to England, to live with sir John Chandos, with whom he has been united in close friendship since they fought together at Najara.

From the foregoing extract it will be evident, that the story which forms the basis of "The Castilian," as well as the delineation of character are far less happily managed than in Gomez Arias. Don Pedro is a mad tyrant, ever talking of blood and revenge, and displaying very few of those peculiarities by which he was really distinguished. It is somewhat remarkable, that in his introductory chapter, the author seems inclined to adopt the opinion of those writers, by whom that monarch has been considered under a rather favourable light, while through the whole course of his work, he describes his conduct as it has been represented by his worst enemies. This inconsistency might be pardoned to him, had he displayed any abilities in the delineation of the tyrant. But we are sorry to observe, that Pedro is the creature of vague generalities and indistinct conceptions; and so is his counterpart, the Castilian, though in a different way. He is a true and a good common-place knight, unmarked by a single feature to distinguish him from the host of preux chevaliers, of whom we have had such abundance. Old Pimiento

and the shoe-maker are not badly drawn. In Don Eyas there is too much meanness: his changes are too frequent, and his selfishness too coarse. Señor Trueba is unable to catch those delicate lineaments, and softly blending features, which give a tone, a cast, a real likeness to a physiognomy. His portraits are but rough sketches; nor do we wonder at it. To give an outline of the features of any particular individual is a work which every dauber of caricatures is equal to; but to afford a likeness, at once correct and animated, of a living being requires the skill of a Vandyk or a Lawrence. In describing the inward man, Señor Trueba merely uses epithets, he never individualizes. In describing external objects, he names, but does not paint. He speaks of trees, of buildings, but conveys to the mind of another, no fixed ideas of a particular object, because he has it not in his own. An authority, no higher than Blair, would give our author some judicious advice on this topic.

No less imperfect, not to say faithless, are his descriptions of scenery. His glowing and gorgeous portraiture of the Guadalquivir with a thousand boats scattered upon its bosom, and a white sail now and then darting across its waters [*Cast.* pp. 28, 29], and gay villas and towering castles, and quiet villages upon its banks, is ludicrously absurd. He is dreaming of our own Thames in these days of wealth, and luxury, and civilization, and has wholly forgotten the beautiful and bright, but somewhat uncultivated and thinly-peopled country of Andalusia. He took his view of the Guadalquivir from the top of Richmond-hill. What would our Spaniard say, if sir Walter Scott had adorned the banks of the Clyde with formal and straight-line plantations of olive trees, or embalmed the atmosphere of Scotland with the fragrance of orange and citron flowers?

There is nothing in "The Castilian" characteristic of the age, and but little of the country where the scene is laid. Though a Spaniard, Señor Trueba appears unacquainted with the peculiarities of his own countrymen. He evidently writes from imperfect memory and servile imitation, not from the power of genius and the sagacity of observation. He should have studied more profoundly the history of the times. The things that are will not teach him the things that were. We cannot write successfully of remote times without erudition, nor make a past out of the present by a mere infusion of vague, antiquated, and romantic phrases.

For a Spaniard, Don Telesforo de Trueba writes English remarkably well. There are traces in his style of the bombast, too frequently characteristic of the Spanish writers, and he

has taken much of the affectation of our own authors of romance. His passion for unmeaning adjectives is excessive. His style, however, is improved in "The Castilian."

In fine, of great powers of mind—of whatever constitutes original genius—he has given as yet no indication. He is an agreeable, lively, and industrious writer; and to say that he is better than those who are worse, is to give him feeble and doubtful praise. His works will form a valuable addition to the circulating library, but he must do better—far better—before he can find his way to the shelf where taste preserves the nobler productions of the intellect.

This it would have been hardly necessary to say, but for the childish and indiscriminating eulogiums which have welcomed these volumes. If any thing can drive mediocrity downwards, it is exaggerated praise. They are no friends to a man's reputation who elevate him on the stilts of ridiculous puffery. Patient study, and sober thought, will make Don Telesforo an interesting, and, perhaps, a popular writer.

At all events, such exaggerated praise is disgusting and injurious. It proceeds from the worst causes, and produces the worst effects. The odious system of puffing and book-making, is the pest of modern literature. By its indiscriminating eulogiums, it smothers real genius. It degrades the noblest functions of the mind into the instruments of a dishonest trading. The lauded individual himself is made the victim of those praises from which he derives pleasure. They inspire him with an injudicious confidence in his own powers, and push him onwards to certain failure, the more keenly felt as it comes unexpected upon a mind rendered too sensitive by flattery, and therefore ill prepared to bear reproof. Señor Trueba is intitled to indulgence as a stranger and a foreigner, otherwise these works would not have occupied so many of our pages. The day will come when he and many of his fellow countrymen will be useful to their country. There are symptoms of hope even in the Spanish peninsula, and it is consolatory to think, that the vicissitudes which have brought us into closer connection with the best men of Spain, cannot fail to have a happy influence on the futurity of that beautiful land.