DOCTORAL DISSERTATION SERIES

PUBLICATION: 5101

AUTHOR: Frederick Sparks Stimson, Ph. D., 1953
University of Michigan

TITLE: SPANISH THEMES IN EARLY AMERICAN LITERATURE IN NOVELS, DRAMA, AND VERSE, 1770-1830

University Microfilms, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1953

SPANISH THEMES IN EARLY AMERICAN LITERATURE

In Novels, Drama, and Verse

1770-1830

by
Frederick Sparks Stimson

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in the
University of Michigan
1952

Committee in charge:

Professor Irving A. Leonard, Chairman
Professor Joe L. Davis
Associate Professor Antoine J. Jobin
Professor Federico Sánchez y Escribano
Associate Professor Charles N. Staubach

Abstract

SPANISH THEMES IN EARLY AMERICAN LITERATURE
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by Frederick Sparks Stimson

This study arose from the conviction that the influence of Spain and Spanish America has been so pronounced on North American literature as to require a careful investigation. Novels, dramas, and poems, written in the present United States from 1770 through 1830, have therefore been culled for themes inspired by Spain and her colonies, and the treatments of the principal ones are analyzed and interpreted.

Ten major themes or aspects of Spanish influence thus considered are: (1) Columbus and the discovery; (2) the "black legend" of the conquistadores; (3) the "noble savage" tradition; (4) the emancipation of Spanish America; (5) the history, factual and legendary, of Peninsular Spain; (6) Spanish language and literature, in general; (7) Cervantes' Don Quijote; (8) the comedia of the siglo de oro; (9) Spain as a geographical setting; (10) the Caribbean sector.

The chief causes for North American interest in these topics are, broadly speaking, two. First, the Revolutionary Period of the eighteenth century gave rise to the patriotic, nationalistic drive which found a symbol of freedom in Columbus; and the opposite symbol of tyranny in the Roman, Moorish, and Napoleonic invasions of Spain, the conquistadores and Charles V, Ferdinand VII and Spain's hold on the New World. Writers in this political vein include Philip Freneau, Joel Barlow, William Cullen Bryant, William Gilmore Simms, Charles Dunlap, David Paul Brown, and Mercy Warren. The didactic current resulted in imitations of the Quijote by Hugh Henry Brackenridge, Royall Tyler, Tabitha Tenney, and Susanna Haswell Rowson.

The second reason for Hispanic themes in American literary expression is early nineteenth century Romanticism--which took on various forms. Bryant's translations of Renaissance poetry, and James Nelson Barker's and John Howard Payne's adaptations of Spanish plays exemplify the erudite type, fostered by the literary historians. Other authors, such as James Gates Percival, Robert Montgomery Bird, and Samuel Judah, sensationalized Spanish settings and history, while Charles Brockden Brown, John Blake White, and others added the sinister, mysterious note of Gothic fiction to Romantic Spain. A more exciting type appeared in the accounts of

Romantic heroes in Peninsular waters, but more particularly in Spanish America. Writers of these adventure stories include Timothy Flint, Thomas Digges, and James Butler.

Literary influences as well as political events contributed to American interest and affected interpretations. Before the appearance of American historical literature, the Scottish scholar, William Robertson, seems to have been the chief source of information. But Spain provided histories of the New World, and, in the writings of the Inca Garcilaso de la Vega, Bartolomé de las Casas, and Alonso de Ercilla, gave sympathetic characterizations of the Indians. The French and British early cultivated the "black legend" and the motif of the "noble savage" and translated original Spanish works. Many countries produced travel books relating to the lands of Spanish speech.

Thus, the indebtedness to Hispanic inspiration of many of the most influential North American writers was considerable. If to this group are added the "literary historians" and leading figures such as Franklin, Jefferson, and Thoreau--all of whom had Hispanic interests, it is evident that the Spanish world did provide a strong stimulus to American letters.

PREFACE

Thomas Jefferson advised his nephew in 1787:

> Spanish. Bestow great attention on this, and endeavor to acquire an accurate knowledge of it. Our future connections with Spain and Spanish America will render that language a valuable acquisition. The ancient history of a great part of America, too, is written in that language--I send you a dictionary.[1]

Benjamin Franklin quoted Spanish proverbs.[2] Henry David Thoreau dreamed of being a postman in Peru.[3] Believing America's part in the War with Mexico iniquitous, Thoreau refused to pay the annual poll tax, for which contumacy he spent a night in the Concord jail.[4] The hero of Timothy Flint s novel Francis Berrian (1826) declared to his Mexican friends that in the United States the ignorant held Spain in contempt, but "all the informed classes felt and appreciated the Spanish character."[5]

About a century after Jefferson, Walt Whitman prophesied:

> We Americans have yet to really learn our own antecedents, and sort them, to unify them. They will be found ampler than has been supposed, and in widely different sources. Thus far, impress'd by New England writers and schoolmasters, we tacitly abandon ourselves to the notion that our United States have been fashion'd from the British Islands only, and essentially form a second England only--which is a very great mistake. Many leading traits for our future national personality, and some of the best ones, will certainly prove to have originated

> from other than British stock . . . . . To that composite American identity of the future, Spanish character will supply some of the most needed parts. No stock shows a grander historic retrospect--grander in religiousness and loyalty, or for patriotism, courage, decorum, gravity and honor . . . . It is time to realize--for it is certainly true--that there will not be found any more cruelty, tyranny, superstition, &c., in the résumé of past Spanish history than in the corresponding résumé of Anglo-Norman history. Nay, I think there will not be found so much.[6]

Such thinking among distinguished literary Americans of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries--and the examples are countless--might indicate a curiously inordinate and unexpected interest in Spain and things Spanish. Yet, after presenting pages of bibliography on other foreign influences on North American fiction, one recent authoritative historian observed: "No survey has yet been made of the Spanish contribution to America."[7]

This lack is further emphasized when Spanish critics themselves appear so impressed by North American interest in Spanish literature as to forget traditional prejudices. The United States, according to the famous Spanish Encyclopedia, has led the world in the field of Hispanism.

> En el desarrollo de este artículo se sigue el orden marcado por la importancia que la tendencia misma tiene en los varios países. Se da, pues, la preferencia á los Estados Unidos, siguiendo luego Francia, Alemania, Inglaterra, Italia, etc.

And it is the United States that is destroying the "black legend":

> No solamente se estudia y admira nuestro idioma y literatura, se traducen sus principales producciones y se realizan trabajos

de investigación de sus letras españolas, sino que también se sacan á la luz de los archivos los documentos que hablan la verdad acerca de la actuación de España en America y se destruye la famosa leyenda negra que nuestros enemigos y envidiosos habían forjado.[8]

A crying need seems patent, therefore, for research on North American literary interest in Spanish worlds and on their influence. Perhaps the stimulus would be found far greater than students--blinded by the brightness of other European sources--have ever suspected.

The ideal study would include four periods. The first, through 1830, would record the sowing of the seed.[9] The second would describe this theme until the American Civil War. During these years, full-flowering Romanticism and political events connected with the confiscation of Spanish territories kept Hispanism very much alive. The third period reached a climax with the Spanish-American War in 1898. The fourth would deal with the very active contemporary Hispanists.

But, as William Hickling Prescott found when he embarked upon the Conquest of Peru, an "embarras des richesses" confronts the investigator.[10] This study was limited, therefore, to the first period--1770 through 1830--sixty years which bridge the close of one century with its Revolutionary literature and the

opening of a new century with its National literature and which witnessed the beginning of Spanish influence.

Even within these time limits, material is so abundant that only the genres of the novel, drama, and poetry are treated, and they only from the thematic standpoint. Only occasional references are made to short stories. A field even richer than that of the short story is offered by travel books which exerted such a marked influence on fiction. While one critic, Carrie E. Farnham, has adequately discussed North American travelers to Spain,[1] a work on such travelers to Spanish America remains a desideratum. The literary historians, George Ticknor, Washington Irving, and William H. Prescott, are mentioned only in connection with their influence on novels, drama, and poetry. A separate study should be pursued on these cultural leaders, as well as on the early, more conventional North American historians of Spanish affairs.

The selection of novels published before 1831 is based on Lyle H. Wright's check list American Fiction, 1774-1850 (San Marino, California, 1939). For dramas, Frank Pierce Hill s American Plays, Printed 1714-1830 (Stanford University, 1934) and Arthur Hobson Quinn's A History of the American Drama, From the Beginning to the Civil War (New York, 1923) are considered authoritative check lists. Since no equally complete bibliography of poetry

is available, the selection of verse illustrating Spanish themes is less exhaustive.

The ten chapters, each devoted to a different Spanish theme, or, in some cases, an aspect of Spanish influence, are roughly divided into three parts. The introductions consist of an arrangement of scattered facts and observations, more or less pertinent to the aspect discussed. The purpose of this first part is to provide lectura amena, by painting a quick, impressionistic picture of the theme's popularity, and by leading the reader gently into the heart of the chapter. The central portion concerns the various methods of treating the theme, each illustrated with examples from novels, dramas, and poetry. The last part of the chapter deals with literary, political, and miscellaneous reasons for American interest and methods of interpretation.

Since the scope of this study is so vast, the different tangents taken by American Hispanists and the forces which impelled them are at times only indicated, without detail. It is hoped, however, that this broad sketch will stimulate further thought and research, while satisfactorily sketching a picture of the whole.

It is a pleasure to express my gratitude to Professor Irving A. Leonard for entrusting me with a field for research which has long appeared to him rich and untrod, and into which he could step

with so much more awareness and authority. Appreciation is also extended Professor Leonard for his encouragement of readability and meaningful synthesis. Professor Joe L. Davis is likewise to be thanked for commending readability, and for helping to keep this initial study within workable limits. To Professor Federico Sánchez y Escribano I owe gratitude not only for his helpful suggestions, based on a thorough knowledge of the Spanish background, but also for his warm and friendly animation of my flagging spirit. Professor Antoine A. Jobin has proved a source of immeasurable help not only in supplying French material, but also in manifesting enthusiastic interest in the field. I am indebted also to Professor Charles N. Staubach for his equally enthusiastic interest and staunch support and for his stylistic suggestions.

I should like to thank also those librarians at the University of Michigan who labored to furnish me with rare Americana, and to Kate Sparks Stimson for patiently perusing certain forbiddingly long and tiresome novels in search of Spanish themes.

Footnotes

[1] Philip S. Foner (ed.), The Basic Writings of Thomas Jefferson (New York: Willey Book Co., 1944), p. 560.

[2] Benjamin Franklin, The Works of Dr. Benjamin Franklin, Consisting of Essays, Humorous, Moral, and Literary: with his

Life, Written by Himself (Hartford: S. Andrus and Son, 1851), p. 169.

[3] Van Wyck Brooks, The Flowering of New England, 1815-1865 (41st ed.; New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1937), p. 300.

[4] Henry David Thoreau, Anti-Slavery and Reform Papers, ed. H. S. Salt (London: Swan Sonnenschein & Co., 1890), pp. 5-7.

[5] Timothy Flint, Francis Berrian, or The Mexican Patriot (Boston: Cummings, Hilliard, and Co., 1826), I, 104.

[6] Walt Whitman, The Complete Prose Works of Walt Whitman (New York and London: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1902), III, 116-118.

[7] Spiller et al., Literary History of the United States (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1948), III, 297.

[8] "Hispanismo," Enciclopedia Universal Ilustrada (Barcelona: Hijos de J. Espasa, 1925), LXVII, 1767.

[9] Cf. Frank Pierce Hill, American Plays, Printed 1714-1830 (Stanford University, California: Stanford University Press, 1934), p. vi. "The closing date was chosen by Wegelin, accepted by Fred W. Atkinson, and adopted by Charles Frederic Brede, in his The German Drama in English on the Philadelphia Stage from 1794 to 1830. Furthermore, Robert F. Roden takes 1831 as the beginning date of his Later American Plays, which he says 'is practically a second part' of Wegelin." Lillie Deming Loshe and Oscar Wegelin use 1830, also, for a dividing date for early American novels. See the former's The Early American Novel (New York, 1907); and the latter's Early American Fiction, 1774-1830 (3d ed.; New York: Peter Smith, 1929).

[10] William H. Prescott, History of the Conquest of Peru, ed. Wilfred Harold Munro (London: J. B. Lippincott Co., undated), I, xi ff.

[11] Carrie E. Farnham, American Travellers in Spain, The Spanish Inns, 1776-1867 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1921).

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CHAPTER I

COLUMBUS AND THE DISCOVERY

Columbus, the discoverer of America, was, in turn, the first figure in Spanish history to be "discovered" by North American writers of the Revolutionary period. The veneration in which the New World held him is well expressed in an 1826 issue of Boston's leading literary journal:

> It is a tribute, which every American, whatever language he may speak, owes to the great name of Columbus, to preserve and cherish everything that tends to impress more deeply on the memory the testimony of his great deeds and character, and to kindle the warmest veneration and gratitude, which, after all, are but feeble returns for the perils he encountered, and the sacrifices, sufferings, and mortifications he endured, in discovering a new world, and laying the foundation of future empires [1]

Columbus was hailed and eulogized to the exclusion of other discoverers and explorers who, with rare exceptions, did not capture literary fancy until after 1830 when they were rescued from oblivion and placed in public light by Washington Irving's Voyages and Discoveries of the Companions of Columbus (1831). Yet England may claim the first play based on this awe-inspiring figure--Thomas Morton's Columbus, or A World Discovered (1792); the first American

stage production which included the Genoese was a serious opera, Ann Julia Hatton's America Discovered, later called Tammany.[2]

Over Columbus, ardent young North Americans waxed eloquently patriotic, especially in the favored genre of the epic. No biographer since William Dunlap has failed to point out that, at the precocious age of sixteen, Charles Brockden Brown proposed an epic on the discovery.[3] The story of Columbus lent the suitably heroic and optimistic note needed by the striplings Freneau and Hugh Henry Brackenridge for their poem delivered on graduating from Princeton, then the College of New Jersey. But the theme undoubtedly reached its fullest expression in the field of artistically written history with Irving's The History of the Life and Voyages of Christopher Columbus (1828).

The first treatment of the Columbus theme, then, in novels and poems of the period between 1770 and 1830, was an epic one, savoring of nationalism. And the first to interpret Columbus in this light was North America's leading eighteenth century poet, Philip Freneau (1752-1832). A loyal son of the British until incarcerated in one of their prison ships, he became a fervent advocate of the American Revolution and a harsh critic of the Old World. Although he was best known as a political satirist, early lyric and Romantic tendencies are revealed in his nostalgic poems

of the sea and in his concern for the welfare of Indians in the West Indies where he traveled frequently on business and pleasure. After Jefferson brought him to the capital as clerk for foreign languages in the Office of the Secretary of State, he edited The National Gazette in such a provocative fashion that, upon attacking Washington on one occasion, he won the name of "that rascal Freneau."

From Freneau's belligerent pen came a series of poems in which Columbus figured, including the collegiate Columbus to Ferdinand (1770), the graduation poem The Rising Glory of America (1771), Discovery (1772), and The Pictures of Columbus (1778). In general, the intrepid mariner courageously sailing onward, despite recalcitrant sailors and political powers, represented to Freneau the "Rising Glory of America." Although Columbus complains of his fate in The Pictures of Columbus, he consoles himself with thoughts of the future greatness of America:

> When memory paints, and golden fancy shows
> My toils rewarded, and my woes repaid;
> When empires rise where lonely forests grew,
> Where Freedom shall her generous plans pursue.[4]

Some critics, however, are more specific in analyzing Freneau's use of the Columbus symbol. A leading historian of American poetry believes that, for Freneau, Columbus symbolized the "indomitable and progressive mind."[5] The author of an

exhaustive biography of Freneau quotes The Freeman's Journal in which Freneau lauded the "illiterate man of invention" who "launches out into the immense ocean of ideas and brings to light new worlds," and concludes that Columbus embodied this commoner; and "it was the common man, the Columbus of invention, who would lead America onward."[6] This sort of Columbus would see that the "spread of liberty rather than the accumulation of wealth should be the motive for the development of the new western continent"; this, the scholar maintains, is the basic theme of Freneau's Columbus poems.[7]

Whether or not one agrees with these detailed analyses, at least it is evident that Columbus was one of the few "Spaniards" admired by the capricious poet, and, in Sketches of American History (1784), Freneau became a little testy even toward his hero:

> Yet the schemes of Columbus, however well planned
> Were scarcely sufficient to find the main land;
> . . . . . .
> Yet great as he was, and deserving no doubt
> We have only to thank him for finding the route:[8]

Columbus was treated as a symbol of fervent nationalism by another spirited eighteenth century poet, Joel Barlow (1754-1812)--a graduate of Yale along with the older writers of the group often referred to as the "Connecticut Wits." The choice of colleges seems to have made no difference in political attitudes,

however, for, like Freneau, Barlow was an ardent patriot and supporter of the Revolution in France where he spent several years as land agent and minister.

Barlow's patriotic The Vision of Columbus (1787) is an ambitious, if dull, poem written in heroic couplets. Throughout its nine Books, a seraph shows Columbus visions of the original inhabitants of North and South America, their subsequent discovery, and the colonization of the New World. In 1807 Barlow published a version expanded to a quarto volume of ten books, called The Columbiad.

Columbus is the chief figure in these two poems, today amusing for their literary mannerisms. Paternally concerned with America's welfare, the anxious old master forever "cast his anxious eye" or "Dropp'd the full tear that started in his eye,"[9] when, from the Mount of Vision, were revealed events which Barlow considered unfavorable--such as the conquests of Mexico and Peru and British military successes in America.

According to the author's plans of 1779 to produce an American epic with Columbus as the hero, Barlow's chief object was to extol America as the greatest country in the world. To this end, Columbus served as a convenient symbol:

> . . . a plan for a poem on the subject of America at large, designed to exhibit the importance of this country in every point of view as the noblest and most elevated part of the earth, and reserved to be [the] last and greatest theatre for the improvement of mankind in every article in which they are capable of improvement.[10]

In the Preface to The Columbiad, Barlow first thanks Columbus for discovering this hemisphere, and then praises freedom and republican principles--concepts which Columbus, with a stretch of the imagination, might be said to have incarnated:

> The first of these [objects of the poem] is to soothe and satisfy the desponding mind of Columbus; to show him that his labors, tho ill rewarded by his cotemporaries [sic], had not been performed in vain; that he had opened the way to the most extensive career of civilization and public happiness; and that he would one day be recognized as the author of the greatest benefits to the human race . . . . But the real object of the poem embraces a larger scope; it is to inculcate the love of rational liberty, and to discountenance the deleterious passion for violence and war; and to show that on the basis of the republican principles all good morals, as well as good government and hopes of permanent peace, must be founded.[11]

As in Freneau's Columbus poems, "Freedom" is constantly called upon:

> Almighty Freedom! give my venturous song
> The force, the charm that to thy voice belong.[12]

This more mature, if more unwieldy, version of Barlow's epic strain also makes use of Columbus simply as a mouthpiece for the author's own philosophic vagaries. What Columbus wants in the way of fulfillment for the human race is what Barlow

undoubtedly wanted; Barlow was "attributing to Columbus the solemn, sympathetic 'reveries' that were undoubtedly his own:

> "He felt the infinitude of thoughts that pass
> And guide and govern that enormous mass.
> The cares that agitate, the creeds that blind,
> The woes that waste the many-mastered kind,
> The distance great that still remains to trace
> Ere sober sense can harmonize the race,
> Hold him suspense, imprest with reverence meek,
> And choked his utterance as he wish'd to speak."[13]

The second way of treating the Columbus theme was purely Romantic, best exemplified by the work of Susanna Haswell Rowson (1762-1824). For her, Columbus furnished an exotic note rather than a symbol of patriotism and freedom. It might be suspected that she was simply exploiting the appeal of his glamor. Although born in England and married (more to please her family than herself) to a British hardware merchant and trumpeter in the Royal Horse Guards, ambitious Mrs. Rowson spent most of her life in America where she augmented her husband's paltry income by trying her hand at many literary pursuits--novels, drama, poetry, editing, and acting.

Her extraordinary yarn Reuben and Rachel; or Tales of Old Times (1798) is a fantastic novel of romance and adventure, sentiment, intrigue, and American Indians. The Preface, however, indicates a laudably didactic desire to teach history, especially the history of the New World, to the young:

> When I first started the idea of writing "Tales of Old Times," it was with a fervent wish to awaken in the minds of my young readers, a curiosity that might lead them to the attentive perusal of history in general, but more especially the history of their native country. It has ever been my opinion, that when instruction is blended with amusement, the youthful mind receives and retains it almost involuntarily.[14]

Mrs. Rowson calmly creates a new family tree: Columbus' granddaughter married a son of Lady Jane Grey; their son married an Indian princess; and theirs, a member of the Penn family, et cetera. She has no qualms about inventing love letters between Columbus and Beatina, in one of which the former asks that the New World be called "Columbia," a combination of their two names.[15] She leads Columbus through a hitherto unknown conquest of Peru, then to the Caribbean Islands, thus anticipating the Panama Canal. After all this and a great deal more, the reader is likely to suspect the blending consists of more amusement than instruction and to hope that receptive youthful minds did not retain too much of it.

The reasons for North America's love for Columbus and for these two eighteenth century literary interpretations--nationalistic and Romantic--seem obvious. As a pioneer charting new worlds, as a martyr to political power, Columbus appealed to Americans who were also pioneering and suffering political indignities. Then, after the Revolutionary War, since he in a sense "created" this

hemisphere, he appealed to pride in the new nation which showed its independence by seeking truly American material such as Columbus and his discovery offered.[16]

Alongside this nationalistic spirit flowed an incipient current of Romanticism. Mrs. Rowson's was of the exotic type that found in Columbus an expression of the faraway and long ago--an escape from the simple, prosaic life of the New World. In poetry, Freneau's and Barlow's was patriotic and declamatory--reflecting their revolutionary political views (Barlow, influenced by the French Revolution, may be considered a "Romanticist," according to one critic).[17] But, in general, their songs of Columbus were impelled by patriotic rather than exotic tendencies.[18]

As a secondary factor in stimulating North American interest in Columbus and the discovery, A History of America by Scotland's William Robertson (1721-1793) may be mentioned. Preacher, King's Chaplain, and Principal of the University of Edinburgh, Robertson was also historiographer-royal of Scotland. Besides his work on America, he was famous for his histories of Scotland and of the reign of Charles V.

In A History of America, the first eight books, published in 1777, deal with the discovery of the New World and the conquests of Mexico and Peru. Although the Scottish historian complained

about the difficulty of securing manuscripts from Spain--"Spain, with an excess of caution, has uniformly thrown a veil over her transactions in America. From strangers they are concealed with peculiar solicitude."[19]--he nevertheless amassed an amazing amount of original source material from Spanish histories and crónicas.

The second of the eight books deals with the life of the discoverer. For his facts, Robertson credited outstanding Spanish historians--including Antonio de Herrera (1549-1625), Royal Chronicler of the Indies, whose Historia general de los hechos de los castellanos en las islas y tierra firma del Mar Oceano (1601-1615) was translated into English in 1740; Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo, author of Historia general y natural de las Indias (1535); and Pedro Martyr, author of the Latin chronicle, Decades de orbo novo (1511-1530), translated into English partly in 1555 and partly in 1612.

Robertson also made copious use of Awnsham Churchill's amazing folio volumes of 1704, A collection of voyages and travels, some now first printed from original manuscripts. Others translated out of foreign languages, and now first pub. in English . . . . In using this heterogeneous collection of the accounts of travelers to all parts of the globe, Robertson showed especial interest in the translation from the Italian of The Life of Christopher Columbus,

and the History of his Discovery of the West Indies; Written by his own Son . . . , a manuscript whose legitimacy, as well as that of the author, has been questioned.

With respect to factual material, Robertson's influence upon American writers seems undeniable. But it would appear also that their sympathetic and flattering interpretation of Columbus' character was inspired, at least in part, by Robertson's own high regard for the discoverer. In brief digressions, Robertson heaped praise: "The mind of Columbus, naturally inquisitive, capable of deep reflection . . ." or again: "Columbus, in whose character the modesty and diffidence of true genius was united with the ardent enthusiasm of a projector . . . ."[20]

Robertson's influence or help is most marked in Barlow's Vision. One scholar, who has analyzed in full the Connecticut Wit's dependence on the historian, points out that the vita of Columbus which makes up the Vision's long Introduction is borrowed entirely from Robertson.[21]

To justify his indebtedness, Barlow pointed out the lack of an American reprint of A History of America:

> The Spanish historians, who treat of the discovery and settlement of South-America, are very little known in the United States; and Doctor Robertson's history of that country, which, as is usual in the works of that judicious writer, contains all that is valuable on the subject, is not yet reprinted in America, and therefore cannot be supposed to be in the hands of American readers in general.[22]

A lack of copies in North America might have been wishful thinking on Barlow's part, however. Robertson's vogue was tremendous, to judge by the countless number of Dublin and London editions of his History recorded by the well-known bibliographer Joseph Sabin. And although the first American printing, according to this authority, did not appear until 1812 (Philadelphia),[23] many foreign editions reached the United States. According to Harry Berstein's study of Spanish books in North American libraries between 1700 and 1815, copies existed in the Salem (Massachusetts) Social, the New York Society, and the Harvard College Libraries and the private collection of John Adams.[24]

More credible is Barlow's remark to the effect that works on Columbus by Spanish historians had little direct influence in North America. Although Martín Fernández de Navarrete's Colección de los Viages y Descubrimientos (1825) was reviewed in American literary journals,[25] his influence and that of other Spaniards probably reached fiction writers vicariously--through histories written in English.

Thus, the fearless and persecuted Columbus furnished a symbol of heroism and the pioneer spirit for eighteenth century patriotic epics and a symbol of glamor to sentimentally inclined authors. Within the period before 1831, information concerning

his life and character probably reached American creative writers chiefly through Robertson, although a scholar reports the existence of Herrera's work in at least four American libraries of the eighteenth century, and Churchill's in at least one.[26] Then Washington Irving took over, making an equally exhaustive study of Spanish histories and chronicles, besides taking advantage of Navarrete's publication. Irving's Life of Columbus appeared too late to affect the works mentioned in this chapter, but thereafter it was recognized in America as the ne plus ultra.

Footnotes

[1] North American Review, XXIII (October, 1826), 487.

[2] Hill, op. cit., p. 69.

[3] William Dunlap, The Life of Charles Brockden Brown (Philadelphia: James A. Parke, 1815), I. 14.

[4] Fred Lewis Pattee (ed.), The Poems of Philip Freneau (Princeton: Princeton Historical Association, 1907), I, 122.

[5] Henry W. Wells, The American Way of Poetry (New York: Columbia University Press, 1943), p. 13.

[6] Lewis Leary, That Rascal Freneau (Rutgers College, N. J.: Rutgers University Press, 1941), pp. 106-107.

[7] Ibid., p. 44.

[8] The Columbian Muse (New York: J. Carey, 1794), p. 82.

[9] Joel Barlow, The Vision of Columbus (Hartford, Conn.: Hudson and Goodwin, 1787), pp. 63, 191, etc.

[10] Leon Howard, The Connecticut Wits (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1943), p. 139.

[11] Joel Barlow, The Columbiad (Philadelphia: Fry and Kammerer, 1807), p. x.

[12] Ibid., p. 22.

[13] Howard, op. cit., p. 316.

[14] Susanna Haswell Rowson, Reuben and Rachel; or, Tales of Old Times (Boston: Manning & Loring, for David West, 1798), p. iii.

[15] Ibid., p. 19.

[16] Cf. Arthur Hobson Quinn (ed.), The Literature of the American People (New York: Appleton-Century Crofts, Inc., 1951), p. 175: "In the period between the close of the Revolutionary War and the early years of the nineteenth century, we see in our literature as its first prevailing characteristic a distinctly national note. This was due of course to the pride which all felt in the new nation and was manifested in literature principally in a choice of American subject and a desire to represent America as the fruition of the design of creation, as something to which the history of the world had been pointing for all time."

[17] M. R. Adams, "Joel Barlow, Political Romanticist," American Literature, IX (May, 1937), 152.

[18] Cf. Wells, op. cit., p. 5: "To magnify Freneau as a romantic poet is to minimize nine-tenths of his entire work and the major elements in all his poems . . . . Clearly an eighteenth-century poet, he is profoundly distinguished by his American spirit."

[19] William Robertson, A History of America (3d ed.; London. Printed for W. Strahan, T. Cadell; and J. Balfour, at Edinburgh, 1780), I, xi.

[20] Ibid., I, 89, 95.

[21] Theodore Albert Zunder, The Early Days of Joel Barlow (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1934), p. 220.

[22] Barlow, Vision, p. vii.

[23] Joseph Sabin, Bibliotheca Americana (New York, 1869 --). XVII, 369.

[24] Harry Bernstein, "Las Primeras Relaciones intelectuales entre New England y el mundo Hispánico," Revista Hispánica Moderna, V (January, 1939), 1-17.

[25] North American Review, XXIII (October, 1826), 488; and XXIV (April, 1827), 265.

[26] Bernstein, op. cit., pp. 2, 6.

CHAPTER II

THE BLACK LEGEND

The stirring theme of the conquests of Peru and Mexico appealed to youthful North American patriots. For instance, in 1787, Charles Brockden Brown proposed epics on these conquests as well as on Columbus;[1] and the eccentric James Gates Percival dallied with the idea of an epic entitled "Fall of Peruvians."[2]

The theme of the conquest of the New World was most fully exploited, however, by the "literary historians." In the early nineteenth century, England led the way with Robert Southey's History of Brazil (1810-1819). In the United States, enterprising publishers employed Robert Charles Sands to prepare a biography of Cortés, said to be unavailable either in Spanish or English. Sands' Historical Notice of Hernan Cortes (1828) was translated into Spanish, prefixed to the letters of Cortés, and supplied to markets in Mexico, the Spanish West Indies, and South America.[3] The theme culminated, however, after 1830, in the account of William H. Prescott who, through the encouragement of George Ticknor --the first great North American student of Spanish literature--

produced works well known and authoritative even today; for example, History of the Conquest of Mexico (1843) and History of the Conquest of Peru (1847).

The chief treatment of the theme in poetry before 1831 was again epic in nature. But, while Columbus symbolized liberty, Cortés and Pizarro embodied "Gold, Glory, and Gospel," drives allegedly confined to the Spanish conquerors, although in recent years proved to be simply characteristics of the age shared by contemporary Europeans.[4] In rare exceptions, however, an involuntary admiration for the fearlessness of the conquistadores crept in, as in this observation from a leading literary journal in 1816: "The achievements of the three Pizarros, Almagro, de Castro, Benalcassar, Alvarado, &c.,&c, seem almost incredible."[5]

Freneau was the first of the 1770-1830 group to turn the "black legend" into poetry. Spain's cruelty is severely chastised in The Rising Glory of America, written while the author was still a friend of the British:

> Better these northern realms deserve our song,
> Discover'd by Britannia for her sons;
> Undeluged with seas of Indian blood,
> Which cruel Spain on southern regions spilt;
> To gain by terrors what the gen'rous breast
> Wins by fair treaty, conquers without blood.[6]

The poem voices the accusation, common even today, that Spain's conquests were motivated only by love for the glittering metal:

> Gold, fatal gold was the alluring bait
> To Spain's rapacious mind, hence rose the wars
> From Chili to the Caribbean sea,
> O'er Terra Firma and La Plata wide.[7]

In Discovery, composed a year later, the denunciation continued:

> Alas! how few of all that daring train
> That seek new worlds embosomed in the main
> How few have sailed on virtue's nobler plan,
> How few with motives worthy of a man![8]

Then Freneau got down to names, the chief offenders being Cortés and Pizarro. The former is cursed in the graduation poem:

> But why, to prompt your tears, should we resume,
> The tale of Cortez, furious chief, ordained
> With Indian blood to dye the sands, and choke
> Famed Mexico, thy streams with dead?[9]

In Discovery, Pizarro received the same treatment:

> Hence, fierce Pizarro stock'd a world with graves,
> Hence, Montezuma left a race of slaves.[10]

The violence with which Freneau turned against the British can be judged by his comparison of Gage with Cortés, in The Midnight Consultations; or, A Trip to Boston (1775):

> Now stalk'd I on towards the dome of state,
> Where Gage resides, our western Potentate,
> A second Cortez, sent by heaven's command,
> To murder, rage, and ravage o'er the land;
> A very Cortez--what's the difference?[11]

Barlow also handled the theme from the same point of attack. Book II of both the Vision and the Columbiad are devoted to the destruction of Mexico; Book IV of both versions, to that of Peru. After admiring Columbus, Barlow damned those who came later to take possession:

> I sing the Mariner who first unfurl'd
> An eastern banner o'er the Western world
> . . . . . .
> Then saw the paths his virtuous steps had trod
> Pursued by avarice and defiled with blood.
> The tribes he foster'd with paternal toil
> Snatch'd from his hand, and slaughter'd for their spoil.[12]

In the Vision he described the splendor of Mexico, with Montezuma "robed in peace";[13] then, in contrast, the carnage wrought by Cortés; and, finally, Columbus' bitter tears:

> Thine the dread task, O Cortez, here to show
> What unknown crimes can heighten human woe.
> On these fair fields the blood of realms to pour,
> Tread sceptres down and print thy steps of gore,
> And live and die the blackest of mankind.[14]

Then Barlow turned southward:

> Another Cortez shall the treasures view,
> The rage rekindle and the guilt renew;
> His treason, fraud and every dire decree,
> O curst Pizarro, shall revive in thee.[15]

The same pattern holds for Peru. Barlow praised the glory of the pre-Columbian civilization, then foresaw the wholesale destruction by Pizarro, at which Columbus moans: "Oh, hide me in the tomb . . . ."[16]

Another poet to descant on the "black legend" was the poet, critic, editor, dramatist, and novelist William Gilmore Simms (1806-1870), who, unlike the more famous Hispanists, was born, not in New England, but in South Carolina. From his western travels resulted novels devoted to frontier, Indian, and Revolutionary War scenes. But his friends soon persuaded him to abandon the trifling subject of a country not yet two hundred years old and to try "a more ancient and foreign, and therefore, more dignified theme."[17] As a consequence of such advice, he became, at the height of the Romantic period, one of the leading North American Hispanists in the genre of the novel, grinding out long and tedious works on Spanish Old World history--Pelayo (1838), Count Julian (1845)--and on Spanish New World figures--such as Balboa (The Damsel of Darien, 1839) and De Soto (Vasconselos, 1854).

Within the period before 1831, Simms, like Barlow, wrote a "vision," The vision of Cortes [sic] (1829), a long poem describing Cortés' most horrible nightmare. Simms began this tirade by pitying Columbus and railing against his followers en masse:

> **. . . conquerors of the tawny Moor,**
> **They seek new countries to explore;**
> **Led by the luckless Genoese,**
> **To lands, beyond undreamt-of seas,**
> **Lords of the soil at home, the brave,**
> **With idle weapons, cross'd the wave,**
> **Sanguine to reap in foreign lands,**

> Full guerdon for their steel-clad bands;
> While high, to lead the way, they rear'd
> The blessed cross, nor danger fear'd,
> While base enthusiasts, it came,
> A beacon light to death and flame.[18]

While asleep in his tent, Cortés dreams that the ghost of the Indian leader, Guatamozin, whom he had tortured to death, leads him to the battlefield, piled high with corpses. There Cortés removes the helmet from the dead body of his favorite page--to find the page is female! The author then makes known the great secret--the girl is an early love who, when Cortés abandoned her, hied herself to a convent. On escaping the convent, she followed Cortés to Mexico, and, never revealing her identity, kept always at his side.

An episode emphasizing Cortés' cruelty is the torture of Guatamozin. Apparently Simms felt somewhat conscience-stricken at this radical departure from Robertson's History, and thought that an explanation was due: "According to the Historian, I have here been guilty of a much greater violation of the fact than may well be passed over." He goes on to note that the purpose of the torture was to discover the gold's location, a discovery which Guatamozin had already revealed. Thus the torture had no justification in the poem, and:

his torture can only be considered wanton, or meant to extort a further confession, as to any residue that might yet be found. The reader is at liberty to believe what he pleases.[19]

No opportunity is missed to depict Cortés as inhumane as possible. On the battlefield he cries:

> Curse on these slaves!--'twere shame to stain
> My scimitar in such lowly blood,
> But that glutless soul can drain
> At every happy stroke a flood.[20]

Guatamozin, from his bed of torment, delivers a veritable sermon to Cortés:

> Greedy adventurer, dar'st thou say.
> The Gods have sent thee forth to prey
> With tiger lip, upon the brave,
> Whose land, by thee, is one wide grave.[21]

Simms also introduced the "Gospel" criticism--that Spain's cruelty was meted out under the banner of the Church. In a note to The vision of Cortes, he observed:

> There is something even ludicrous in the strange union, which the Spanish adventurers in Mexico, contrived to make of religious devotion and their own bloodthirsty and ambitious projects. The banner of Cortes, according to Robertson, whose work, by the way, has all the merit of romance, added to the correctness and general truth of the history, had upon it a large cross, with this inscription, "Let us follow the cross, for under this sign we shall conquer." The "In hoc signo vinces" of Constantine, may be forgiven, when we learn the character of the Christian Pagan; but truly, it would be difficult to find, in the whole annals of audacity, a similar instance of impudence. The finger of devotion guiding to blood shed and murder.[22]

But Simms was much more of a Romantic than Freneau and Barlow, and wrote when Romanticism was coming into its own in the United States. Perhaps this explains his occasional undercurrent of awed admiration for the Spaniards' daring and incredible feats of bravery. This involuntary esteem is evidenced by Cortés' refusal to give in when all the odds were against him:

> Amidst vicissitudes and reverses that would have crushed any humbler spirit, the energies of Cortes, never for a moment forsook him. Within an enemy's walls, surrounded by men of his own nation, jealous of his power, and perpetually thwarting him by machinations and treasons--he rose superior to circumstances, and seemed invigorated by every overthrow.[23]

A final poet who should be mentioned with regard to this theme and its treatment is the Connecticut schoolmarm, Lydia Huntley Sigourney (1791-1865), such a writer of best sellers that she was referred to as "The American Hemans," and paid by Louis Godey simply for the use of her name in his Lady's Book.[24] After 1830 she wrote poems on the Columbus theme, but during the period under discussion she published her Traits of the Aborigines of America (1822), a disordered poem of five cantos which prattles of discoverers and settlers of all parts of this hemisphere, from the early Scandinavian and Welsh explorers to German émigrés.

In the first canto she discusses the Spanish in America, and attacks them with a scarcely feminine ferocity. She asks Mexico:

> . . . No sound
> Portentous, warns thee that the spoilers came
> To riot in thy glory?
> . . . . . .
>
> Aught like the step of Cortez, like his glance
> Withering thy charms, as the false Spirit's eye
> On sinless Eden.[25]

"Unprincipled Pizarro" comes in for a tongue-lashing, too. Speaking to Ahatualpa [sic], she says:

> . . . Not thy proffer'd gold,
> Profuse as grasping Mammon's boundless wish,
> Could sooth the tyrant's guilty thirst for blood,
> Or bind his perfidy. But thou must bend
> In all thy mildness to the blasting doom
> Of base Pizarro.[26]

The rather fabulous figure, William Dunlap (1766-1839), artist, translator, playwright, manager and producer, sometimes called the "father of the American stage,"[27] produced many plays with Spanish subject matter, such as a translation of Schiller's Don Carlos (produced 1799); a ballad-opera, The Knight of Guadalquivir (produced 1800); and a pantomime on the Don Juan theme (produced 1799).

Dunlap's translation from the German of Augustus von Kotzebue, Pizarro in Peru; or, The Death of Rolla, has survived

in an edition of 1800. Although only a translation, the play reveals, by its popularity, America's enthusiasm for certain interpretations of Spanish themes. Historians report approximately two hundred performances, beginning in 1800, but some of these may have been of British versions.[28]

Dunlap's adaptation and Pizarro: or The Spaniards in Peru (1800), the version published by Charles Smith, a New York bookseller and Dunlap's competitor, tell the same story in almost the same words. Pizarro returns to Peru to attack the Incan band led by the Spanish Alonzo de Molina and the Peruvian Rolla. In the scuffle, Alonzo is captured and imprisoned. Rolla soon takes advantage of an opportunity to save Alonzo's life, but fails to profit from another opportunity--that of murdering Pizarro. At the end of the play, the kidnapped child of Cora and Alonzo is brought in by Pizarro's henchmen. Rolla flees with the child, managing, although wounded, to fight his way to Cora. Cora clutches the child to her bosom, crying: "My child--covered with blood." But Rolla assures her that it is not the child who is dying, but himself: "It is my blood."[29]

Both plays reflect the same opinion of Pizarro. He is such a thorough-going scoundrel that his former friend, Alonzo de Molina, though the intervention of Las Casas (who has somehow

become Pizarro's underling), abandoned his Spanish compatriots to help Rolla lead the Peruvian forces. Alonzo is not to be considered a traitor, however:

> No! Deserter I am none! I was not born among robbers! pirates! murderers!--When those legions, lured by the abhorred lust of gold, and by foul ambition urged, forgot the honor of Castilians, and forsook the duties of humanity, they forsook me. I have not warred against my native land but against those who have usurped its powers.[30]

When Alonzo is finally captured, Pizarro's only thought is, of course, to torture him. Elvira pleads: "Hold!--Pizarro--hear me--If not always justly, at least act always greatly."[31] Then the conquistador directs his wrath against her and calls the guards to put her, too, to the torture. To polish off his character completely, the author has Pizarro demand, purely out of revenge, the death of Cora's baby.

The nationalistic drive was the first reason for North American interest in the conquistadores, as it was for the popularity of the Columbus theme. When British tyranny reached a climax in the Revolutionary period, writers like Freneau and Barlow looked around belligerantly for other symbols of oppression and found the Spanish. European aggressors--such as Gage and Cortés--became one and the same thing in the eyes of these advocates of New World freedom.



Concurrent with this political reason ran the more literary one--Romanticism. Spanish America offered a suitable setting for early Romantic predilections for the glamorous and faraway. This exoticism is more marked, of course, in writers like Simms and Dunlap. The former's Vision strikes the reader as sentimental, bloody, melodramatic, and naive; the tone is grandiloquent.

Although T. Robinson Warren, one of the better travel authors, wrote several decades after the period under discussion, his confession reveals how the conquistadores appealed to his sentimental nature. In the following quotation concerning Prescott's History of Peru, the involuntary admiration of Pizarro is again apparent:

> On the eve of manhood, when the imagination was the most powerful, when the mind was craving excitement, and when the soul was all susceptibility, daguerreotyping each hour new and opposite impressions; at that period of my life my eye chanced to light upon a History of the Conquest of Peru . . . so enraptured did I become with everything connected with this romantic country, that I resolved before I died, if I could possibly effect it to visit Peru . . . . Unimaginative indeed would be the youth who could follow the great historian through his captivating work, and not become deeply impressed with the individuality of each locality so faithfully described, and in each and all of the dramatis personae, whose prowess was so spiritedly set forth. To the hot blood of youth, the reckless bravery of a Pizarro would kindle an irrepressible enthusiasm in his veins . . . .[32]

Probably North American writers consulted more Spanish sources in connection with the conquests than they did for material

on Columbus. One instance in point is Bryant's friend, Robert Charles Sands, who was, not only a historian, but also a poet, essayist and author of a short story, Boyuca (1832), based on Ponce de León. His familiarity with Spanish documents about the New World is evidenced by his letter of February 10, 1828, in which he discusses preparation for the Historical Notice of Hernan Cortes (1828): "I am very much troubled for want of books. I have read Robertson and Clavigero together, and am getting through De Solis."[33]

Sands was referring to the famous history of Mexico by Francisco Javier Clavijero, and the equally famous Historia de la conquista de Mexico, Poblacion, y Progressos de la America Septentrional, conocida por el nombre de Nueva España by the Spanish dramatist and official historian of the Indies, Antonio de Solís y Rivadeneira (1610-1686). This account, of which only the first part was completed, appeared first in Madrid in 1684; a London edition, translated into English, was published in 1724.[34] This English version was owned by the Philadelphia Library Company of 1764 and the New York Society Library; a Spanish edition, by the New York Historical Society.[35]

There is no record of English or American translations before 1831 of Cortés' Cartas de relación, but presumably Sands

read some of them, either genuine or spurious, in Spanish, in connection with this introductory biography. In the same letter, he observed:

> I found the second and third letters of Cortes in the New York Society library, edited by an old fool of an archbishop of Mexico, in 1770. The archbishop's notes and commentaries are of no value.[36]

In a letter two days later, he expressed doubt concerning the letters' authenticity: "I don't believe it--that is, I don't believe they are the letters of Cortes . . . ."[37]

Possibly the chronicle of the plain, unaffected foot soldier Bernal Díaz del Castillo (1492-1584) was sufficiently read by North American writers before 1831 to be considered an influence. His Verdadera historia de la conquista de la Nueva España (1632), written to give credit to the foot soldier as López de Gómara had given credit to the leader, Cortés, has been much praised for its straightforward simplicity and sincerity. A Salem, Massachusetts (1803), reprint of Maurice Keatinge's London translation of 1800 is recorded;[38] it figured in the collection of the New York Society Library and in the Boston booksellers catalogue.[39] Sands attempted to secure some copies of the chronicle, according to the letter of February 10: "I want Guevara, Bern. Diaz del Castillo, and Herrera, the two former especially, as the latter is only a compiler."[40] And in a review of Navarrete's publication, an American

literary journal expressed admiration for Spanish chronicles of the unaffected type of Díaz':

> Not a few of the adventurous voyagers and undaunted soldiers, who first explored this continent, and bore the Spanish arms in triumph over its broad expanse, were themselves accomplished writers, who described their own fortunes and the exploits of their compatriots in the frank, simple, and engaging style of brave men, schooled in the toils of the camp and the vicissitudes of active life.[41]

The other two Spanish writers to whom Sands refers are the aforementioned Antonio de Herrera and Antonio de Guevara (1480?-1545)--a Franciscan friar and chronicler for Charles V. Guevara's El Reloj de Príncipes o Libro de Marco Aurelio (1529), which ennobled the rustic man and attacked Roman imperialism, has been pronounced a satire on European colonization of the New World. As one scholar puts it:

> Guevara, as an officer of the imperial house, did not dare to say openly that the conquistadores were tyrants and the Indians most wise saints. He concealed the Indians behind the fiction of the "Villano del Danubio".[42]

Robertson's History stimulated American interest in the conquistadores as well as in Columbus. In his first volume, Robertson devoted Book III to Hispaniola, Cuba, and a sympathetic treatment of Las Casas. For Book V of the second volume--devoted to Cortés, he credited most frequently the writings of Bernal Díaz del Castillo, Cortés, and the latter's secretary, López de Gómara. For Book VI of the third volume--concerning Peru

and Pizarro, he drew most heavily from Herrera and Augustín de Zárate's Historia del Descubrimiento y Conquista de la Provincia del Peru (1555).

Joel Barlow relied on Robertson. One scholar points out that Barlow's information on Mexico came from Robertson's Book V; the material on Peru, from Book VI.[43] In the notes to her Traits of the Aborigines, Mrs. Sigourney constantly referred to "Dr. Robertson." Although Simms did not always get Robertson's geographical facts straight--in his book, "Acapulco is a mountain in Peru"[44]--his admiration of, and indebtedness to, Robertson, even his reluctance at taking poetic license, have already been cited. From Robertson, Simms probably borrowed the incident of Guatamozin.[45]

Early American historians, who might have influenced fiction, were also more likely to draw from Robertson than directly from Spain. Richard Snowden, in his The History of North and South America (1817), admitted his complete indebtedness: "In what relates to South America, Dr. Robertson's history has . . . been implicitly followed."[46] According to the quotation from Sands' letter of February 10, he, too, used Robertson as well as Spanish material.

After 1830, the dependence of American historians continued. Prescott, in his 1847 Preface to the Conquest of Peru, praised Robertson's sketch of that country.[47] Irving cried exultantly: "The books which Robertson was years in collecting are all within my reach."[48] Then, in an act of generosity almost without precedence in literature, Irving handed over his Mexican material to Prescott who became, toward the middle of the century, the North American authority on Spanish material pertaining to the conquests.

Certain English sources should also be mentioned as contributing to North American interest in the Spanish conquests. For instance, one critic believes that Freneau owed his ideas about European conquests of the New World to the English satirist Charles Churchill (1731-1764). In Discovery, Freneau analyzed the motive behind the discovery of new lands and found it to be avarice under the guise of religion. When all was said and done, Europe did little for America except reduce her natives to slavery. The critic concluded: "In tone, subject, and style . . . [the work] is reminiscent of a portion of Churchill's Gotham, Book I, in which the English satirist discusses the doubtful blessings Europe had bestowed upon the savage."[49]

Another scholar maintains, however, that Freneau's humanitarianism, expressed in Discovery in his censure of European

expansion and reflected in the poet's pity for the plight of the West Indian Negro, came from the widely developing movement of thought and feeling in eighteenth century England: "Avarice, pride and ambition were obnoxious to him, as they were to Pope and to many another humanitarian of the eighteenth century."[50]

British plays on the subject of the conquest further stimulated North American interest. The English stage was exploiting Spanish cruelty as early as 1658 in Sir William Davenant's The Cruelty of the Spaniards in Peru. The most important British dramatic contributions to North America were, however, the London translations of Augustus von Kotzebue (1761-1819). Born in Weimar, then a resident in Russia, Kotzebue produced his plays at theatres in St. Petersburg and Reval, Virgin first appearing at the latter city in 1789. He was extremely popular in France, and his influence in London began in 1796 with the production of Die Negersklaven; and from there his influence spread to America.

Between 1790 and 1810, Kotzebue enjoyed so much popularity in England that approximately one hundred seventy editions of his works were on the market.[51] A critic of American drama claims that at least four translations of Kotzebue's Pizarro appeared in England in 1799--including one by Richard Brinsley Sheridan, much changed from the original German. Dunlap restored

it.[52] Smith's version may be simply a steal from the English, for "Coad says that only three plays by Kotzebue were actually translated by Smith and the rest are reprints of London editions."[53]

The reason for such an interpretation of the theme in North America might be partly the English Protestant antagonism toward Latin Catholicism. This scorn for the religious faith of Spain and her conquerors was noted in Simms, and will appear again in other quotations.

A more important factor, however, in determining North America's method of interpreting the conquests is simply the "black legend," an old fire for which Bartolomé de las Casas' Brevísima relación de la destruición de las Indias (1552) provided the most inflammable fuel. In a footnote to The Midnight Consultations, Freneau referred to the Dominican missionary's "History" to support his denunciation of Cortés.[54] In Sketches of American History, he speaks of Las Casas as the "good bishop."[55]

Barlow was likewise bewitched by the Bishop of Chiapa's virtues:

> Nor thou, Las Casas, best of men, shalt stay
> The ravening legions from their guardless prey.
> . . . . . .
> Oh! hapless prelate, hero, saint and sage,
> Doom'd with hard guilt a fruitless war to wage,
> To see, with grief (thy life of virtues run)
> A realm unpeopled and a world undone.[56]

In his notes to The Columbiad, Barlow praised Las Casas' famous or infamous tract.[57]

In the play Pizarro, Las Casas plays a supersaintly role. He and Alonzo seem to be the only Spaniards in search of anything but loot. Elvira contrasts Pizarro and the Bishop when she cries: "Your inhumanity--and that good Las-Casas--oh! he appeared to me just now something more than heavenly; and you! ye all looked worse than earthly."[58]

How did the "Apostle of the Indians'" baleful interpretation of the Spanish conquests reach these early authors? A few North Americans--such as Samuel Sewall and the historian, John Prince --ordered copies of his work in Spanish.[59] But the "black legend" had long been in the air; Europe had turned a scowl of disapproval on Spanish internal and external affairs for many a year. One critic lists the early French denouncers of Spanish cruelty in the New World, outstanding among whom were Montaigne, Oexmelin, Voltaire, Montesquieu, the Abbé Raynal, Marmontel, Roucher, de Paw, La Harpe, and many others. At the end of the eighteenth century other nations joined in--the leaders in the attack on Spain's foreign policy being Adam Smith, Robertson, and the German, Campe. In the early nineteenth century, the historians, Brougham, Sismondi, and Niebuhr, followed suit.[60]

The black account given by one of these French writers, Jean François Marmontel (1723-1799), undoubtedly reached the English speaking world. His Les Incas, ou La Destruction de l'Empire du Pérou (1777), a sort of dramatized novel and history, was translated into English in London the same year. It figures in the 1804 catalogue of Boston booksellers, and a copy was owned by the New York Society Library.[61] This French historian and playwright based his entire harangue on a literal interpretation of Las Casas. In the Preface, he exultantly quotes Las Casas' comparisons of the Spanish to various of the more ferocious wild beasts:

> Jamais l'histoire n'a rien tracé de plus touchant, de plus terrible, que les malheurs du Nouveau-Monde dans le livre de Las-Casas. Cet apôtre de l'Inde, ce vertueux prélat, ce témoin qu'a rendu célèbre sa sincérité courageuse, compare les Indiens à des agneaux, et les Espagnols à des tigres, à des loups dévorants, à des lions pressés d'une longue faim.[62]

The purpose of his very dramatic account of early Peru was, according to Marmontel, to give the Spanish a good tongue lashing: "Le but de cet ouvrage est donc, et je l'annonce sans détour, de contribuer, si je le puis, à faire détester de plus en plus ce fanatisme destructeur . . . ."[63]

Juderías deplored the European translations of Las Casas' Brevísima relación: ". . . y que la obra misma se traduce a

varios idiomas europeos durante el siglo XVII con tftulos cada vez más ezpeluznantes."[64] England furnished some hair-raising editions, listed by Sabin:

> The Tears of the Indians: Being an Historical and true Account of the Cruel Massacres and Slaughters of above Twenty Millions of innocent People; Committed by the Spaniards in the Islands of Hispaniola, Cuba, Jamaica, &c. As also in the Continent of Mexico, Peru, & other Places of the West Indies, to the total destruction of those Countries. 1656.[65]

A version which stressed antagonism toward the Church was:

> Popery Truly Display'd in its Bloody Colors: Or, a Faithful Narrative of the Horrid and Unexampled Massacres, Butcheries, and all manners of Cruelties, that Hell and Malice could invent, committed by the Popish Spanish Party on the Inhabitants of West India: Together with the Devastations of several Kingdoms in America by Fire and Sword, for the space of Forty and Two Years, from the time of its first Discovery by them. 1689.[66]

Any statement as to how many of these European sources for the "black legend" were actually used by North American writers is, however, conjectural. One certain channel of transmission is again Robertson, who may thus be considered not only to have helped awaken interest in the conquerors, but also to have guided the interpretation. The Scot loved facts too much, however, to dwell at length on the black picture. As Juderías remarks: "Robertson, que publicó su Historia de America en 1777 fué a decir verdad, mucho más imparcial que sus predecesores."[67]

Yet even Robertson indulged to some extent in the traditional attitude. Of Cortés' youth, he wrote: "At this period of life, he was so impetuous, so overbearing, and so dissipated, that his father was glad to comply with his inclination, and send him abroad as an adventurer in arms."[68] Of Cortés as the conquistador: "The barbarous manner in which Cortes treated a people unacquainted with the laws of war established among polished nations, appears so shocking to the later Spanish writers, that they diminish the number of those whom he punished so cruelly."[69]

Robertson's opinion of Pizarro was equally unfavorable: "During his long service in the New World, he had imbibed those ideas and maxims of his fellow-soldiers, which led them to consider its inhabitants as an inferior race, neither worthy of the name, nor entitled to the rights of men."[70] Concerning the death of Atahualpa, whom Pizarro ordered burned alive, Robertson wrote: "But pity never touched the heart of Pizarro."[71]

Late eighteenth century American writers attacked the conquistadores because the latter, like the British, typified European domination of the New World. (They also represented to Protestant America the threat of Latin Catholicism.) The early nineteenth century took over the theme because of the exotic background and characters involved. A further impetus was given by an increasing

appreciation of Spanish chronicles which were beginning to be read in the original, even in this period before Prescott's ascendancy. The interpretation of the theme was that of the fiery Las Casas, whose bitter denunciation was exploited especially in France and on the British stage, and from there it reached the United States.

Footnotes

[1] Dunlap, Charles Brockden Brown, I, 14.

[2] Julius H. Ward, The Life and Letters of James Gates Percival (Boston: Ticknor and Fields, 1866), p. 259.

[3] G. C. Verplanck (ed.), The Writings of Robert C. Sands in Prose and Verse (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1834), I, 18.

[4] For new ideas on the Spanish Conquest, see: Irving A. Leonard, Books of the Brave (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1949); Silvio Zavala, La Filosofía Política en la Conquista de América (Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1947); and José María Ots Capdequi, Instituciones Sociales de la América Española en el Período Colonial (Argentina: La Plata, 1934).

[5] North American Review, II (March, 1816), 294.

[6] Pattee, op. cit., I, 52.

[7] Ibid., p. 65.

[8] Ibid., p. 86.

[9] Ibid., p. 50.

[10] Ibid., p. 86.

[11] Ibid., p. 165.

[12] Barlow, Columbiad, p. 21.

[13] Barlow, Vision, p. 62.

[14] Ibid.

[15] Ibid., p. 65.

[16] Ibid., p. 130.

[17] William P. Trent, William Gilmore Simms (Cambridge, Boston, and New York: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1895), p. 112.

[18] William Gilmore Simms, The vision of Cortes, Cain and other poems (Charleston, S. C., 1829), p. 7.

[19] Ibid., p. 150.

[20] Ibid., p. 20.

[21] Ibid., p. 25.

[22] Ibid., pp. 147-148.

[23] Ibid.

[24] DAB, XVII. 155.

[25] Lydia Huntley Sigourney, Traits of the Aborigines of America. A Poem (Cambridge: From the University Press, 1822), p. 20.

[26] Ibid., p. 21.

[27] Oral Sumner Coad, William Dunlap, A Study of his Life and Works (New York: The Dunlap Society, 1917), p. 129.

[28] Arthur Hobson Quinn, A History of the American Drama, From the Beginning to the Civil War (New York and London: Harper & Brothers, 1923), p. 99, n. 1.

[29] Pizarro in Peru: Or, The Death of Rolla. From the German of Augustus von Kotzebue (New York: Printed by G. F. Hopkins, For William Dunlap, 1800), p. 2.

[30] Ibid., p. 47.

[31] The Dramatic Works of Baron Kotzebue, trans. Charles Smith (New York: Printed for Stephen Stephens, 1800), III, 32.

[32] T. Robinson Warren, Dust and Foam; or Three Oceans and Two Continents (New York: Charles Scribner, 1859), pp. 92-94.

[33] Verplanck, op. cit., I, 18.

[34] Sabin, op. cit., XXI, 574.

[35] Bernstein, op. cit., pp. 3, 8.

[36] Verplanck, op. cit., I, 18.

[37] Ibid., p. 19.

[38] Sabin, op. cit., V, 399.

[39] Bernstein, op. cit., pp. 9, 17.

[40] Verplanck, op. cit., I, 18.

[41] North American Review, XXIV (April, 1827), 267.

[42] Américo Castro, Antonio de Guevara, El Villano del Danubio y otros Fragmentos (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1945), p. xix.

[43] Zunder, op. cit., p. 87.

[44] Simms, op. cit., p. 150.

[45] Cf. Benjamin Bissell, The American Indian in English Literature of the Eighteenth Century (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1925), p. 16, n. 35: "An account of this famous episode is contained in William Robertson's History of America (London,

1777), Bk. 5. It is mentioned by many of the Spanish historians; Robertson cites B. Diaz, Gomara, Herrera, Torquemada. Dryden made use of this incident in his Indian Emperor, Act 5, sc. 2."

[46] Richard Snowden, The History of North and South America (Philadelphia: Benjamin Warner, 1817), p. 3.

[47] Prescott, op. cit., I, xi.

[48] Stanley T. Williams, The Life of Washington Irving (New York: Oxford University Press, 1935), I, 305.

[49] Joseph M. Beatty, "Churchill and Freneau," American Literature, II (May, 1930), 122.

[50] Leary, op. cit., p. 45.

[51] L. F. Thompson, Kotzebue, A Survey of His Progress in France, and England (Paris: Librairie Ancienne Honoré Champion, 1928), p. 55.

[52] Quinn, American Drama, pp. 98-99.

[53] Hill, op. cit., p. 96.

[54] Pattee, op. cit., I, 165.

[55] The Columbian Muse, p. 83.

[56] Barlow, Vision, p. 129.

[57] Barlow, Columbiad, p. 414, n. 29.

[58] Pizarro; or the Spaniards in Peru (New York: Printed for Charles Smith, and Stephen Stephens, 1800), p. 7.

[59] Bernstein, op. cit., pp. 1-2.

[60] Julián Juderías, La Leyenda Negra (Barcelona: Editorial Araluce, 1943), pp. 225-262.

[61] Bernstein, op. cit., pp. 8, 17.

[62] Jean François Marmontel, Les Incas, ou La Destruction de l'Empire du Pérou (Paris: Chez Verdière, Librairie, 1824), p. 7.

[63] Ibid., p. 27.

[64] Juderías, op. cit., p. 229.

[65] Sabin, op. cit., III, 401.

[66] Ibid., p. 402.

[67] Juderías, op. cit., p. 233.

[68] Robertson, op. cit., II, Bk. V, 250.

[69] Ibid., p. 524.

[70] Ibid., III, Bk. VII, 50.

[71] Ibid., p. 56.

CHAPTER III

THE NOBLE SAVAGE

In the process of venting their spleen on the conquistadores, American authors ennobled the savage. Idealization of the North American Indian is found in the writings of very early New Englanders. Of course orthodox Puritans like Cotton Mather (1663-1728) considered the Indians "doleful creatures who were the veriest ruines of mankind,"[1] and declared they were children of the devil.[2] But opponents of this kind of Puritanism--such as Roger Williams (1604-1683) and Thomas Morton (1662-1647)--tended to glorify the Indian. The former maintained the Indian had descended from the Trojans; the latter gave their ancestry as Hebraic.[3]

The Indian of Spanish America was also idealized. For instance, the rather obscure figure, James Ralph--first heard of as Benjamin Franklin's comrade in pleasure and traveling companion to England--compiled a poetic narrative called Zeuma or Love of Liberty (1729), concerning a Peruvian chieftain who fell in battle, and his mistress, captured by the Spaniards, but later rescued. This, another of the lengthy epics so popular in the

eighteenth century, laid the setting that was to become so familiar in the period between 1770 and 1830--a delightfully sylvan mise en scène in which natives romp about until their pastoral sports are interrupted by the advent of ferocious Spaniards:

> In ages past, as time revolv'd the year
> 'Twas all a round of innocent delights;
> The fearless Natives rarely heard of war
> And its destructive ills; Famine, Disease,
> And all the various plagues of other realms,
> Were there unknown; life was a constant scene
> Of harmless pleasures; and, when full of days,
> The woodland hunter and the toiling swain
> Like ripen'd fruit that, in the midnight shade,
> Drops from the bough, in peace and silence sank
> Into the grave. But when the Spanish troops,
> In search of plunder, crowded on the shore,
> And claimed, by right divine, the sovereign rule,
> Another scene began; and all the woes,
> Mankind can suffer, took their turn to reign.[4]

North American authors, however, were simply carrying on a long European tradition. According to one scholar, "the narratives of Columbus illustrate the first step in the formation of the Noble Savage idea."[5] Guevara's ennobling of the rustic man in Reloj de Príncipes may also be noted. A greater influence, however, was that of Bartolomé de las Casas. While condemning the conquistadores, he glorified the Indians to such an extent that he may be considered, as one critic puts it, "an extreme example of the 'noble savage' group."[6]

Of primary importance, too, were the Inca Garcilaso de la Vega's Royal Commentaries of Peru (1609-1617), its French translation of 1634, and the English of 1688 by Sir Paul Rycault. The Commentaries not only supplied detailed information about the Incas, especially Manco Capac, but aided and abetted the cause of savage "nobility." For "it was a sympathetic volume. Garcilaso emphasized the humanitarianism of his ancestors, their benevolent conquests, and the agricultural society which they established; and either he or the translator had interpolated hints that the Incan empire was one of the greatest achievements ever dictated exclusively by the 'laws of Nature and Reason.'"[7]

The influence of Spanish works on English literature, which in turn influenced North America, might also be mentioned. One scholar summarizes England's indebtedness to Spain as follows:

> The influence of the whole group of Spanish historians must have been very great in England. A good deal of this, to be sure, came through the French, but the early date at which many of these were translated would seem to indicate considerable interest. Selections from some of these appeared in the collections of Hakluyt and Purchas. Without attempting any complete list of these translations (many of them, like Rycault's of Garcilaso, incomplete and inaccurate), I will mention a few of the more important, in order to give some idea of their popularity. Gomara appeared in English in 1578, Acosta in 1604, Oviedo in 1613, Las Casas in 1656 (an adaptation in a work called The Tears of the Indians), Cieza de Leon in 1709, Herrera in 1740.[8]

The author of a book on the English tradition of the "noble savage" finds evidence of the theme even in the works of English rationalists from the middle of the seventeenth to the middle of the eighteenth century. He notes the earliest use of the term "noble savage"--in Part One of Dryden's Conquest of Granada (1670).[9] Many eighteenth century travelers, dramatists, poets, such as William Cowper and Thomas Gray, and novelists, including Henry Fielding and Tobias Smollett, at least touched on the theme. Then followed the great British Hispanist Robert Southey (1774-1843) with his Tale of Paraguay, a narrative in Spenserian stanzas, and Madoc (1794-1799; 1805), dealing with the adventures of a Welsh prince among Aztecs, a blank-verse poem which would seem, by its length--forty-five books--to have exhausted the subject. And one of Kotzebue's critics lists many examples to prove that English audiences were familiar with plays of Peruvian backgrounds and characters.[10]

The "noble savage"--often more noble than civilized man --is a concept that enjoyed a long tradition in France. A French scholar on the subject maintains that the longed-for ideal of the "Terrestial Paradise" inspired French writers as early as the end of the sixteenth century through the accounts of French missionaries and voyageurs and continued without interruption for

three centuries, thus linking Montaigne to Rousseau.[11] According to another French critic, some seventy works discuss the "noble savage" in the seventeenth century alone; in the eighteenth, before Rousseau's Discours sur l'origine de l'Inégalité parmi les hommes (1754), at least sixty.[12]

From the very beginning, the French tendency was to favor these children of nature and to praise their simplicity, inherent goodness, and happiness:

> On avait d'abord raconté leurs moeurs, puis dès le XVIe siècle (il y paraît à lire Montaigne), surtout a la fin du XVIIe siècle, et à travers le XVIIIe, on les avait jugées et comparées. Et presque toujours la comparaison s'était prononcée en leur faveur contre les prétendues sagesses des civilisés.[13]

In the second half of the eighteenth century, the philosophes exaggerated to the point of considering the Europeans the real savages:

> Morelly (Code de la nature, 1755) étudie l'"état de l'homme au sortir des mains de la nature" et "les traits admirables de l'humanité des peuples d'Amérique" qui "peuvent bien nous nommer sauvages." . . . . Raynal admire tour à tour les Paraguayens, les Indiens, les Caraibes, les Hottentots . . . . Les pamphletaires, qui se multiplient à partir de 1770, changent en faveur des sauvages leurs sarcasmes en lyrismes "Oh! les heureuses nations! Oh! les aimables hommes! Quelle douceur dans les moeurs! Quelle simplicité dans les lois et les usages!" (Rouillé d'Orfeuil, L'Alambie des lois, 1773).[14]

The works of some of these French writers were owned by early American libraries. For instance, the books on Santo

Domingo and Paraguay by the Jesuit missionary Pierre François Xavier de Charlevoix (1682-1761) figured in the 1723 library of Harvard College, and the Massachusetts Historical Society owned a London edition of The History of Paraguay.[15] The Histoire philosophique et politique des établissements et du commerce des Européens dans les deux Indes (1770) by the Abbé (Guillaume Thomas François) Raynal (1713-1796) was owned by the Salem Social and the Harvard College Libraries, and John Adams possessed an English translation of 1776.[16]

The chief treatment of the theme, then, in poetry and drama through 1830, was a Romantic idealization of the aborigines. In Books II, III, and IV of the Vision and Columbiad, Barlow divested Cortés and Pizarro of human decency, but clothed the pre-Columbian worlds of Mexico and Peru with peace and tranquility, and converted Incan legendary leaders into classic heroes. Capac is called "Immortal."[17]

In Book II, Columbus is shown a vision of happy Aztec Mexico

> Oh happy realm! the glad Columbus cries,
> Far in the midland, safe from every foe,
> Thy arts shall flourish as thy virtues grow,
> To endless years thy rising fame extend,
> And sires of nations from thy sons descend.[18]

Of course the "smile benignant kindling in his eyes," on viewing

this peaceful scene, is soon erased by Hesper's prophesy of the Spaniards' arrival. Book II includes also a discussion of Capac and Oella, the traditional founders of the Peruvian Empire.

Between Books II and III of the Vision, Barlow inserted "A Dissertation on the Genius and Institutions of Manco Capac," in which he compared the governments of Moses, Lycurgus, Mahomet, and Peter of Russia with that of the Peruvian leader, and concluded that "the system of Capac is the most surprising exertion of human genius to be found in the history of mankind."[19]

Book III of both versions recounts the feud between Capac's son Rocha, and Zamor, the leader of a band of mountain savages. The latter demands the death of Rocha and his companions. In the ensuing battle, Capac mortally wounds Zamor, thereby saving his son and people.

In Book IV, Columbus is told of the great Indian empire in Peru:

> In one dark age, beneath a single hand,
> Thus rose an empire in the savage land.
> Her golden feats, with following years increase,
> Her growing nation spreads the walks of peace,
> Her sacred rites display the purest play
> That e'er adorn'd the unguided mind of man.[20]

This idyllic civilization, like that of Mexico, is doomed to destruction, however, and Columbus' joy is quickly reduced to despair.

Simms, in his Vision, also visualized the Indian as more "civilized" than those who enjoyed civilization's doubtful advantages. While Barlow idealized the Peruvian Rocha, Simms did the same with the Aztec Guatamozin, who, as a great humanitarian, is contrasted with a primitive-minded Cortés. Of the former, Simms wrote in his notes: "This brave Indian, appears in all the characteristics of a hero of Romance, fully worthy of the middle ages . . . . We find him at all times, dignified and manly."[21]

Another poet already referred to--Robert Charles Sands--also tried his hand at ennobling Guatamozin and, like Barlow and Simms, used the medium of a dream or vision. Sands' Dream of Papantzin (1828) is one of many Spanish-inspired pieces which appeared in that distinguished annual and gift-book, The Talisman, edited by William Cullen Bryant. Sands first quoted in Spanish the legend recounted by Clavijero, the Mexican historian he read in preparation for his study on Cortés. Then he converted into English poetry this tale of a Mexican princess of the sixteenth century.

Soon after the Princess Papantzin's burial in a cave, a passing child hears her call forth orders to tell the Aztecs of her resurrection. To King "Moxteuczoma" who rushes to the scene, the resurrected Princess relates the revelations given her after

death. Chief among them is that of the advent of the Spaniards. The poem ends abruptly with the prophecy's fulfillment in which "stern Cortes" is contrasted with "gracious" Guatamozin:

> By the road-side, with scorn and obloquy
> The brave and gracious Guatemotzin hung;
> While to Honduras, thirsting for revenge,
> And gloomier after all his victories,
> Stern Cortes stalked. Such was the will of God.[22]

Lydia Huntley Sigourney's Traits of the Aborigines, besides lashing the Spaniards, paints a sublime picture of pre-Columbian America with its carefree inhabitants:

> O'er the vast regions of that Western world,
> Whose lofty mountains hiding in the clouds
> Conceal'd their grandeur and their wealth so long
> From European eyes, the Indian rov'd
> Free and unconquered.[23]

Peru was especially grand:

> . . . Bright the Sun
> Still shone, Peru! upon thy diamond cliffs,
> Cheer'd the soft flow'ret, blushing, while its roots
> Sprang from the sparkling ore, gilded the dome
> Of Capac's lofty temple . . . .[24]

James Gates Percival (1795-1856) was another Hispanic-minded early American poet. Like Sands, he was a friend of George Ticknor; all members of this contingent had in common an interest in foreign languages and literatures. A "Connecticut Yankee" along with Barlow, in personal eccentricity he has been compared with Edgar Allan Poe.[25] Percival's abilities did not

include a way with women--he remained a shy bachelor all his life--but they did cover many widely divergent fields. One of North America's ranking poets until his popularity was eclipsed by Bryant's, he was also a physician, editor of three geographies of the world, and, in later life, a geologist.

In Percival's unfinished Poem on the Incas (1823), the treatment of the aborigines is again glorification, but in retrospect. Monumental ruins become the motif for this rather lengthy "fragment" in which the author pretends to be in Peru viewing the "Inca's pyramid." Thus, the aboriginal theme becomes linked to the conventional "ruins of time" idea.

> MAN is born to die,
> And so are nations. Thus I mused,
> As on the Inca's pyramid
> I sat and gazed around.
> . . . . . .
> And where is now that royal race?
> Gone, and mingled with the ages,
> That have passed away.[26]

Drama of this period reveals the same tendency to glorify the Spanish American Indians. While William Dunlap and his competitor Charles Smith damned the Spanish in their adaptations of Pizarro, they made a Romantic hero of Rolla. Incredibly disinterested in his own welfare, he relinquishes his beloved Cora to the Spanish Alonzo without a whimper; in fact, because of his love for Cora, he insists on taking his rival's place in prison. When

the opportunity to stab the villainous Pizarro is presented, Rolla's inherent nobility of character stays his hand. As a final small "gesture," he gives up his life to save Cora's and Alonzo's child.

But an even better example is Dunlap's and Smith's Virgin of the Sun (1800),[27] also translated from Kotzebue. Of this latter play, a well-known historian of American drama writes: "This play may be looked upon as an expression of the general theme, so popular in the eighteenth century, of the 'noble savage.'"[28]

Virgin of the Sun concerns the same characters as Pizarro, but takes place earlier. Alonzo de Molina, already the cohort of the Peruvians, finds out that his mistress, the Peruvian sun-goddess Cora, is pregnant. The punishment meted out to goddesses in such a condition is interment alive. Naive Cora, however, is not dismayed, for the sun's rays continue to fall on her at dawn. The High Priestess and King Ataliba, however, are not so easily convinced of the sun's forgiveness and condemn both Cora and Alonzo to death. Cora's former suitor Rolla vainly intercedes in their behalf, then in desperation leads a Peruvian insurrection against the King. Ataliba hurriedly gives in to the mob, admitting that Capac's old laws are now too strict.

Thus all the "savages" are idealized. The heroic Rolla is all self-abnegation. King Ataliba turns out to be humane after

all; Capac's harsh laws are excused on the grounds that in his day disorder and lack of discipline justified them. And Peru of the time of the play is pictured as having attained such a height of tranquility and loving kindness that all former paganism should be forgiven and forgotten.

The Romantic drive accounts for the interest manifested in the great Aztec and Incan civilizations. Spanish America provided early American writers with a splendid emotional outlet--a glamorous setting and native heroes like Rocha, Rolla, and Guatamozin, who typified the heroic and sentimental. In Pizarro, Rolla, with his desires to live in a cave, away from the world, then to have Cora strew flowers on his corpse, resembles Chateaubriand's Chactas rather than an Inca. A scholar, discussing the popularity of Pizarro in England and France, writes: "Rolla was the ideal tragic hero of the 19th century . . . ."[29]

This sentimental interest in South America was to grow by leaps and bounds. One of the first plays set in South America, Virgin of the Sun stands out as a landmark. One scholar of American drama puts it: "This play of Kotzebue was one of the first to lay its scene in South America, destined to become on the American stage a country associated with romance."[30]

Direct literary influences on the North American works mentioned in this chapter came from many European countries. Robertson, for his treatise on Peru in Book VI of the third volume, drew from the chronicle of the Inca Garcilaso de la Vega. But since the Yale and Harvard Libraries, the Philadelphia Library Company of 1764, and the Massachusetts Historical Society possessed copies,[31] it is likely that the Royal Commentaries was one of the few Spanish documents to exercise a direct influence on North American writers of the period. Joel Barlow when a Yale student heaped praises on the mestizo's account of the Peruvian dynasty.

> The honest zeal of Garcilasso de la Vega in collecting these traditions into one body of history, as a probable series of facts, is to be applauded; since he has there presented us with one of the most striking examples of the beau ideal in political character, that can be found in the whole range of literature. He treats his subject with more natural simplicity, tho with less talent, that Plutarch or Xenophon, when they undertake a similar task, that of drawing traditional characters to fill up the middle space between fable and history . . . . He writes apparently with the most scrupulous regard to truth . . . .[32]

A recent scholar maintains that most of the material for the Indian battle in Book III of the Vision came from Garcilaso's narrative, although changed in the conversion of prose into epic form. According to this critic, Barlow took advantage of the fact that in Garcilaso's account two Incan youths bore the same name

--Inca II, Manco Capac's quiet, peace-loving son, was called Rocha, and so was the great warrior, Inca VI. Barlow telescoped history by attributing the deeds of the latter to the uneventful life of the former; thus he capitalized on the bravery of Inca VI and the distinguished parentage of Inca II.[33]

Another Spanish masterpiece which exerted some influence on Barlow--and incidentally on the British Hispanist Robert Southey--[34] was Alonzo de Ercilla's La Araucana (1569, 1578, 1589), an epic of thirty-seven cantos which emphasizes the heroic valor of the Chilean Indians in defending their native land. Unfortunately, even the summary in 1782 by the British poet William Hayley did not reach Barlow until his Vision was going to press:

> In reviewing this part of my subject, I have to lament, that so extraordinary and meritorious a Poem, as the Araucana of don Alonso de Ercilla, of the sixteenth century, has never yet appeared in our language. The account given of that work by Voltaire excited my curiosity at an early day; as I conceived the manners and characters of the mountain savages of Chile, as described by that heroic Spaniard, must have opened a new field of Poetry, rich with uncommon ornaments.
>
> That elegant and concise sketch of it lately given to the public by Mr. Hayley, has come into my hands, since I have been writing these notes, and but a few days previous to the Poem's being put to press. Yet it gives me reason to hope, with every friend of literature, that the whole of that great work will ere long be presented to the English Reader by the same hand.[35]

According to Sabin, an American edition of this summary came out in New York in 1808, still too late, however, even for Barlow's

later version, The Columbiad.[36] The New York Historical Society, however, owned a copy of Juan Ignacio Molina's Geographical, Natural and Civil History of Chile (1808) which carried the Araucana as an appendix.[37]

But from Voltaire's l'Essai sur la Poésie épique (1728), of which Chapter VIII is devoted to the Araucana, Barlow probably gleaned enough about the Chilean epic to form a new conception of poetry, and "it undoubtedly inspired him to devote a considerable part of his own poem to South America and its original inhabitants."[38] Voltaire's comments upon the Araucana's organization, beginning with a description of the geography of Chile and a discussion of the customs of the people, may have encouraged Barlow to include his introductory survey.[39]

As a third Spanish writer directly to inspire at least one American poet, Francisco Javier Clavijero (1731-1787) should be mentioned. This Mexican historian and friar finally moved with the Jesuits to Italy where he founded an academy and published in Italian his famous History of Mexico in which he refuted some of the absurdities of Robertson, Raynal, and Las Casas. After this Italian edition of 1780-1781, an English translation appeared in London in 1787,[40] a copy of which was owned by the New York Society Library.[41] The Spanish edition appeared in 1826, entitled

Historia Antigua de Megico [sic]. From Book V, Chapter XI, of this history, Sands took the legend of Papantzin, which he converted into poetry.[42]

Another Spanish history of the New World which enjoyed popularity in America was the Historia natural y moral de las Indias (1590) by the cosmographer and historian José de Acosta (1539?-1600). An American bibliophile and a Rhode Island library owned copies of this history,[43] which, in 1604, was translated into English. "Though not inclined to idealize"[44] the Indians, Acosta stoutly defended them.

Direct literary influences came from France as well as Spain. Much has been written, for example, concerning Voltaire's influence. Besides his interpretation of the Araucana, his favoring of real rather than fabulous heroes--a preference expressed in the Conclusion of his essay on epic poetry--may have led Barlow to choose Indian heroes who, though legendary, had some claims to reality.[45] A minor and questionable vestige of Voltairian inspiration is noted by another critic. He points out, in passing, the similarity of the name Zamor in Barlow's Vision of Columbus to a name in Alzire, Ou les Américains (1736)--Voltaire's drama depicting the struggle between the barbarous Spanish and the unfortunate Incan children of the sun: "It is interesting but of little

value to note that Zama is one of the leading characters of Voltaire's drama, Alzire."[46]

The aforementioned work of Marmontel might well be considered a fairly direct source. The story of the two opposing leaders, Pizarro and Rolla, and the two lovers, Alonzo and Cora, will be found in Marmontel's The Incas. As many critics have pointed out, this was undoubtedly Kotzebue's source for Virgin of the Sun--a play that was passed on, like Pizarro, to England, then to North America.[47]

A contemporary biographer of Barlow believed Marmontel's influence was also visible in the battle between Rocha and the mountain band, described in Book III of the Vision.[48] One modern biographer, however, maintains the influence is very limited:

> As for the possible influence of The Incas on Barlow, it is by no means pronounced. In The Incas, as in Book Three of Barlow's poem, there is an eclipse during a battle. Also, many of the facts in regard to Incas and names of Incas and Spaniards as well as the Incan Vestal Virgins Barlow mentions in his poem are found in The Incas.[49]

This last critic returns to the omnipresent Robertson, claiming he had more to do with shaping Barlow's attitude toward the savage:

> Barlow also took many of the facts about the Incas and Manco Capac in the "Dissertation" between Book Two and Book Three of his poem from Robertson's History. This work, furthermore, rather than The Incas of Marmontel probably is the source of "descriptions and relations" Dr. Smith thinks Barlow found in Marmontel's book.[50]

Robertson, whose Book IV of the second volume of History of America is devoted to American Indians, mainly credited Las Casas and French travelers, historians, and philosophers--outstanding among whom are Buffon, Muller, Hennepin, Rochefort, Lafitau, Charlevoix, and many others. Robertson's attitude toward the Indian was probably, however, derived chiefly from Rousseau whom he quoted at length:

> Other philosophers have supposed that man arrives at his highest dignity and excellence long before he reaches a state of refinement; and, in the rude simplicity of savage life, displays an elevation of sentiment, an independence of mind, and a warmth of attachment, for which it is vain to search among the members of polished society.[51]

Germany's contribution through the figure of Augustus von Kotzebue may also be noted. Of course the inspiration for his Virgin came from Marmontel, and the play reached America via British adaptations--such as Frederic Reynolds' version of 1812.

Thus the theme of the native inhabitants of Spanish America enjoyed great popularity in North America between 1770 and 1830. The treatment accorded the theme by four poets and in two plays was excessive glorification. The reason for North America's interest was the incipient desire to play up the exotic and unreal. Although Mexico and Peru are located in this hemisphere, comparatively little was actually known about their geography and

indigenous civilizations; in that day they seemed as glamorous and remote as Shangri-la.

The motif of the "noble" Spanish American savage appears to have originated in Spain in the sixteenth century, with Las Casas, Ercilla, and later the Inca Garcilaso. It was then cultivated during the eighteenth century in France and England. Through various channels the theme reached North America where writers had already considered sympathetically the plight of their native inhabitants. London was evidently the clearing-house--furnishing America with translations of the German Kotzebue, the Spanish Inca Garcilaso de la Vega and Ercilla, the French Marmontel, and London editions of Robertson's History of America--which upheld Las Casas and synthesized additional French material.

Critics disagree as to which of the five countries and which specific author exerted the greatest influence. Whether Marmontel, Robertson, or Garcilaso contributed most to Barlow's epic, for instance, is a moot question, but the latest scholar--Leon Howard --favors the Royal Commentaries. Another scholar maintains that Carcilaso's influence was greater than even that of Las Casas:

> Las Casas, because of his sympathy with the Indians, and opposition to their enslavement, has generally been supposed to have had the most influence upon the later conception of the noble savage, but a careful study would probably bring out as much or even greater influence by Garcilaso.[52]

Footnotes

[1] Magnalia (Hartford, 1820), I, 504, cited by Roy Harvey Pearce, "'The Ruines of Mankind': The Indians and the Puritan Mind," Journal of the History of Ideas, XIII (April, 1952), 212.

[2] Lewis Hanke, The First Social Experiments in America (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1935), p. 3.

[3] Davis, Frederick, Mott (eds.), American Literature, An Anthology and Critical Survey (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1949), I, 71.

[4] Evert A. and George L. Duyckinck (eds.), Cyclopedia of American Literature (New York: Charles Scribner, 1855), I, 103.

[5] Hoxie Neale Fairchild, The Noble Savage, A Study in Romantic Naturalism (New York: Columbia University Press, 1935), p. 10.

[6] Hanke, op. cit., p. 20.

[7] Howard, op. cit., p. 148.

[8] Bissell, op. cit., p. 18.

[9] Fairchild, op. cit., pp. 28-29.

[10] Thompson, op. cit., p. 85.

[11] Gilbert Chinard, L'Amérique et le rêve exotique (Paris: Librairie E. Droz, 1934), pp. v-vi, 491. See also Hanke, op. cit., pp. 6, 75: Hanke points out that not all Frenchmen held this magnanimous attitude toward the Indians. Francis I, for instance, declared them "savages living without the knowledge of God or the use of reason." Hanke criticizes the cited work of Chinard, and also the French scholar's Chapter VIII of L'Exotisme Américain dans La Littérature Française au XVIe Siècle (Paris, 1911), for ignoring certain basic treatises, and for a naive interpretation of Las Casas.

[12] Daniel Mornet, La Pensée française au XVIIIe siècle (Paris: Librairie Armand Colin, 1926), p. 59.

[13] Ibid., pp. 58-59.

[14] Ibid., p. 60.

[15] Bernstein, op. cit., pp. 5, 6.

[16] Ibid., pp. 6, 7.

[17] Barlow, Vision, p. 65.

[18] Barlow, Columbiad, p. 74.

[19] Zunder, op. cit., p. 207.

[20] Barlow, Vision, p. 129.

[21] Simms, Vision, p. 148.

[22] Robert Charles Sands, "Dream of Papantzin," The Talisman for MDCCCXXIX (New York: Elam Bliss, 1828), p. 306.

[23] Sigourney, op. cit., p. 3.

[24] Ibid., p. 20.

[25] Henry E. Legler, James Gates Percival (Milwaukee: The Mequon Club, 1901), p. 9.

[26] James Gates Percival, Poems (New York: Charles Wiley, 1923), p. 391.

[27] The Virgin of the Sun . . . From the German of Augustus von Kotzebue (New York: Printed by G. F. Hopkins for William Dunlap, 1800). And The Virgin of the Sun . . . Translated from the German of Kotzebue (New York: Printed for Charles Smith and S. Stephens, 1800).

[28] Quinn, American Drama, p. 97.

[29] Thompson, op. cit., p. 138.

[30] Quinn, American Drama, p. 97.

[31] Bernstein, op. cit., pp. 3, 5, 6.

[32] Barlow, Columbiad, p. 397, n. 17.

[33] Howard, op. cit., pp. 148-149.

[34] Fairchild, op. cit., p. 194.

[35] Barlow, Vision, p. 68.

[36] Sabin, op. cit., VI, 220.

[37] Bernstein, op. cit., p. 8.

[38] Howard, op. cit., p. 146.

[39] Ibid., pp. 146-147.

[40] Sabin, op. cit., IV, 137.

[41] Bernstein, op. cit., p. 8.

[42] Francisco Javier Clavigero, Historia Antigua de México (Mexico: Editorial Porrua, S.A., 1945), II, 42-46.

[43] Bernstein, op. cit., p. 2.

[44] Bissell, op. cit., p. 16.

[45] Howard, op. cit., p. 147.

[46] Zunder, op. cit., pp. 220-221.

[47] Ch. Rabany, Kotzebue, sa vie et son temps, ses oeuvres dramatiques (Paris: Berger-Levrault et Cie., 1893), p. 156. Also, Quinn, American Drama, p. 97, n. 1.

[48] W. P. Smith, "Account of Mr. Joel Barlow, An American Poet," The Monthly Magazine, and British Register, VI (October, 1798), 251.

[49] Zunder, op. cit., p. 302, n. 112.

[50] Ibid., p. 220.

[51] Robertson, op. cit., II, Bk. IV, 57-58.

[52] Bissell, op. cit., pp. 18-19.

CHAPTER IV

EMANCIPATION OF SPANISH AMERICA

By 1821 the Spanish American colonies were virtually independent, although the mother country refused to acknowledge the reality. During this last year, Spain finally ratified the Treaty of 1819 by which she had ceded Florida; the following year, the United States formally recognized Spanish American independence; and in 1823 President Monroe issued his famous doctrine.

During these first three decades of the nineteenth century, North America watched with anxious concern Spanish America's progress on the road to freedom. The leading North American literary journal assured its readers they would be kept au courant on developments below the border: ". . . we think the concerns of South America so important in connection with our own country, that we shall not fail to give them the full share of attention which they may justly claim."[1]

The air was full of smoke from the bonfire lighted by American patriots for the sake of freedom throughout the world, and especially throughout the United States. Statesmen, such as

John C. Calhoun and Henry Clay "who was filled with a passionate zeal for the South American patriots,"[2] urged the United States to recognize Spanish American independence. Other distinguished North Americans, including the writers James Fenimore Cooper and William Cullen Bryant, the sculptor Horatio Greenough, and the inventor Samuel F. B. Morse, defended Spanish America's cause. Van Wyck Brooks writes:

> Morse rejoiced that America had "no titles of nobility, no ribbons, and garters, and crosses, and other geegaws that please the great babies of Europe;" and, along with Cooper and Bryant, he backed revolutionists everywhere, in Poland, in South America, in Italy, in France. For in those days Americans believed in republics: they were convinced that God was tired of kings.[3]

Some famous North Americans were even physically engaged in the struggle. The Hispanic-minded Anna Cora Ogden Mowatt Ritchie (1819-1870), who later wrote a long poem on Pelayo--a popular Spanish historical figure--devoted part of her Autobiography to her father's part in the celebrated Miranda expedition of 1806 --one of the earliest attempts to liberate Venezuela and Colombia and to revolutionize Spanish colonies. According to Mrs. Ritchie, Samuel G. Ogden was the "capitalist" owner of the ship "Leander" which carried the expedition to southern waters. But because the treacherous Aaron Burr informed the Spanish minister in Philadelphia of the plans, the "Leander" was intercepted by Spanish

vessels, and the expedition failed dismally. Ogden was later prosecuted for outfitting an expedition against a power friendly to the United States, but was acquitted. And, recollects Mrs. Ritchie:

> Although this expedition failed, it was the first blow struck for liberty, and led to the subsequent independence of South America. Bolivar himself made this declaration, and expressed a readiness to compensate my father for his heavy losses.[4]

The chief treatment of the theme, then, was political in nature, with Spain a symbol of tyranny; Spanish America, regarded perhaps more sympathetically than it is today, symbolized the oppressed.

Some poets clamored for the freedom of all the Spanish colonies in general. Although James Gates Percival refers most often to the region of La Plata in his Ode on the Emancipation of South America (1821), the poem is dedicated to the freedom of the whole continent. Percival was another of those who advocated the suppression of tyranny throughout the world--this short poem being one of a series calling for freedom in Latin America, Greece, Poland, even in Spain itself--freedom from the tyranny of Ferdinand VII.

The following lines reveal the kinship that North Americans felt toward Spanish Americans who were undergoing Old World domination similar to that which the former had suffered in pre-Revolutionary days.

Sister in freedom! O'er the main
We send our hearts to thee:[5]

Philip Freneau was concerned with the freedom of Colombia and Venezuela in his poem On General Miranda's Expedition, first published in an 1815 collection. Doughty Freneau did not fail to point out that the previously discussed project of Francisco de Miranda ended in a fiasco:

To execute a vast design,
The soul, Miranda, was not thine:
With you the fates did not combine
To make an empire free.[6]

A third early North American to interest himself in the cause of Spanish American freedom was William Cullen Bryant (1794-1878)--the well-known poet and editor from Massachusetts. He was also an aficionado of things Spanish. As one critic of this aspect of Bryant, R. M. Peterson, concludes: "Beyond question he should be classed as a true Hispanophile."[7]

Bryant was most concerned about freedom within the Spanish Peninsula, but he was also interested in the welfare of one of the far-flung colonies, as evidenced by The Damsel of Peru. Although critics differ with respect to the dating of Bryant's poems,[8] Damsel was probably first published in 1826 when it appeared in the United States Review and Literary Gazette.[9]

Bryant's interest in the mother country is seen in comparisons between Spain and Peru throughout this poem which tells of a Peruvian "damsel" who sings as she awaits her lover's return:

> 'Tis a song of love and valor, in the noble Spanish tongue
> That once upon the sunny plains of old Castile was sung;
> When, from their mountain-holds, on the Moorish rout below
> Had rushed the Christians like a flood, and swept away the foe.
> Awhile that melody is still, and then breaks forth anew
> A wilder rhyme, a livelier note, of freedom and Peru.

On the day she was to be married, she had sent her lover off to fight the Spanish:

> For she has bound the sword to a youthful lover's side,
> And sent him to the war the day she should have been his bride,[10]

At the end of the poem, the hero returns. It is to be assumed that since he has now done his duty, the young lady will accept his hand:

> I lay my good sword at thy feet, for now Peru is free,
> And I am come to dwell beside the olive-grove with thee.[11]

The theme of the emancipation of Spanish America continued, but at times native tyrants replaced Spain. North American literature afforded them the same venomous treatment it showed the mother country.

One such dictator was the ambitious creole Agustín de Iturbide (1783-1824), who triumphantly entered Mexico City in 1821. The following year he was declared Emperor Agustín I,

but his reign was short-lived, for in 1823, at the revolt of Santa Anna, he was forced to flee the country. Secretly returning the following year, Iturbide was recognized, captured, and shot.

In The Fall of Iturbide; or, Mexico Delivered (1823), Henry King Strong (preceptor of the Pittsfield Academy, according to the title page) struggled with this subject. The plot concerns Iturbide's love for Larinda, the only member of his coterie who fails to do him homage. This lack of respect might be easily understood, however, for by Iturbide's orders Larinda's father had been tortured to death on the rack. Furthermore, she is in love with the young Mexican general, Carlina. On discovering the identity of his rival, Iturbide sends Carlina to prison to await the rack, too. But Larinda, in male disguise, takes Carlina's place in the prison cell, allowing him to rush to his troops for succor. At this moment, Iturbide enters the cell. On discovering the prisoner's identity, he is about to stab her. But somehow Carlina has been able to reach the army--a league from Mexico City--and to return within the space of a few minutes, just in time to do the stabbing himself. Iturbide receives the fatal blow, instead of Larinda.

Like Spain, Iturbide symbolized tyranny; Mexico had simply jumped from the frying pan into the fire. Larinda bemoans the quick turnover of tyrants:

> Happy, happy country, were it not for
> Iturbide. Scarce were thy fetters broken
> That had clank'd for ages, e'er that Monster
> Rose to rivet them again. None even
> Dare to lisp the name of liberty--'tis
> Certain death.[12]

In the Epilogue, the author proudly claims that though there were many plays about other tyrants--such as Brutus, Caesar, and others--his was the first to treat of a native tyrant.

> In mimic pomp this night we first have seen
> A Native tyrant grace the tragic scene
> The first proud monarch on Columbia's shore.[13]

Native or Spanish tyranny, they were all the same to proud North America--where neither would be brooked. The object of the play, explains the author, is "to expose the hateful deformities of vice and to excite the sympathies in favor of virtue, and inspire the young American with a love for our free institutions . . . ."[14] There may be tyrants in other regions of the globe, but in this hemisphere they were <u>verboten</u>:

> But fair Columbia with her broad domain
> Shall own no Monarch--wear no Tyrant's chain,
> For Freedom's banners shall in every clime
> Soon wave as deathless as the roll of Time.[15]

A second treatment of the theme of the emancipation of Spanish America was more Romantic than patriotic. Some authors, instead of regarding Spanish America as a symbol of political

oppression, exploited it as a highly colorful setting for stories of adventure and romance.

The first North American novel to make such use of Mexico was written by Timothy Flint (1780-1840)--Harvard graduate, novelist, and editor of The Western Monthly Review. He and his daughter Emeline were also minor Hispanists, he writing several short stories on Spanish America, and she supposedly translating Spanish verse. Flint was at various times an Unitarian, a Methodist preacher, and a Presbyterian missionary, but regardless of this religious background, he was inclined to be a liar. Although he claimed to have traveled even to Europe and South America, biographers think his wanderings, though wide enough to include the American Midwest, certainly did not extend even as far as Old Mexico.[16]

Francis Berrian, or the Mexican Patriot (1826), though praised highly by the very critical Englishwoman Frances Trollope,[17] is an implausible yarn filled with superman episodes, kidnappings, and revolutions below the border. The author relates the supposed life story of Francis Berrian--a handsome young New England Puritan whom he met on a steamboat going West. Filled with Romantic ennui, Francis was like those "many gallant and high-minded men, to whom no career was open in the United

States, who disdained oppression, and under that generous feeling, and a cupidity fired with the prospect of the Mexican mines, united West of the Sabine."[18] Francis joined the Patriot party and, in company with a comic Irishman, engaged in Patriot-Royalist revolutions and Indian skirmishes.

Then the Romantic interest enters this incredible picture. Francis falls in love with Martha Miguela d'Alvaro, but their cause is opposed by Martha's father who seems to be on the other side of the fence in almost all matters. Not only is he Catholic--while Francis is naturally Protestant--but he is also a Royalist. Martha, however, overlooks these basic differences and almost instantly prefers her rugged young North American suitor to her native one, even though the latter is Iturbide's right-hand man.

Incidentally, this triangle, composed of a noble born Spanish heroine fresh from a convent, a clean-minded North American suitor, and a dissipated Latin one, is repeated in Simms' play, Michael Bonham; or, The Fall of Bexar (1852). And a Spanish American heroine's love for a North American became a common motif, found in the short story, Paulina, or the Cataract of Tequendama, published in Timothy Flint's Western Monthly Review of March, 1830, and in Anne Royall's The Tennesseean.

A curious twist, however, is given to Flint's romance. It contains a second heroine, the refugee Wilhelmina de Benvelt, who is also in love with Berrian. When he and Martha settle down in New England where they plan to spend six months of each year--the other six in Mexico--Wilhelmina settles down with them!

The sentimental interest furnished by Spanish America is summed up in the following conversation between Francis and the author himself. It is to be noted that they are completely in accord with one another's views, since, as one critic points out, Francis was really only Timothy's raissoneur, the novel being partly biographical:[19]

> "This true history will seem to you little short of a romance. You matter-of-fact people here in the States, are, I am sensible, inclined either to ridicule romantic feeling and adventure, or, still worse, to view it as having immoral tendencies, and tending to unnerve the mind, and unfit it for the severer and more important duties of life." "Have no fear upon that score," I cried, "for I, at least am not one of them. It is so long since I have heard of nothing but dollars and cents, the mere mercenary details of existence, that I languish to be introduced to another world. I heartily despise the idle declamation against romances, which I so often hear. Poesy and romance are the higher and holier matters of the intellectual world . . . . The Arabians and the Spanish, and generally the more sensible and intellectual people of the South were delighted with romances . . . . I have heard many a good soul declaim that he would be glad if there was nothing of romance in the world. I should regard him who could, and would, destroy the illusions of fancy and the imagination, as I would the evil genius, who would destroy the foliage and flowers from the trees, to give us fruit from the naked stem."[20]

The causes of American authors' interest in the theme of Spanish American freedom might be categorized as literary, political, and economic. The first resulted from the swiftly increasing interest in sentimental treatments. A declamatory and patriotic Romanticism is evident in the foregoing poems of Freneau, Percival, and Bryant, and a fantastic type in the wild plots of Strong's play and Flint's novel.

Critics point out the imported sources of Flint's exotic tendencies. One scholar of Western writers of fiction identifies them as Scott and Byron.[21] A more obvious source, however, was the great French Romanticist, François-René de Chateaubriand (1768-1848), whose four months' trip to America (1791) resulted in Atala (1801), René (1802), and Les Natchez (1826). Francis quotes from Chateaubriand throughout the novel, as, for instance, his reference to Génie du Christianisme.[22] A leading scholar of the North American novel, speaking of Berrian who was in reality Flint, sums up this influence in the following succinct fashion:

> Obviously here was a man ripe to appreciate the sentiments of Chateaubriand, whose books had lately been published in America. Add mouldy ruined monuments and agreeably melancholy thoughts of the tomb to Cooper's experience of forest solitudes, and you get something like the tone of Chateaubriand. And so we find Francis Berrian announcing this new note in American fiction--a sympathetic response to Chateaubriand's variety of tender mysticism in forest fastnesses. Berrian tells the Condesa of his passion for the author of

Atala (which he quotes from memory), and he vouchsafed that Chateaubriand's travels afford passages of poetic fervor which provide "abundant aliment for day-dreams."[23]

It is to be questioned, however, whether the exoticism of Francis Berrian is not partly American in spirit. Although the hero occasionally pouts in the sentimental manner, his virile, blood-and-thunder exploits are far removed from the delicate, nostalgic reminiscences and musings of Chateaubriand. Perhaps North American adventures in outlying Spanish territories and the development of the western frontier--personally witnessed by Flint, Simms, and other early literary travelers to the West--gave a more rugged and adventurous slant to their Romanticism.

Political reasons account not only for North America's interest in the theme, but also for her interpreting it as a black-and-white conflict between Spain, the tyrant, and Spanish America, the oppressed. The Revolution was fresh in the minds of North Americans; by mental projection they could feel Spanish America's similar position, as pointed out by Francis Berrian when speaking of North Americans who joined the Patriot's ranks: "Their avowed object was to aid the Patriot natives in communicating to this oppressed and beautiful country, the entire freedom of their own."[24] A leading literary journal of the day also reveals this sympathy which came from personal experience:

> Our example has animated the South American provinces to declare themselves independent, and the times are fresh in our recollection, when our own enthusiasm and courage were inflamed by the same exclamations of liberty, rights, independence, tyranny; and we feelingly remember with what fearful odds the ardour of stripling power wages war against the mature and practiced strength of habitual authority.[25]

The economic reason for North America's interest and interpretation should not be underestimated. North American sympathy for Spanish America was not wholly altruistic, for the latter's political liberation meant the former's commercial freedom in southern waters. Adventurers from the United States were already exploiting Spanish American treasures, as evidenced by the popularity of trade articles such as Dr. Willard's Inland Trade with New Mexico, 1825, published in Flint's Western Monthly Review in April and May, 1829. According to Flint's Preface, North American profiteers were everywhere: "Into what nook of our globe can we penetrate, and not find our citizens with their 'trade and traffic'?"[26] Even Longfellow's father was commercially minded enough to urge his son to study Spanish rather than Italian or German, "owing to the relations developing between the United States and South America."[27]

For a time the United States feared these favorable commercial relations with the Spanish Colonies might be halted by the return of Latin America to that despotic monarch of the early

nineteenth century, Ferdinand VII (1784-1833); this concern added to North American bitterness toward Spain. Such a move had indeed been planned by the Austrian statesman Prince Clemens Metternich (1773-1859) and his Quadruple Alliance, at the Congress of Verona in 1822. Clay, among others, "saw the Holy Alliance darkly plotting to restore the imperial despotism of Spain, and he longed to form a league of new-world republics to oppose this odious relic of the Middle Ages."[28]

Thus North American writers, whether impelled by sentimental, patriotic, or economic motives, clamored for the freedom of Spanish America. It was the established residents of this hemisphere--first the aborigines, then the creoles--who received North American praise. Spain herself, in both cases, came out on the short end. When she discovered and conquered, she was damned; when she tried to retain her holdings, she was again consigned to the nether regions. It was the Romantic era wherein nuances were not recognized; right was right, and Spain was usually wrong. But as Spanish territories opened up and fortune seekers from the United States penetrated them, literary Romanticism assumed a more American, less French cast. Although Chateaubriand's ennui was certainly in evidence, the exoticism of North American

writers resulted, in general, from physical rather than mental turmoil.

Footnotes

[1] North American Review, XXIV (April, 1827), 300.

[2] Van Wyck Brooks, The World of Washington Irving (New York: E. P. Dutton & Company, Inc., 1944), p. 241.

[3] Ibid., p. 33.

[4] Anna Cora Mowatt, Autobiography of an Actress; or, Eight Years on the Stage (Boston: Ticknor, Reed, and Fields, 1854), p. 14.

[5] James Gates Percival, Poems (New Haven: Published for the author by A. H. Maltly & Co., 1821), p. 33.

[6] Pattee, op. cit., III, 271.

[7] R. M. Peterson, "Bryant as Hispanophile," Hispania, XVI (1933), 412.

[8] A. H. Herrick, "Chronology of a Group of Poems by W. C. Bryant," MLN, XXXII (1917), 180-182.

[9] Henry C. Sturges (ed.), The Poetical Works of William Cullen Bryant (New York and London: D. Appleton and Co., 1926), p. lxix.

[10] Ibid., p. 100.

[11] Ibid., p. 101.

[12] Henry K. Strong, The Fall of Iturbide; or, Mexico Delivered (Pittsfield: Printed by Phinehas Allen, 1823), p. 5.

[13] Ibid., p. 37.

[14] Ibid., unpaginated preface.

[15] Ibid., p. 38.

[16] John Ervin Kirkpatrick, Timothy Flint, Pioneer, Missionary, Author, Editor, 1780-1840 (Cleveland: The Arthur H. Clark Co., 1911), p. 223.

[17] Frances Trollope, Domestic Manners of the Americans (London: George Routledge and Sons, Ltd., 1927), pp. 147, 270, etc.

[18] Flint, op. cit., I, 5.

[19] Alexander Cowie, The Rise of the American Novel (New York: American Book Co., 1948), p. 216.

[20] Flint, op. cit., pp. 10-14.

[21] Ralph Leslie Rusk, The Literature of the Middle Western Frontier (New York: Columbia University Press, 1926), p. 18.

[22] Flint, op. cit., p. 132.

[23] Cowie, op. cit., p. 217.

[24] Flint, op. cit., p. 5.

[25] North American Review, V (July, 1817), 226-227.

[26] Reuben Gold Thwaites (ed.), Early Western Travels, 1748-1846 (Cleveland: The Arthur H. Clark Co., 1905), XVIII, 327.

[27] Orie William Long, Literary Pioneers (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1935), p. 163.

[28] Brooks, World of Washington Irving, p. 241.

CHAPTER V

PENINSULAR HISTORY AND LEGEND

Peninsular Spain attracted romantically inclined North American writers by its colorful history--an arabesque woven by a succession of foreign usurpers with threads from both the East and the West. Because of the occasional indistinguishable fusion of historical fact and legendary fancy, the fabric was of an even more intricate design.

Fancy as well as facts captivated the greatest of the American Hispanists, Washington Irving and William Hickling Prescott. In their day, historians endeavored to produce works entertaining and engrossing as well as carefully documented. As the eighteenth century author of the quixotic novel Modern Chivalry put it: "History has been well said to be the Romance of the human mind; and Romance the history of the heart. When the son of Robert Walpole asked his father, whether he should read to him out of a book of history; he said, 'he was not fond of Romance.'"[1]

With this tolerant and sentimental attitude toward Spain's confused and fissured history, Irving and Prescott encompassed

practically all the story of Spain, from legendary to contemporary days,[2] and the popularity of their works reflect America's fascination for the theme. Because it reads like a novel, Irving's Conquest of Granada, one of his few historical pieces to fall within the period under discussion, might be included in this study. But as well-documented history, too, it has stood the test of time--according to a recent article.[3]

Further proof of North American interest in the history of Spain is furnished by the presence of well-known histories in eighteenth century libraries. Copies of the Historia general de España, written in Latin by the Jesuit padre Juan de Mariana, then published in Spanish in 1601, figured in the collections of the historian John Prince, the Philadelphia Library Company of 1764, and the Harvard College Library. John Adams owned copies in both English and Spanish.[4]

In the period through 1830, the beginning of an interest in Spain's history appears in the genres of poetry and drama. The first treatment of the theme was again political and patriotic in spirit--a holdover from the eighteenth century of Freneau and Barlow. Writers sought, in Spanish history, from the period of Roman domination to the nineteenth century, instances which depicted

political oppression or revolt; Spain sometimes symbolizing the tyrant, sometimes the victim.

In his play Sertorius, or the Roman Patriot (1830), David Paul Brown (1795-1872), one of Philadelphia's most distinguished lawyers, went back to the period of Spain's first foreign master, Rome.

According to Brown's notes, he based this grandiloquent and oratorical, but very dull and long-winded, play on Plutarch's account of Sertorius in Volume VIII of Lives.[5] Quintus Sertorius, General in Spain, refuses to join with the King of Pontus, Mithridates, and Spanish revolutionary groups to throw off the Roman yoke. A rival commander, Persenna, however, is ready and waiting to turn traitor to Rome and wins the people to his side. Sertorius turns over the command to him and bows out gracefully.

Quickly defeated by the Romans, Spain is now worse off than before. The populace begs Sertorius to lead them again, but, offended by their former support of Persenna, he refuses until his beloved Marcia adds her plea to the people's. Spain's commander once again, Sertorius proposes to fight Metellus, Pompey's aid, in single combat, and thus end the war without wholesale bloodshed; but the cowardly Metellus refuses, fearing Sertorius' skill with the sword.

In the general conflict which ensues, Spain triumphs, and "Sertorius has won immarcesible fame."[6] But the play is a "tragedy," and prospects of its ending happily are soon blighted when jealous Persenna, having lost out to Sertorius both in matters of state and the heart--he, too, loved Marcia--invites Sertorius to a Victory Feast. There the traitor stabs Sertorius as Marcia enters and swoons over her beloved's dead body.

This is a play about revolt against tyranny, but in this instance, Spain is placed in a sympathetic light--as the oppressed. Spain also enjoys this North American favor in a poem by Simms.

In The Spanish Chief, published in Simms' collection of 1827, Early lays, the scene shifts to the period of Moorish domination. The "chief" is expiring beside his native Guadalquivir, presumably after an unsuccessful attempt to hold off the Moors. His beloved escapes from the captors and reaches the hero's "bosom" to die with him. Simms berates the Moorish "tyrant" and sympathizes with the "patriot" chief:

> Oh, vain to tyrant ears the moan,
> From the patriot bosom breaking;[7]

Spain again receives condolence in The Ladies of Castile (1790), by Mercy Otis Warren (1728-1814), but now the setting is the sixteenth century. This Massachusetts-born playwright

and historian belonged to a family celebrated in American history as ardent colonial patriots. Sister of James Otis, the statesman and writer, she married James Warren, active in the patriot ranks of the Revolutionary War. She apparently enjoyed the friendship of well-known American leaders like Samuel and John Adams, and Jefferson. With some she kept up a flourishing correspondence--she and Mrs. John Adams addressed each other in their letters as "Marcia" and "Portia."[8]

Probably this devotion to the cause of freedom led Mrs. Warren to choose the tyranny of the Emperor Charles V as a subject for her play. From Flanders, where he was brought up, he came to the Peninsula in 1516, as Charles I of Spain. Because of the favor he showed his Flemish courtiers, the selling of privileges, the raising of the alcabala, and other unjust practices, Charles soon enraged the Cortes, the clergy, and the Spanish people. As he set out for Germany to be crowned Emperor Charles V, a riot broke out in Toledo; civil wars soon followed in other parts of Spain, and then war was declared with Francis I. Charles abdicated in 1556 in favor of his son, Philip II, perhaps the chief monument to the greatness of the former's reign being the fact that it was the era of the conquistadores.

The Ladies of Castile concerns the political maneuverings of the wives of Spain's great during a period of utter confusion brought on from without by the French attack and from within by civil discord. The women are caught between the two opposing camps--the "patriot" one led by Don Juan de Padilla, Commander of the troops raised by the States of Spain; and the monarchical camp headed by Don Velasco, Regent in the absence of Charles V.

Members of the first camp, desirous of peace, maintain that Charles is the cause of conflict; they want him done away with by fair means or foul. One of this group, for instance, reveals his hatred of the monarch by associating him with the now traditional "black legend":

> But thirst of gold--the cursed thirst of gold,
> Which plunder'd Mexico of all its wealth,
> And broil'd her valiant sons in quest of more,
> Is a feverer tyrant of the mind,
> Than coarser vice that mark'd our simpler state,
> Ere cruel Spain explor'd that distant world.[9]

Padilla's wife Donna Maria voices equally intense dislike:

> Yet justice's sword can never be resheath'd
> 'Till Charles is taught to know we will be free;
> And learns the duty that a monarch owes,
> To heaven--the people--and the rights of man.[10]

She counsels her brother Don Francis to kill De Haro, Velasco's son. He is loath to do so, however, for he loves Louisa--she is Velasco's daughter and De Haro's sister.

Poor Louisa, politically in sympathy with Padilla and emotionally in sympathy with her lover, Francis, is yet mindful of family ties to her father and brother:

> What have I done--my filial love,
> And the connubial ties--at variance set--
> A brother's life against a husband's stak'd--
> My country's weal, with loyalty at war--
> Confusion--tumult--death and slaughter reign;[11]

Velasco's troops win over the States of Spain, and Padilla and Francis end up in chains. But De Haro, less of a villain than his father, allows Francis to escape to seek grace from Charles and permission for marriage to Louisa. All this Francis manages to accomplish, but not in time, for Louisa, ignorant of Francis' pardon and fearful of an unwelcome marriage, stabs herself. Francis does likewise.

By chronological order of setting, the next work to find examples of tyrants and victims in Spanish history and to garb the Spanish people in the cloth of the latter is William Cullen Bryant's poem The Spanish Revolution (1809), a work of one hundred thirty-five lines in the heroic measure. The historical background is now the early nineteenth century. The weak monarch Charles IV had handed the reins of government to Queen María Luisa and the Prime Minister, Godoy. When Napoleon demanded concessions, the three planned to flee to America as the Regents of Portugal

did in 1807. But upon escape, Godoy was seized as a traitor, and Charles abdicated in favor of his son Ferdinand. In 1808 Napoleon placed his brother Joseph Bonaparte on the Spanish throne; four years later Spanish cities organized a league of defense and a constitution for limited monarchy.

Bryant confessed his youthful years--he was only fourteen or fifteen at the time--as he began this patriotic harangue:

> A BARD, in science young, unskill'd in song,
> Essays to tell, how, rous'd by gathering wrong,
> Iberia, rising from disgrace and chains,
> Repuls'd th' Usurper from her native plains;

Then Bryant attacked the tyrant, Napoleon:

> When Bonaparte, (his death-dispensing hand
> Extending rudely o'er th' Iberian land,)
> Tore, to exalt a favorite of his own,
> The lineal monarch from his rightful throne;[12]

According to this violently Romantic interpretation, the rebellion in Spain was first voiced as "a soft, a low complaint," but grew terrible with insurrection and massacres until Iberia triumphed.[13] Bryant then exhorted his own country to help Spain:

> My country! think, what injur'd Spain endures,
> Her righteous cause is liberty's,--'tis yours!
> Her generous sons, who, French finesse despise,
> Would gladly meet thy nourishing supplies.
> Why then, does Commerce still delay to steer
> To their green shores her breeze-compell'd career!
> Rise! bid her spread her enterprizing sail,
> And raise her streamers to the wavy gale;
> Explore the bounties of the torrid zone,
> And let its ripe productions be our own![14]

The keynote of the poem is the glorification of common people who will rise up in any land against a tyrant:

> Who, but indulges in the generous tide
> Of patriot feelings, with a noble pride?[15]

On Napoleon's abdication in 1814, Ferdinand VII returned to Spain, having promised to maintain the Constitution of 1812. But he soon annulled it and dissolved the Cortes. As a result of these acts and of his despotic rule, there broke out in 1820 a military insurrection which was successful enough that Ferdinand again had to swear to uphold the Constitution. But in 1823, with the aid of an army from Louis XVIII of France, Ferdinand was able to restore an absolute monarchy, and the Spanish people once more found themselves victims of political oppression.

Bryant made use of these years, too, to sympathize with the Spanish people. In Spain (1822), he deplored the country's quick submission to another despot, after having just thrown off the yoke of Napoleon.

> Aye, wear the chain--ye who for once have known
> The sweets of freedom--yet would crouch again
> In blind and trembling worship of a throne;

Then he exhorted Spain to recover that inherent spirit of freedom which once drove off the Moors:

> The spirit that of yore had slept so long,
> Then woke, and drove the Moors to Afric's shore

Lives, and repressed, shall rise one day more strong--
Rise and redeem your shackled race once more,[16]

Bryant's The Lament of Romero (1826) voices the same dislike of Ferdinand VII. Romero, the Romantic hero, declares:

The perjured Ferdinand shall hear
No oath of loyalty from me.[17]

And Romero deplores Spain's renewed oppression:

Fair-fair-but fallen Spain! 'tis with a swelling heart
That I think on all thou mightst have been, and look at what thou art;[18]

From the pen of Freneau Spain never received sympathetic treatment. Of course his selections from Spanish history deal not with the oppressed Peninsular inhabitants, but with Spain as a world power. France recognized American independence in 1778, then formed an alliance with Spain and Holland to declare war on England. By the Treaty of Paris in 1783, America's territory was recognized as extending West to the Mississippi. To these European bids for favor--now that America was "Freed from a cruel parent's care"[19]--Freneau sarcastically refers in The Rival Suitors for America, first published in a 1795 issue of the Jersey Chronicle. Of Spain, one of the "rival suitors," he snapped:

The Spaniard grave, with cloak and sword,
Some favour from the nymph implor'd--
Vain were his tears and coaxing art--
She could not bear a jealous heart.[20]

An amusing bit of doggerel, entitled Epitaph Upon a Spanish horse called Royal-Gift (1816), concerns that sore point between America and Spain, the mouth of the Mississippi River, then controlled by Spain. Between 1782 and 1796, an attempt was made to settle the problem, ending in the Jay-Garoqui agreement of 1785. But this agreement was never ratified, and western settlers, still lacking free navigation of the Mississippi, threatened to leave the Union or wage war on Spanish settlements.

To help soothe the angry Union, the King of Spain sent Washington a gift, one which did not meet with much favor in Freneau's eyes. Although his pen was anything but "weak," as he professes, he allows the horse to speak.

> As my pen is rather weak
> May I, sirs, your pardon seek,
> If the horse himself shall speak;

The horse relates that he was a King's favorite, and often trotted his master around the Prado in Madrid. But since he capriciously threw his "honoured load" on several occasions, the King:

> "Angry at my vicious way,
> He sent me to America
> To witness presidential sway.
>
> "He sent me here, without Petition,
> T' escape the Holy Inquisition;
> Such was the purpose of my mission.

"Weary of the Royal Plan
Hither I came to find a man,
and die--a GOOD REPUBLICAN."[21]

A second way of treating Spanish history was from a purely literary standpoint. North American writers, such as James Gates Percival, found in the annals of Spain--especially in those of Moorish Spain--a flower of rank and colorful growth.

Percival's blank verse play, Zamor, a Tragedy (1815), is indeed a "tragedy"--in many ways. It concerns the rivalry in love between the Spanish Alonzo and the Moorish Zamor. Both love Alzira, daughter of Abdallah, the king of Granada. Zamor professes to be a friend to all, but in reality is jealous of the preference Alzira shows Alonzo, and nurses a deep-seated grudge against Abdallah for having struck him from his list of warriors.

When Abdallah is again attacked by the Spanish, he calls in Zamor, apologizes for having wrongly accused him of losing a battle, and reinstates him. Zamor outwardly appears to accept the apology, but inwardly swears revenge on the three A's--Abdallah, Alonzo and Alzira. The sweetness of this revenge is soon tasted; Zamor tells Abdallah that his daughter is Alonzo's mistress. To the Christian-hating Abdallah this justifies murder, and he proceeds to stab his daughter to death.

Although Abdallah wins his battle with the Christians, he finds no peace of mind. Grief-stricken over murdering his daughter, he then learns through the treacherous Zamor that his only son, Almanzor, died in the fracas. Zamor, having taken over the army, soon puts an end to his sorrow by stabbing him. Finally justice is meted out--Almanzor, alive after all, rushes in, slays Zamor, and wins back the Moorish army.

In this wild melodrama, Zamor is painted completely black:

> Yes, I'm a savage, Ibrahim, complete
> In all the wickedness, in all the hard,
> Unfeeling cruelty, and all the cunning,
> That mark a savage of the fellest stamp.[22]

And Spanish history is treated only as an excuse for Romantic implausibility.

Simms drew upon Peninsular history in like manner, as evidenced by a trivial poem published in Early lays. Fragments consists of a dialogue between Roderick and his lady, Marina. Her jealousy is the sentimental poem's only theme:

> And a wife too, Roderick,
> Whose duty should, if her wild heart cannot,
> Instruct her, that her Lord's most wandering look
> Is no authority for her's to roam.[23]

Incidentally, the theme of Roderick, the last of the Visigothic kings in Spain, enjoyed considerable popularity in America. For his Don Roderick in The Conquest of Granada, Irving admitted

drawing on Sir Walter Scott's The Vision of Don Roderick (1811), in dull Spenserian stanzas, and Robert Southey's blank verse poem Roderick the last of the Goths (1814).[24] Then, after 1830, the Visigothic period was treated in novels by Simms and in a poem by Anna Cora Ogden Mowatt Ritchie.

The reasons for American interest in the history of Spain were those discussed in connection with other Spanish themes. First of all, America was psychologically conditioned against tyrants. Her hatred of Great Britain led her to denounce other European oppressors and to glory in the democratic principles she professed to have achieved. It was the age of Thomas Paine's The Rights of Man (1791-1792), an expression bandied about by all and sundry, including Mrs. Warren in an earlier quotation. This mental attitude, as applied to Spain, is set forth clearly in a "Dedicatory Letter" of February 20, 1784, which is published with her play:

> . . . I have recurred to an ancient story in the annals of Spain, in her last struggles for liberty, previous to the complete establishment of despotism by the family of Ferdinand.
>
> The history of Charles the fifth, the tyranny of his successors, and the exertions of the Spanish Cortes, will ever be interesting to an American ear, so long as they triumph in their independence, pride themselves in the principles that instigated their patriots, and glory in the characters of their heroes, whose valour completed a revolution that will be the wonder of ages.
>
> What a field for genius! What a display of capacity, both in science, in business, and in politics, does this

> revolution exhibit! Certainly enough to fire the ambition, and light up every noble spark in the bosom of those who are in the morning of life.[25]

From tyranny--such as that exerted by Charles V--she hoped America would forever be free:

> The nations have now resheathed the sword; the European World is hushed in peace: America stands alone:--May she long stand, independent of every foreign power; superior to the spirit of intrigue, or the corrupt principles of usurpation that may spring from the successful exertions of her own sons: --May their conduct never contradict the professions of the patriots who have asserted the rights of human nature; nor cause a blush to pervade the cheek of the children of the martyrs who have fallen in defence of the liberties of their country.[26]

Then in the early nineteenth century, when independence had been won, America developed a passion for democratic government. A leading historian of the American drama believes this democratic tendency explains the appearance of certain plays among which are Brown's Sertorius and two dramas with a Spanish American setting, written shortly after 1830 by Robert Montgomery Bird.

> But to the historian who reads the plays . . . from 1825 to 1840, with constant reference to the political and social ideals of America in that day, the essentially native flavor of this drama becomes apparent . . . Oralloossa, the revolt of the Indians against their Spanish conquerors; The Broker of Bogota . . . the resentment of the merchant class against the oppression of a ruling caste . . . Sertorius, the revolt of Spain against Roman rule . . . . At that time democracy was the dominant political note. The Grecian Revolution of 1829, the revolt of the South American republics against Spain, and the

> establishment of a constitution in Spain itself, the French Revolution of 1830, the struggle of Poland for freedom, were in the air. But the most vital inspiration was the triumph of democratic institutions at home. The election of Andrew Jackson in 1828 showed the preference of the people of the United States for democracy.[27]

A factor which determined America's malevolent attitude toward Ferdinand VII, and a benevolent one toward his people, is the aforementioned fear that he might recover the Spanish American Colonies. Thereby arose a dislike, evidenced by such slurring remarks as the following, published in an American literary journal: "We are not prone to expect from that unhappy prince at any time, and least of all, in the present distracted state of his kingdom, any very enlightened acts for the promotion of learning."[28]

Ferdinand's religious policy also disturbed Protestant America. The Spanish Inquisition, established in Castile four centuries previously, under an earlier Ferdinand, became in the eighteenth century only a shadow of its former self, and was entirely suppressed by Napoleon on his entry into Madrid in 1808. In 1813 the Cortes declared it to be incompatible with the Constitution. But the following year, on his return from exile, the arrogant Ferdinand restored the institution, although not to its former glory. Abolished again by the Liberal Revolution of 1820, it was restored again in 1823 when Ferdinand received French aid, and

lasted until 1834 when the reigning Queen allied herself with the Liberals.

The Spanish Inquisition had always been a bone of contention between Protestant American writers and Spain. Barlow, for instance, railed against it in The Columbiad:

> Led by the dark Dominicans of Spain,
> A newborn Fury walks the wide domain,
> Gaunt Inquisition; mark her giant stride,
> Her blood-nursed vulture screaming at her side.
> Her priestly train the tools of torment brings,
> Racks, wheels and crosses, faggots, stakes and strings;
> Scaffolds and cages round her alter stand,
> And, tipt with sulphur, waves her flaming brand.
> Her imps of inquest round the Fiend advance,
> Suspectors grave, and spies with eye askance,
> Pretended heretics who worm the soul,
> And sly confessors with their secret scroll,
> Accusers hired, for each conviction paid,
> Judges retain'd and witnesses by trade.[29]

When Ferdinand re-established this institution to which Gothic fiction had lent such a sinister note, America was up in arms, as evidenced by the following observation from Boston's leading literary journal: "There is indeed a wonderful consistency in the Spanish character; other nations may have their autos da fés in the sixteenth century, but perhaps no other nation would have re-established the Inquisition in the nineteenth."[30]

Another of the many literary attacks on The Inquisition's restoration by Ferdinand is found in Bryant's Spain:

> Degenerate Spaniards! let the priestly band
> Possess your realm again; and let them wake
> The fires of pious murder in your land,[31]

The reason for the second American way of interpreting Spanish history--the Romantic treatment--is simply that the story of medieval Spain furnished writers with a treasure chest of adventure and love stories. American appreciation of the exotic element in Spanish history is indicated by the following comment in an American journal's review of Alexander Slidell Mackenzie's popular travel book, A Year in Spain (1829):

> The very name of Spain comes upon one at all conversant with its history, attended with thrilling emotions and associations. Perhaps there is no land under heaven whose history excites so many feelings of romantic interest . . . how many romantic incidents, how many pleasant dreams does the name of Spain awaken?[32]

Washington Irving, the American most enthralled by legendary Spain, often commented upon the romantic quality of his adopted country: "Spain is virtually a land of poetry and romance, where every-day life partakes of adventure, and where the least agitation or excitement carries everything up into extravagant enterprise and daring exploit."[33]

Thus, the history of the Spanish Peninsula was copiously chronicled not only by American historians, but also by American poets and dramatists of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. One set of writers found exemplified in Spanish history

the patriotic theme of the rise of the common people against tyrants, from the period of Roman domination to the despotism of Ferdinand VII. Another group was more interested in exploiting the exotic elements in the story of the Peninsula.

Because of the abundance of poems and dramas devoted to episodes in Spanish history, it is apparent that this aspect of Hispanic influence was one of the strongest. Interest in it continued in the period between 1830 and the Civil War, blossoming forth in the dramas of George Henry Boker and in novels such as James Fenimore Cooper's Mercedes of Castile (1840), to give to American Romanticism a definite Spanish coloration.

Footnotes

[1] Hugh Henry Brackenridge, Modern Chivalry, ed. Claude M. Newlin (New York: American Book Co., 1937), p. 406.

[2] Irving's Mahomet and His Successors (1850) carried Moorish history up to 705. Then the history of the Peninsula itself was exploited. Irving's Legends of the Conquests of Spain (1835) and Spanish papers and other miscellanies (1866) dealt with the Visigothic period. The Moorish period was romanticized in The Alhambra (1832) and A Chronicle of the Conquest of Granada (1829). Then, except for Irving's works on Columbus and his followers, Christian Spain was taken over by Prescott, with his History of the Reign of Ferdinand and Isabella (1837), and his edition with additions of Robertson's History of the Reign of Charles V (1857). The reign of the succeeding monarch, Philip II, was also chronicled by Prescott (1855, 1858), and played a part in The Rise of the Dutch Republic (1856) by another Hispanophile, John Lothrop Motley.

[3] Louise M. Hoffman, "Irving's Use of Spanish Sources in the Conquest of Granada," Hispania, XXVIII (November, 1945), 483-498.

[4] Bernstein, op. cit., pp. 2, 3, 6, 7.

[5] David Paul Brown, Sertorius; or, The Roman Patriot (Philadelphia: E. L. Carey & Hart, 1830), p. 84.

[6] Ibid., p. 58.

[7] William Gilmore Simms, Early lays (Charleston, South Carolina, 1827), p. 71.

[8] Quinn, American Drama, pp. 33-34.

[9] Mrs. Mercy Warren, Poems, dramatic and miscellaneous (Boston: Printed by I. Thomas and E. T. Andrews, 1790), p. 129.

[10] Ibid., p. 117.

[11] Ibid., p. 124.

[12] William Cullen Bryant, The Embargo: or, Sketches of the Times (2d ed.; Boston: Printed by E. G. House, 1809), p. 21.

[13] Ibid., p. 23.

[14] Ibid., p. 26.

[15] Ibid., p. 25.

[16] Tremaine McDowell (ed.), William Cullen Bryant, Representative Selections (New York: American Book Co., 1935), p. 27.

[17] William Cullen Bryant, Thirty Poems (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1864), p. 82.

[18] Ibid., p. 83.

[19] Pattee, op. cit., III, 130.

[20] Ibid., p. 131.

[21] Lewis Leary (ed.), The Last Poems of Philip Freneau (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1945), p. 15.

[22] Percival, Poems (1821), p. 255.

[23] Simms, Early lays, p. 98.

[24] Williams, op. cit., I, 357.

[25] Warren, op. cit., p. 100.

[26] Ibid., p. 101.

[27] Quinn, American Drama, p. 267.

[28] North American Review, XXIV (April, 1827), 265.

[29] Barlow, Columbiad, pp. 144-145.

[30] North American Review, II (May, 1815), 3.

[31] McDowell, op. cit., p. 27.

[32] American Monthly Magazine, I (September, 1829), 422-423.

[33] Pierre M. Irving (ed.), Spanish papers and other miscellanies (New York: G. P. Putnam and Son, 1867), I, 4.

CHAPTER VI

SPANISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

More properly an aspect of Spanish influence, rather than a theme, was North America's interest in the Spanish language and literature. Spanish grammars and dictionaries were owned by many eighteenth century American libraries; a Newport, Rhode Island, library had this kind of material; Harvard College claimed a copy of the 1726 edition of the dictionary of the Royal Academy; in an 1804 catalogue of the wares of Boston booksellers, a grammar by Delfino and Fernández is listed.[1]

According to Berstein, the first North Americans to know the Spanish language and read its literature were the jurist Samuel Sewall (1652-1730?) and the theologian Cotton Mather (1663-1728)--the latter publishing in Boston in 1699 a theological treatise with a Spanish title.[2] Benjamin Franklin, too, appointed American correspondent by the Royal Academy of History in Spain, was familiar with Spanish. Especially interesting and entertaining is his praise, in a letter to Noah Webster, of the Spanish system of placing a question mark at the beginning of a sentence.[3]

George Ticknor (1791-1871), the "pioneer in the introduction and promotion of the study of modern languages and modern literatures in this country," began his study of Spanish at home with Francis Sales, with whom he was later associated at Harvard.[4] Ticknor's friends and fellow Hispanists followed in his footsteps. Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, whose Hispanic interests have been exhaustively studied by Iris Lilian Whitman, wrote his father from Spain in 1827: "I must not forget to mention that I have taken a Spanish instructor, and feel enough enthusiasm about the language to make good progress in it."[5] Robert Charles Sands acquired the language "very critically."[6] The prodigy in languages, James Gates Percival, included Spanish and Portuguese among his many.[7]

The career of the "Charleston Intellectual," Hugh Swinton Legaré (1797-1843), who died at Ticknor's home, was in part literary--he founded the Southern Review--and in part political. In both fields, his knowledge of Spanish stood him in good stead. He published an article on Spanish ballads; as Attorney-General he appeared before the Supreme Court in cases involving the Venezuelan patriot, Miranda, and Spanish land grants.[8]

The American historian John Lothrop Motley, who, like Longfellow, dutifully corresponded with his parents, wrote his mother in 1825: "I have commenced Spanish, which I like very

much."[9] And by that year Washington Irving was well along in his study of the language. Later he wrote his nephew:

> The Spanish language is full of power, magnificence, and melody. To my taste it excels the Italian in variety and expression. It has twice the quantity of words that the French has.[10]

As the desire to master Spanish irregular verbs grew, so grew the need for instructors. The period under discussion witnessed the beginning of the profession of Spanish teaching in America. The first teacher of whom there is record was Paul Fooks, at the University of Pennsylvania from 1766 to 1797.[11] Courses in Spanish may have been given at William and Mary from 1780 on.[12] Meanwhile, the wealthy Boston merchant Abiel Smith bequeathed Harvard a sum of money to maintain a professor of French and Spanish. This position was offered to George Ticknor.

Before accepting, Ticknor went abroad with Edward Everett and included Spain in his itinerary. Ticknor established the earliest great Spanish library in America and taught at Harvard from 1819 to 1835, delivering the first well-known lectures in America on Spanish literature. Literary greats continued to hold the Smith chair: after a sojourn at Bowdoin beginning in 1829, Longfellow replaced Ticknor, and was himself replaced by James Russell Lowell.

This era witnessed also the initial importation of native teachers of Spanish. Francis Sales taught at Harvard, first as assistant to Ticknor, from 1816 to 1854. Longfellow encouraged a friend met in Spain, José Cortés y Sesti, to teach private classes in Cambridge and Boston. The famous Cuban poet José María Heredia, exiled in New York, helped support himself by teaching Spanish. Some of these whose native tongue was Spanish managed to publish works in that language in America. Sales, for instance, introduced, in American editions, many Spanish masterpieces. José Antonio Miralla, the Argentinian poet, published in Philadelphia a Spanish translation of Thomas Grey's Elegy,[13] and Felix Megia wrote a play on Lafayette, printed in Spanish in 1824, and later translated and published in English.[14]

During this period an interest was also manifested in Spanish literature, especially in the Quojote and the comedias, influences so great that they justify separate chapters in this study. But Americans were familiar with other Spanish masterpieces, too, as evidenced by their presence in eighteenth and early nineteenth century American libraries. For instance, the Harvard College and the New York Society Libraries possessed copies of Fernando de Rojas' great novel, La Celestina (1499); the latter library also owned some English versions of works by the seventeenth century

satirist Francisco de Quevedo; the Burlington, New Jersey Library Company secured a copy of Baltasar Gracián's El heroe (1637); and an 1804 catalogue of the offerings of Boston booksellers includes Cervantes' pastoral novel, La Galatea (1575), selling for $1.00. One private library in Philadelphia contained a copy of Jorge de Montemayor's pastoral novel, La Diana (1565), and Primera parte de la vida de Guzmán de Alfarache (1599). The work of the fifteenth century Antonio de Nebrija and the eighteenth century Benito Jerónimo Feijóo figured in the library of John Adams.[15]

Although the first important American studies of Spanish literature, Ticknor's History of Spanish Literature (1849) and Longfellow's The Poets and Poetry of Europe (1855), appeared after 1830, the foundations for critiques on Spanish literature were laid in the period under discussion. Robert Southey, of course, led the way with his translations of Spanish ballads and his version of the Cid (1808), but William Cullen Bryant discussed early Spanish poetry in the Talisman (1825) and Spanish ballads in his "Recollections of the South of Spain" in the next year's Talisman. And Legaré commented on some of the ballads in one of his learned articles.[16]

This growing interest in the Spanish language and literature was early reflected in poetry. The pages of American literary

journals were studded with English versions of Spanish poems. The chief result of this aspect of Spanish influence, then, was direct translation.

The renditions of Ticknor's friend and fellow product of New England, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807-1882), are the most famous, but they were published during the flowering of the Hispanic Movement in America--from 1830 through the Civil War. Before 1831, Longfellow's only published work of a Spanish nature was a reader for his students at Bowdoin College, Novelas Españolas, El Serrano de la Alpujarras y El Cuadro Misterioso (1830). This collection included two tales, modeled on Irving's Rip Van Winkle, and The Young Italian, just published in "Jorge" Montgomery's Tareas de un Solitario o Nueva Colección de Novelas (1829).

The rather obscure and mysterious bilinguist, George Washington Montgomery, was born in 1804, son of an American resident in Spain.[17] On the Peninsula, "Jorge" published Spanish translations of Irving, including The Conquest of Granada and The Sketch Book. His novel, El Bastardo de Castilla, later called Bernardo del Carpio, was edited by Francis Sales for use at Harvard. Then Montgomery must have entered the American Consular Service, during which time he published in English a travel book on Guatemala.

The only outstanding translations of Spanish verse in the period under discussion are those of William Cullen Bryant, a poet already mentioned in connection with his patriotic verse inspired by the revolt of the Spanish people against Napoleon and Ferdinand VII. Bryant's translations have long since been eclipsed by Longfellow's, perhaps because the latter produced in far greater quantity and undertook longer and better known works, such as the Coplas of Jorge Manrique and the epic Cid.

One of the few Spanish writers on American Hispanists, Miguel Romera Navarro, whose praise is scant and grudging, does, in the case of Bryant, show wholehearted enthusiasm. The critic did not look far enough, for Bryant, during his lifetime, translated considerably more than fourteen Spanish poems, but the Spaniard's complimentary opinion seems worthy of quotation: "No más de catorce breves composiciones traducidas por él hemos encontrado, pero excelentes, inmejorables sobre todo las descriptivas o que tienen por tema la naturaleza."[18]

Bryant translated short and delicate Spanish poems which afforded him an outlet for his sentimentality. Like the Romantic writers fascinated by historical episodes during the Moorish domination of Spain, Bryant was especially intrigued by the Moorish ballads. In his "Recollections of the South of Spain," published

in The Talisman for 1829 (1828), Bryant discussed the national ballads of Spain, "not the least curious among them" being the "Romances Moriscos."[19] The author relates that his walk along the Sierra Morena in Andalusia was interrupted by the singing of two sisters. He talks to Francisca and Conchita, who smile at his "bad Castilian,"[20] and since his memory is short, he immediately jots down the words of their song. He then gives them to the reader as A Moriscan Romance.

The title of this poem was later changed to Fatima and Raduan, and, in a note in an 1832 edition, Bryant continued his discussion of this type of Spanish ballad: "They were composed in the fourteenth century, some of them, probably by the Moors, who then lived intermingled with the Christians; and they relate the loves and achievements of the Knights of Grenada [sic]." He then apologizes for:

> . . . so poor a conceit deforming so spirited a composition as this old ballad, but I have preserved it in the version. It is one of those extravagances which afterwards became so common in Spanish poetry when Gongora introduced the estilo culto as it was called.

He muses on the Spanish practice of calling a lady "by the name of the most expressive feature of her countenance, her eyes," and goes on to discuss the Spanish preference for green eyes.[21]

Fatima and Raduan is a delightfully Romantic piece introduced by a note of amorous distress:

> Diamante falso y fingido
> Engastado en pedernal, &c.

But Fatima knows, as other maidens know, that she will forgive her lover:

> Oh, I could chide thee sharply--but every maiden knows
> That she who chides her lover, forgives him ere he goes.[22]

The discussion of the Spanish predilection for green eyes appeared earlier in Bryant's article "Early Spanish Poetry," which appeared in The Talisman for 1830 (1829). The article is followed by the story of Eva, who sits in the shade of an almond tree. Her Moorish lover, apparently situated in the branches above her, sings ballads. Thereupon follow The Alcayde of Molina and The Death of Aliatar.

The former concerns the "courteous and valorous" commander on the Moorish side. After a victorious battle over the Christians, he hastens to visit his lady love, Zelinda, who is not as forgiving as Fatima. From her balcony she declares that although she loves him, she is renouncing him, for he has made his choice--he prefers war to her. And she "Shut the door of her balcony before the Moor could speak."[23]

The Death of Aliatar shows the reverso de la medalla; in contrast to The Alcayde, the Christians win the skirmish. The Moorish warriors had been led to battle by brave Aliatar:

> Brave Aliatar led forward
> A hundred Moors to go
> To where his brother held Motril
> Against the leaguering foe.[24]

But now they return home "All mournfully and slowly":

> To the deep wail of the trumpet
> And beat of muffled drum.

(This plaintive refrain of two lines ends almost every verse.) Aliatar had been killed by "knights of the Grand Master," and his love, Zayda, weeps.

The Siesta, published in The Talisman for 1830 (1829), is a delicate little piece in which the lover ruefully tells the air to lull his lady to sleep, "though in my breast the pain she has waked may slumber no more."[25] Bryant never identified the source for this poem, but one modern critic classifies it with the "large group of ballads that are not connected with any legendary hero nor with historical events."[26]

Spain's lyric poets of the Renaissance and later also appealed to Bryant, perhaps because so much of their work is devoted to nature, a favorite subject with Romanticists. Outstanding among these Italianated lyricists was Spain's great mystic, Fray

Luis de León (1527-1591), whose La vida del bendito was translated by Bryant. Fray Luis' life was filled with contrasts. A monk of the Augustinian Order, he taught at the University of Salamanca; a student and translator of Latin, he also staunchly defended its descendant, Spanish. From his hectic life--the Inquisition imprisoned him for five years--he sought, with conscious effort, peace in pastoral nature.

The Life of the Blessed first appeared in the United States Review of May, 1827. It praises heaven, "Region of life and light!" where "Walks the good shepherd," leading his happy flock. There Fray Luis and Bryant would find surcease from mundane troubles; there they would remain, never straying:

> Ah! then my soul should know,
> Beloved! where thou liest at noon of day,
> And from this place of woe
> Released, should take its way
> To mingle with thy flock and never stray.[27]

Another of the sixteenth century writers who appealed to the early American Romanticist was Pedro de Castro y Añaya, highly praised by Lope de Vega. He was a native of Murcia, but little else is known about his life. Castro's Las Auroras de Diana (published 1640?) was so entitled because it consists of five talks told at dawn for five consecutive days to amuse Diana who, after a long illness, was seized by a fit of melancholia.

Bryant's opinion of the work was not very high: ". . . notwithstanding it was praised by Lope de Vega, [it is] one of the worse of the old Spanish romances, being a tissue of riddles and affectations, with now and then a little poem of considerable beauty."[28]

Bryant liked it well enough, however, to extract from it The Rivulet, published in the United States Literary Gazette of May 15, 1823. Again his Romantic tendencies are evident in this choice of a "nature poem." The author tells the rivulet not to hasten to the sea, for there it will only perish in the vastness. It would be better off remaining at home:

> Far better 'twere to linger still
> In this green vale, these flowers to cherish,
> And die in peace, an aged rill,
> Than thus, a youthful Danube, perish.[29]

From a slightly later poet, Bartolomé Leonardo de Argensola (1562-1631), Bryant also drew material. Like Fray Luis, Barolomé was educated for the Church and connected with the University of Salamanca. Then, along with his older brother, Lupercio, also a poet, he spent some time in Naples. There Bartolomé entered the court of the Count de Lemos, and subsequently was appointed chronicler of Aragon, for he was a distinguished historian as well as a poet. An example of the Italianated school, his poetry is classic, pure, and elegant.

From Argensola's María Magdalena, Bryant produced an English version first published in the United States Review of October, 1826. Mary Magdalen [sic] compares Mary with nature. Though sinful, she may be forgiven, for her repentant soul, like dead and ugly nature, like "leaves on the dry dead tree," can later blossom forth in beauty. She:

> The perished plant, set out by living fountains,
> Grows fruitful, and its beauteous-branches rise,
> For ever, towards the skies.[30]

Bryant translated also from Esteban Manuel de Villegas (1598-1669), a disciple of the Argensola brothers. Like his masters, Villegas was educated at court and the University of Salamanca; and, a neoclassicist along with the rest of this group, he translated from the Latin. Bryant's Springtime, take from Villegas' Oda VI, was first published in the United States Literary Gazette of July, 1826.[31] This is another poem devoted, in the Romantic fashion, to reflections of the human soul in nature. The poet sings of the beauty of Spring, but because his loved one is absent:

> It makes me sad to see the earth so gay;
> I care not if the train
> Of leaves, and flowers, and zephyrs go again.[32]

A third period in Spanish poetry which appealed to Bryant was the contemporary one, manifested by his interest in the Cuban, José María Heredia (1803-1839). Heredia's poems are classical

in form, but revel in the savage, uncontrolled aspects of nature. Bryant was probably attracted to his nature poetry because of this treatment--one wilder than that of the Renaissance poets.

Bryant may have translated Heredia's Niágara,[33] written when the poet was an exile in the United States, but he is definitely known to be the author of an English version of Heredia's En una Tempestad. The Hurricane, as Bryant entitled it, was first published in The Talisman for 1828 (1827). In the Romantic fashion, nature--in this case, the hurricane--is personified. The author excitedly awaits "his" slow but sure arrival, and then, in the Byronic manner, glories in his aloneness with "him":

> And I, cut off from the world remain,
> Alone with the terrible hurricane.[34]

One reason for American interest in the Spanish language may have been the vista of trade possibilities with Spanish America, a vista which opened up as the Spanish colonies declared independence. In a report in 1818 on the University of Virginia, Thomas Jefferson, a student of Spanish along with his daughter, Martha, foresaw this commercial need for Spanish: ". . . the Spanish is highly interesting to us, as the language spoken by so great a portion of the inhabitants of our continents, with whom we shall probably have great intercourse ere long, and is that also in which is written the greater part of the early history of America."[35] The

advice from Longfellow's father, concerning the practical benefits derived from a study of Spanish, has already been cited.

As a result of this commercial interest, many Americans traveled to outlying Spanish American territories, thereupon learning something of the language. For instance, Emeline Flint, daughter of the western traveler, Timothy Flint, is said to have been an eager Spanish scholar.[36] Another traveler and student of the language was Aaron Burr,[37] the politician, who, after assassinating Alexander Hamilton, was involved in a fantastic plot to separate from the Union Spanish territories in the West.

The rise of Romanticism, however, constitutes the major reason for the desire of many North Americans to learn the Spanish language and read its literature. This movement resulted in the New World's eagerness to acquire the culture of the Old. European culture was considered most easily attained by travel, then by a command of foreign languages and a familiarity with foreign literatures. As a result, early American scholars initiated the trend of studying abroad: "One of the most important contributions to American intellectual life in the nineteenth century resulted from the romantic impulse which impelled a group of aspiring young scholars to pursue their studies in foreign countries."[38]

George Ticknor was the earliest of the American students to include Spain in the "grand tour," but he was soon followed by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, whose Romantic attitude toward scholarship was typical of the early nineteenth century: "Longfellow's enthusiasm for travel as a means to culture, his capacity for admiration of other literatures and his desire to familiarize himself with their languages are general tendencies of the epoch."[39]

Travel in Europe, then, was the first step in this Romantically impelled effort to acquire culture. The second step was a knowledge of foreign languages, but even then the goal was not deemed really attained. The final step was a knowledge of European literatures and ways of life. As Longfellow phrased it in his Inaugural Address at Bowdoin in 1829:

> The mere acquisition of a language then is not the ultimate object; it is a means to be employed in the acquisition of something which lies beyond. I should therefore deem my duty but half performed were I to limit my exertions to the narrow bounds of grammatical rules: nay that I had done little for the intellectual culture of a pupil, when I had merely put an instrument into his hands without explaining to him its most important uses.[40]

The same exotic impulse led American writers to delve into Spanish literature. The observation of one of the greatest of the American Romanticists, Washington Irving, indicates its tremendous appeal:

> I do not know anything that delights me more than the old Spanish literature . . . . The old literature of Spain partakes of the character of its history and people; there is an Oriental splendor about it.[41]

The Moorish period of Spanish literature, like the Moorish period in Spanish history, afforded an especially colorful outlet. Again the remarks of Irving, resident in the Alhambra for a time, represent Moorish Spain's sentimental appeal to an American of the early nineteenth century: "For my part, I gave myself up, during my sojourn in the Alhambra, to all the romantic and fabulous traditions connected with the pile."[42] In The Alhambra (1832), Irving's collection of legends concerning the famous Spanish monument, he refers again to exotic, Moorish Spain: "It is a romantic country; but its romance has none of the sentimentality of modern European romance; it is chiefly derived from the brilliant regions of the East, and from the high-minded school of Saracenic chivalry."[43]

This love of the remote accounts for Bryant's interest in the romances moriscos, devoted to love and war. It also accounts for his predilection for two other periods of Spanish poetry, the Renaissance and the early nineteenth century. Although in an entirely different way, both schools sang of nature, and nature was a dominant motif for Romanticists. In the Renaissance, nature offered a refuge, a path toward inner peace; Heredia's nature was

violent and turbulent. But Castro and Villegas, as well as Heredia, personified it and found in it a reflection of the soul, whether it be the Quietistic soul of the sixteenth century or the Byronic of the nineteenth.

Thus a surprising number of American intellectual leaders in the early nineteenth century studied the Spanish language and were on speaking terms with Spanish literature. Proof of this Hispanic activity is given by the existence of Spanish dictionaries and literary works in American libraries, by the hiring of Spanish instructors, and by travel to Spain.

The study of the language and literature was reflected in American fiction by translations. These were mainly of Spanish poems concerning love, adventure, and nature--three elements that appealed to sentimental writers. Although some students were prompted by commercial interests, it was the Romantic urge, in general, that caused this preoccupation for things Spanish. And the Romanticism was of the "genteel" type, fostered by New England scholars and poets desirous of bringing to America an imported, somewhat recherché culture.

Footnotes

[1] Bernstein, op. cit., pp. 2, 6, 7.

[2] Ibid., p. 1.

[3] Franklin, op. cit., p. 206.

[4] Long, op. cit., p. 3.

[5] Iris Lilian Whitman, Longfellow and Spain (New York: Instituto de las Españas, 1927), p. 84.

[6] Verplanck, op. cit., I, 16.

[7] Ward, op. cit., p. 308.

[8] Linda Rhea, Hugh Swinton Legaré, A Charleston Intellectual (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1934), p. 212.

[9] Long, op. cit., p. 199.

[10] Fred Lewis Pattee, The Development of the American Short Story (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1923), p. 16.

[11] Bernstein, op. cit., p. 4.

[12] "Hispanismo," op. cit., p. 1768.

[13] Brooks, World of Washington Irving, p. 241.

[14] Hill, op. cit., p. 65.

[15] Bernstein, op. cit., pp. 1-17.

[16] Writings of Hugh Swinton Legaré (Charleston, S. C.: Burges & James, 1864), II, 299-334.

[17] John De Lancey Ferguson, American Literature in Spain (New York: Columbia University Press, 1916), pp. 13-14.

[18] Miguel Romera-Navarro, El Hispanismo en Norte-América (Madrid: Renacimiento, 1917), p. 68.

[19] The Talisman for MDCCCXXIX, p. 43.

[20] Ibid., p. 48.

[21] William Cullen Bryant, Poems (New York: E. Bliss, 1832), p. 237, n.

[22] Ibid., p. 92.

[23] William Cullen Bryant, Poems (Philadelphia: A. Hart, Late Carey & Hart, 1853), p. 245.

[24] Ibid., p. 247.

[25] Poems of William Cullen Bryant (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell & Co., 1893), p. 149.

[26] Peterson, op. cit., p. 407.

[27] Parke Godwin (ed.), The Poetical Works of William Cullen Bryant (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1883), II, 251.

[28] Ibid., II, p. 263.

[29] William Cullen Bryant, Poems (Chicago and New York: Belford, Clarke & Co., n.d.), p. 152.

[30] Bryant, Poems (1853), p. 235.

[31] With the first printing of the translation in the United States Literary Gazette, Bryant included the original Spanish version, identifying it only as "by Villegas." The Spanish original may be found in Narciso Alonso Cortés' edition, Eróticas ò Amatorias (Madrid: La Lectura, 1913), p. 54.

[32] Parke Godwin, op. cit., II, 247.

[33] Clara Cutler Chapin, "Bryant and Some of His Latin American Friends," Bulletin of the Pan American Union (November, 1944), p. 610. See also Peterson, op. cit., pp. 407-408.

[34] The Talisman for MDCCCXXVII, p. 115.

[35] Foner, op. cit., p. 405.

[36] Kirkpatrick, op. cit., pp. 232-233.

[37] Brooks, World of Washington Irving, p. 259.

[38] Long, op. cit., p. v.

[39] Whitman, op. cit., p. 3.

[40] Ibid., p. 106.

[41] Pattee, Development of the American Short Story, pp. 16-17.

[42] Henry A. Pochmann (ed.), Washington Irving, Representative Selections (New York: American Book Co., 1934), p. lxviii, n. 155.

[43] Washington Irving, The Alhambra (New York and London: M. P. Putnam's Sons, 1865), p. 460.

CHAPTER VII

QUIXOTISM

Of course the name of Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra (1547-1616) stood first in the roster of Spanish authors who influenced American literature. And this inspiration began early, as M. F. Heiser, an authority on "Cervantes in America," points out: "The flowering of the creative influence of Cervantes in the United States came early, between 1790 and 1815, during the period in which the few literary figures were frankly imitative of classical and eighteenth century models."[1]

Distinguished Americans held the Spaniard in great esteem. Joseph Dennie, a prominent member of the Federalist forces, contributed a biography of Cervantes to The Port Folio of 1802.[2] James Nelson Barker started his dramaturgical career in 1804 by composing a play--which he later destroyed--on the life of this Spanish warrior of the sword and pen.[3] "Bryant . . . had a particular regard for Cervantes."[4] Longfellow ranked him with Homer, Dante, and Milton.[5]

A British adaptation of Cervantes' El celoso extremeño was performed in America as The Padlock, almost every season from 1769 to 1800.[6] But of course it was Don Quijote de la Mancha (1605; 1615) which most attracted American attention. It was said to be the only novel Jefferson read twice; his daughter Martha read portions of it daily.[7] Freneau often referred to it with admiration.[8] Along with his biography, Dennie included comments which, according to Heiser, constitute "the first review of Don Quixote to appear in American periodicals."[9] The sailor, diplomat, and travel writer, Alexander Slidell Mackenzie, "knew it [the Quijote] by heart."[10]

In the field of the essay, a Harvard senior in 1807 applied quixotic touches to his Don Quixote at College, or, A History of the Gallant Adventures Lately Achieved by the Combined Students of Harvard University, a pamphlet attacking the poor food served in commons.[11] Washington Irving's familiarity with Cervantes is found, Heiser reports, in the early satirical essays, Salmagundi (1807-1808) and The Knickerbocker History (1809).[12]

The presence of the Quijote in American libraries provides further proof of its popularity. Although the first American edition, supervised by Francis Sales at Harvard, did not appear until 1836,[13] earlier, English editions are reported to have formed part

of the private libraries of Freneau,[14] the essayist William Wirt,[15] Longfellow's father,[16] John Logan of Philadelphia, John Adams,[17] and distinguished southerners in Virginia and Maryland.[18] Town libraries in Newport, Rhode Island, Burlington, New Jersey, Salem, Massachusetts, and New York City possessed copies;[19] so did the college libraries of Princeton[20] and Yale.[21] In Boston, of course, everyone owned a Quijote--according to Van Wyck Brooks.[22]

Although published a few years after the period under discussion, the following comment by a leading American literary journal reveals the fervor which Cervantes' masterpiece created in America:

> Homer wrote the Odyssey after the Iliad--the author of Paradise Lost gave the world nothing better than Paradise regained --Tasso's continuation of Jerusalem Delivered has been forgotten from its utter worthlessness--and the second part of Goethe's Faust is both extravagant and tame--Cervantes is the only man who has written a book of which the second part was equal to the first.[23]

It is debatable whether early North Americans really understood the significance of this great well of Renaissance and Baroque thought. But its political and literary satire and its buffoonery and Romantic elements American writers did indeed understand, and proceeded to use as a mold for decidedly inferior, yet nonetheless interesting, novelistic and dramatic attempts.

The first use of the quixotic theme, then, was for the purpose of political satire, and the first example is the novel Modern Chivalry, by Hugh Henry Brackenridge (1748-1816). Born in Scotland, Brackenridge graduated from Princeton with Freneau, whose previously discussed graduation poem, The Rising Glory of America, he helped to write. Brackenridge led an active life, as army chaplain, schoolteacher, magazine editor, and lawyer. But it was a singularly frustrating one; as one scholar, drawing an obvious parallel, has pointed out: "Brackenridge had knightly ideals, and his tilting at windmills was as little profitable as Don Quixote's."[24]

Modern Chivalry (Part I, 1792-1797; Part II, 1804-1805) concerns the rambles of Captain John Farrago, a serious man whose knowledge of life was gained vicariously, through books at his home in Western Pennsylvania, and Teague O'Regan, his Irish servant, illiterate and knavish. En route eastward, the two encounter a "farrago" of nonsensical adventures consisting of entanglement with foolish groups--scientists, citizens anxious to elect representatives, and so forth. Every group admires Teague, offering him membership, and to prevent his acceptance the Captain is forced to concoct the most fantastic objections. After the Captain extricates Teague from each absurd assemblage, there follows a chapter of the author's reflections. In Philadelphia the

servant becomes the idol of society, and is interviewed by the President. Thereupon he becomes exciseman, is tarred and feathered, captured by a scientific society, caged as a strange animal, and sent to France as an Eskimo. The second part, of a later date, describes a new settlement founded by the Captain and the resultant governmental problems which give the author a pretext for long discourses on politics.

This novel, of the didactic-satirical type, upholds "rational democracy,"[25] attacking all political extremes. Although siding with the people in the struggle between aristocracy and commoners, Brackenridge objected to the excesses of mere political democracy, such as electoral methods, coonskin candidates, and extreme reform movement. According to Heiser, "this quest of the golden mean is what Brackenridge really means by 'Modern Chivalry'";[26] and to achieve it, he directed his satire against many entities which he considered aberrations from the norm, such as the University of Pennsylvania, the American Philosophical Society, the professions, and "a pushing fellow with no qualifications setting himself up for high office."[27]

To those familiar with Cervantes' chef d'oeuvre, Brackenridge's borrowings seem patent. With respect to the external and mechanical, Brackenridge's imitation was fairly complete. Modern

Chivalry, like Don Quijote, is built on a series of adventures and inn scenes, interspersed with the author's reflections and interpolated stories. The protagonists of both works are similar--a bookish traveler and an illiterate servant who becomes a king. Farrago says of himself: "I have been called the modern Don Quixotte, on account of the eccentricity of my rambles, or the singularity which they conceive themselves to discover in my conversation and manner."[28]

Aside from the physical layout, other similarities are pronounced. Brackenridge constantly invited attention to similarities between his work and the Spaniard's.[29] Both Cervantes and Brackenridge indulged in satire on social and governmental foibles. Both believed that a book must entertain as well as instruct.[30] Both advocated simplicity of style.[31]

But it is to be conjectured whether underlying philosophies as well as these external ones were not common to both authors. Brackenridge's basic ideology, voiced by Farrago--"The duration of power, will always be in proportion to the discrete use ot it."[32]--seems to be in harmony with Cervantes' earlier outlook on politics. As the Quijote might, from careless reading, be mistaken as a complete rejection of the social set-up of the day, as a plea for democracy as it is conceived today but unknown to Cervantes,

so from the same superficial perusal, Modern Chivalry might be wrongly construed as opposed to democracy.[33] Both novels, however, attack the follies, not the essence, of the governments of their respective periods.

The second treatment of the theme is for the purpose of literary rather than political satire. Just as the Quijote ridiculed certain novels of chivalry, Female Quixotism, Exhibited in the Romantic Opinions and Extravagant Adventures of Dorcasina Sheldon (1801) makes light of English sentimental romances such as Samuel Richardson's Clarissa, or, the History of a Young Lady (I, II, 1747; III-VII, 1748), and History of Sir Charles Grandison (1754), and picaresque tales like Tobias Smollett's The Adventures of Roderick Random (1748).[34]

The career of Tabitha Tenney (1762-1837) resembled that of her heroine. Brought up in Exeter, New Hampshire, by strict parents, her life was a secluded one until she married a member of Congress and "entered society." Upon his death, she retired to her native town and occupied herself with needlework and charity--the kind of innocuous and ladylike pastimes she recommended to her heroine. Her Female Quixotism had brought her considerable fame, however, for it was reprinted in 1808 and 1829.[35]

The story opens with a letter, addressed "To all Columbian Young Ladies, who read Novels and Romances," which refers the reader to the tale's Spanish prototype: ". . . when you compare it [the story of her life] with the most extravagant parts of the authentic history of the celebrated hero of La Mancha, the renowned Don Quixote, I presume you will no longer doubt its being a true uncolored history of a romantic country girl, whose head had been turned by the unrestrained perusal of Novels and Romances."[36]

Dorcas, who changed her name to the more elegant Dorcasina, resides on the Delaware near Philadelphia. There she sees a "disguised hero in every horseboy, and a romance in every chance acquaintance."[37] At age twenty she rejects one young man because he lacks glamor. But no Romantic knight shows up to carry her away, so for fourteen years she lives quietly with her father, her maid Betty, and her books. Then she embarks upon a series of absurd love affairs in which she is ridiculed by the succession of lovers who take advantage of her vanity and bookish training.

The first proposal comes from an Irish knave, O'Connor, who plans to marry her for her money. The second suitor, Philander, plays tricks on her with the help of a barber. A third proposal comes from a too practical widower with three married

children. At the age of forty-eight, she is again duped, this time by a servant whom she fancies a gentleman in disguise. Then she almost marries a fortune hunter.

In middle age, a disillusioned virgin, she is resigned to the life of an old maid and aware that the seat of her trouble lay in the reading of too many romances. The book ends with Dorcasina's letter of advice to her best friend:

> And now, my dear Mrs. Barry, if you should ever be blessed with daughters, let me urge you . . . . Withold from their eye the pernicious volumes, which, while they convey false ideas of life, and inspire illusory expectations, will tend to keep them forever ignorant of every thing really worth knowing; and which, if they do not eventually render them miserable, may at least prevent their becoming respectable. Suffer not their imaginations to be filled with ideas of happiness, particularly in the connubial state, which can never be realized. Describe life to them as it really is, and as you have found it, chequered with good and evil.[38]

Mrs. Tenney's most obvious borrowing from Cervantes is her satire on literary vogues and the harm caused by "unrestrained" reading of extravagant tales. As a scholar of quixotism in England points out, anent the influence on Tenney of Cervantes' Quijote and Lennox's The Female Quixote: "In general outline Female Quixotism is like Don Quixote and The Female Quixote in that it is chiefly concerned with one quixotic figure deluded by reading, and a faithful attendant; it differs in the natural touches of local color in connection with the Pennsylvania scene, the

realism of the treatment of the heroine, left desolate at the end with no hope of a happy solution, and in the obvious didacticism which pervades."[39] The "faithful attendant" is Dorcasina's Betty a "Sancho-Panza-ish maid."[40] Both Cervantes and Tenney include a barber, too, for humorous touches. Both works are episodic.

In the play The Island of Barrataria, the Quixotic theme is handled much more superficially. From Cervantes, Royall Tyler (1757-1826) extracted only slapstick humor. Tyler came from Boston and studied at Harvard and Yale. His career was varied; an army major, he also dabbled in politics and law, being chief justice of the Supreme Court of Vermont and professor of jurisprudence at the University of that state. On the side, he successfully followed literary pursuits. The Contrast, for which he is best known, was the first performed American comedy (1787). His engagement to John Adams' daughter was broken off by Adams, apparently because he suspected Tyler of instability of character.

The Island of Barrataria, a three-act farce, concerns Sancho Panza's troubles as governor of the Island. He is compelled to postpone dinner until after he has presided at a court of law. His first case is that of the stout wench, Mrs. Slammerkin, whose "jewell" has been robbed by a certain Joseph Nunney. Sancho hands her Joseph's purse, then secretly dispatches a boy to snatch

it back. Of course she manages to guard the purse more staunchly than she was able to retain her "jewell," a discrepancy which Sancho points out in deciding the case in favor of Joseph.

Then follows the case of the two old men, the one accusing the other of failing to return the reales he borrowed. The borrower asks the plaintiff to hold his cane while he swears that the money is now in the hands of its rightful owner. After swearing, he takes back his cane. Sancho, observing the astute maneuvering of the innocent looking cane, sees through the trick, breaks open the cane, and discovers the money.

At the banquet scene, Don Pedro Physico Positivo Pulmonic Detergent whisks away the food, with one excuse or another, before the ravenous Sancho can even taste it. Sancho's rule ends when Barrataria is invaded, and Sancho, incumbered by two heavy shields, remains immobile until the end of the battle.

The subplot concerns Julietta who, disguised as an old woman similar in appearance to Sancho's wife "Dame Terresa," pleads in court that her husband wants to leave her for a girl with money. This is Julietta's way of reminding Sancho of his own swaying affections. It seems that Alvarez, Julietta's wealthy father, is trying to marry her off to Sancho, despite her preference for a local swain, Carlos. Of course Carlos finally wins her hand.

The play's chief concern is its dialogue, a sample of which follows:

Alvarez: My Lord, I have an only daughter; she is the belle of Barrataria.

Sancho: Hope she has a short clapper then--don't like noise.

Alvarez: She is the toast of the town.

Sancho: Very comfortable in a noggin of brisk ale on a cold morning.[41]

As one critic points out, the main plot of Tyler's play is taken from Chapters 44, 45, 47, 49, 51, and 53 of the Second Part of Don Quijote, although Tyler has reduced the length of Sancho's rule to only one day.[42]

A fourth treatment of the quixotic theme was an exotic one. Another lady of letters, Mrs. Susanna Haswell Rowson, played up Romantic elements in the Quijote as she did in the life of Columbus. Her play, Slaves in Algiers, or a Struggle for Freedom (1794), attacks the rulers of Algiers, Tunis, and Tripoli, who had been unscrupulously preying upon Mediterranean commerce and demanding ransom and tribute from captured foreigners, including North Americans.

As fantastic as Rowson's novel, Reuben and Rachel, this slapstick yet didactic comedy frantically waves the flag of American patriotism on every possible occasion. Its ridiculously

complicated plot concerns a group of Americans who, in Mediterranean waters for some implausible reason or another, were captured, held for ransom by the "Algerine Dey," and are now plotting escape with the help of Sebastian, a Spanish slave friendly to their cause. Zoriana, the Dey's daughter, turns out to be a Christian at heart and wants to escape with the Americans, especially with Henry, the one she loves. Olivia, the play's heroine, however, refuses to take part in the schemes, for if the participants --who include her father and her lover--fail, she will have to placate the Dey in order to save all from torture.

Just as Olivia feared, the Dey, on discovering the escape plot, orders the father and lover to the torture chamber. Olivia pleads to be punished in their stead; then an older woman, Rebecca, appears and demands to be the victim. After making this magnanimous offer, the mysterious Rebecca tells her story. It seems she is a New Yorker who, on marrying a British officer against her father's wishes, was banished from home. Then misfortune set upon her. She learned of the death of her father and of her husband, and of her daughter's capture. Later, however, she finds out that one of these misfortunes is a false alarm--her husband is alive. She starts out for England after him, but she is kidnapped en route. In an abrupt scene of mutual recognition,

Olivia and her father turn out to be Rebecca's daughter and husband.

The comedy, ending happily when the Algerian slaves revolt and the Dey relents, closes with: ". . . may Freedom spread her benign influence through every nation . . . ."[43]

In her Preface, Mrs. Rowson proudly claims the Quijote as one of her sources: "Some part of the plot is taken from the Story of the Captive, related by Cervantes, in his inimitable Romance of Don Quixote, the rest is entirely the offspring of fancy."[44] The most likely conclusion is that all of the play is pure and simple "fancy," but the story of Zoriana does show some similarity to that of Zoraida in Chapters 39, 40, and 41 of the First Part of the Quijote. The two women--both Moorish, both living in Algiers --are so anxious to marry their American lovers and to turn Christian that they betray their fathers and plan escape with foreign Christians.

Thus Mrs. Rowson drew from the Quijote not its spirit or philosophy, but a little of its external plot. This she used to sensationalize her already thoroughly fantastic production.

One reason for early American interest in Cervantes was because everywhere "Don Quixote had seized the imagination of the eighteenth century in a way peculiar to that age . . . ."[45]

The Quijote seemed to stress ideals sought by that century--sanity and moderation, and the spirit and tone of the book harmonized with Voltairian skepticism--that lively questioning of authority and keen concern with politics and culture, characteristic of the "Age of Enlightenment."

Thus Spain's most famous caballero appealed to many countries in the eighteenth century, especially England, and it is probable that in some cases he reached American writers secondhand, via English works. For instance, Tyler suggests a substitute title for his play, since another author, whom a drama critic identifies as the British Thomas D'Urfey, had already used the title "Barataria" in a play produced in this country.[46]

Mrs. Tenney's work is a closer imitation of Charlotte Ramsay Lennox's The Female Quixote: or, The Adventures of Arabella (1752) than it is of Cervantes. Samuel Johnson's friend Mrs. Lennox was a successful writer who a few scholars claim was America's first novelist;[47] but since her birthplace is obscure, and seventy years of her life were spent in England, she is usually classed as British.

Lennox designed the pattern which Mrs. Tenney was to follow a half century later. The name of the isolated country girl is Arabella instead of Dorcasina; Lucy is the maid. Arabella's

head is turned not by English novels, but by English translations of seventeenth century French romances, such as La Calprénède's La Cléopâtre and Mlle. de Scudéri's Le Grand Cyrus. Then follows for the bookish heroine a series of burlesqued love affairs.

One scholar discusses the countless British imitators of Cervantes and forerunners of Mrs. Lennox, including Samuel Butler's mock epic, Hudibras (1663-1678), and Henry Fielding's play, Don Quixote in England (1728-1733).[48] Soon after Mrs. Lennox's novel, appeared Tobias Smollett's translation of Don Quixote (1755), The Adventures of Sir Launcelot Greaves (1760-1761), and Humphrey Clinker (1771). The British imitations or works directly influenced by Lennox include novels and plays too obscure and numerous to list.[49]

In his Modern Chivalry, Hugh Henry Brackenridge mentioned authors in addition to Cervantes who influenced his quixotic attitude: "Moreover, afterwards when I came to have some acquaintance with the modern wits, such as Cervantes, Le Sage, and especially Swift, I found myself still more inclined to an ironical, ludicrous way of thinking and writing."[50] On another occasion, he remarked: "And in the English language that of Hume, Swift, and Fielding, is the only stile [sic] that I have coveted to possess."[51]

His biographer adds to these influences those of Rabelais, Smollett, and Laurence Sterne.[52]

According to one scholar, it was this "satirical form of didacticism, which gave rise to the large family of eighteenth century Quixotes . . . ."[53] The popularity of this more "enlightened" form of literature, and the resulting scorn of the sentimental novel, may thus be another reason for American interest, especially for that of Mrs. Tenney.

A final reason for North American interest in quixotism was the omnipresent Romanticism. Mrs. Rowson's play consists of a not so skillful blending of the two main currents--an embarrassingly nationalistic attitude which maintained that only in America was the word "freedom" ever heard of and a fascination for fantastic plots, complete with disguises and mistaken identity. Apparently Mrs. Rowson could extract the exotic from any theme--including Columbus and quixotism--but her Romantic interpretation of the Quijote was not unique during the period under discussion, as evidenced by the remark of a friend of the Hispanist and Romantic dramatist, George Henry Boker:

> . . . for as we grew older, Boker and I, from reading Don Quixote and Scott, used to sit for hours improvising legends of chivalry and marvelous romances.[54]

To judge from the number of copies of the Quijote throughout early America, it was the most popular of all Spanish masterpieces. Didactically inclined American writers found in it a way to express their dissatisfaction with contemporary politics or recent literary vogues. Other writers extracted only superficial plot fragments for purposes of humor or fantastic adventure. But the Quijote's popularity was not confined to America; rather it furnished a model in Europe for the scientific, debunking rationalists of the eighteenth century and before. American writers, then, in many cases did not go directly to Cervantes, but to the diluted versions in English literature.

Footnotes

[1] M. F. Heiser, "Cervantes in the United States," Hispanic Review, XV (October, 1947), 435.

[2] Ibid., p. 419.

[3] Quinn, American Drama, p. 137.

[4] Peterson, op. cit., p. 405.

[5] North American Review, XXXIV (January, 1832), 56, cited in Whitman, op. cit., p. 128.

[6] Heiser, op. cit., p. 417.

[7] Brooks, World of Washington Irving, p. 92, n. 287.

[8] Heiser, op. cit., p. 417.

[9] Ibid., p. 419.

[10] Brooks, World of Washington Irving, p. 320.

[11] Heiser, op. cit., p. 420.

[12] Ibid., p. 421.

[13] "Hispanismo," op. cit., p. 1767.

[14] Leary, op. cit., p. 414

[15] William Peterfield Trent, et al. (eds.), The Cambridge History of American Literature, Vol. I, Colonial and Revolutionary Literature, Early National Literature (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1933), p. 236.

[16] Whitman, op. cit., p. 3.

[17] Bernstein, op. cit., pp. 2, 7.

[18] Brooks, World of Washington Irving, pp. 89-90.

[19] Bernstein, op. cit., pp. 2, 3, 7, 8.

[20] Leary, op. cit., pp. 21-22.

[21] Howard, op. cit., p. 23.

[22] Brooks, Flowering of New England, p. 8.

[23] American Monthly Magazine, New Series, I (April, 1836), 354.

[24] Cowie, op. cit., p. 59.

[25] Brackenridge, op. cit., pp. xix-xx.

[26] Heiser, op. cit., p. 415.

[27] Vernon Louis Parrington, The Colonial Mind, 1620-1800 (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1927), p. 391.



[28] Brackenridge, op. cit., p. 265.

[29] Cowie, op. cit., p. 57.

[30] Brackenridge, op. cit., pp. 405-406.

[31] Ibid., p. 355 f.

[32] Ibid., p. 389.

[33] Ibid., p. xxviii.

[34] Miriam Rossiter Small, Charlotte Ramsay Lennox, an Eighteenth Century Lady of Letters (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1935), pp. 110-114.

[35] Cowie, op. cit., p. 28.

[36] Tabitha Tenney, Female Quixotism (Boston, 1801), I, iv.

[37] Loshe, op. cit., p. 20.

[38] Tenney, op. cit., II, 213.

[39] Small, op. cit., p. 114.

[40] Cowie, op. cit., p. 27.

[41] Arthur Wallace Peach and George Floyd Newbrough (eds.), Four Plays by Royall Tyler (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1941), p. 14.

[42] Quinn, American Drama, p. 72.

[43] Mrs. Rowson, Slaves in Algiers; or, a Struggle for Freedom (Philadelphia: Printed for the author by Wrigley and Berriman, 1794), p. 72.

[44] Ibid., p. ii.

[45] Small, op. cit., p. 92.

[46] Quinn, American Drama, p. 72.

[47] Gustavus Howard Maynadier, The First American Novelist? (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1940).

[48] Small, op. cit., pp. 92-98.

[49] Ibid., pp. 99-110.

[50] Brackenridge, op. cit., p. 43.

[51] Ibid., p. 643.

[52] Ibid., p. xxxvii.

[53] Loshe, op. cit., p. 22.

[54] Edward Sculley Bradley, George Henry Boker, Poet and Patriot (London: Oxford University Press, 1927), p. 9.

CHAPTER VIII

THE *COMEDIA*

Second to the *Quijote* as a source of inspiration to American writers before 1831 was the *comedia*, the Spanish drama perfected and produced in quantity by Lope de Vega (1562-1635), Calderón de la Barca (1600-1681), and lesser figures of Spain's Golden Age of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Evidence of some familiarity in America with products of the Spanish National Theater is offered by J. R. Spell in his article on "Hispanic Contributions to the Early Theater in Philadelphia." He reports, for instance, a Philadelphia performance in 1791 of Calderón's *El Escondido y la Tapada*. This British translation had been presented in London as early as 1770 with the title, *'Tis well it's no worse*.[1] Irving's *Journal* of 1825 records that he was then reading through Calderón's plays, purchased in Paris.[2] Some *siglo de oro* plays reached American eyes--thanks to Harvard professor Francis Sales, who supervised their American reprinting.[3] Ticknor's lectures at Harvard on the history of Spanish literature--the "first attempt made in this country"--were delivered

during the period under scrutiny, but Longfellow's lectures there on Lope and Calderón were begun in the late 1830's, and his study of Lope's predecessors, in the 1840's.[4]

Early American drama manifested an interest in Spanish themes--an interest that at the height of the Romantic period in America shone forth in Robert Montgomery Bird's and George Henry Boker's galaxy of plays based on original Spanish material. But in this earlier period, the Spanish themes came to America via France.

The first theme with a Spanish setting is that of courtly love, satirized in James Nelson Barker's How to Try a Lover (1817)--"after Tyler's Island of Barrataria . . . the first significant example that has survived of that interest in Spanish themes for stage treatment, which was to become so frequent in the next period."[5]

After Dunlap's retirement, James Nelson Barker (1784-1858) and John Howard Payne were two of the most prominent American dramatists of the first quarter of the century. Barker followed the professions of soldier and politician. Captain in the army, he became mayor of his native city, Philadelphia, then Collector of the Port, and later, under Van Buren, First Comptroller of the Treasury. His playwriting career began in 1804 with The

Spanish Rover, the drama referred to in connection with the influence of Cervantes.

How to Try a Lover, laid in thirteenth century Catalonia, is a nonsensical comedy concerning Carlos, who, accompanied by his squire Pacomo, lives the life of a Don Juan. Carlos is at last seriously wounded by Cupid's arrow when he meets Eugenia, whose father is a friend of Carlos' father. Both Counts, the two paterfamilias contrive to bring the lovers together in a roundabout way. On the theory that their children's love for each other will be strengthened by being opposed, the Counts hide Eugenia away in a castle. Carlos and Pacomo finally gain entrance, only to be arrested for trespassing and tried before the Court of Love. In the meantime, Eugenia and Carlos learn of their fathers' deception and plan one of their own. Eugenia, presiding over the Court, keeps the Counts in suspense by seeming to be on the verge of pronouncing Carlos guilty, but at last she condemns him to accept her hand for life. Then she lets the Counts in on her little joke.

The play's chief raison d'être is clever dialogue like the following between Carlos and his valet:

Car: O woman! object of all my wishes!
Pac: Cause of all my scratches!
Car: Thy bright eyes may indeed wound--
Pac: And so indeed may thy long nails--
Car: But how sweet the cure of thy balmy lips!

Pac: Or thy snagged teeth.
Car: O woman! to thee I owe all my joys!
Pac: And I all my cudgellings![6]

Spanish in spirit are the setting and the gracioso Pacomo, who in comedia fashion conveniently falls in love with the servant of his master's mistress. But the direct source for the play was French, as indicated by Barker: "The author is indebted to one of the novels of Le Brun, for the ground-work of this little comedy."[7] As a historian of the drama has pointed out, the plot, characters, and even some of the dialogue were appropriated from the last volume of La Folie Espagnole, a picaresque type novel published in four volumes between 1799 and 1801 by Charles Antoine Guillaume Pigault-Lebrun (1753-1825); the humorous squire Pacomo was developed out of Lebrun's dastardly rascal Trufaldin.[8]

Tragic love was dramatized in another play of Spanish descent and inspiration, John Howard Payne's The Spanish Husband; or, First and Last Love (published in an 1826 collection; produced in 1830). Payne represents the early nineteenth century trend toward foreign themes in the theatre, while his aforementioned contemporary, Barker, concerned himself more with native ones. Payne's cosmopolitan outlook was probably a natural result of spending most of his life in London and Paris, though he was born in New York in 1791 and grew to manhood in Boston. He

was one of the first North Americans to depend entirely for his living on the fickle favors of the theatre world in both England and America--most of his plays were first produced at Drury Lane and Covent Gardens.

In England in 1813, Payne met Peter Irving, Washington's nephew, with whom he lived in Paris in 1823 and 1824. Probably Peter and Washington had something to do with at least some of the versions of The Spanish Husband. In a letter of 1825, Washington wrote that he and Peter were shortening Payne's manuscript --according to Payne's most recent critics, the Irvings were then working on the tragi-comic opera version, the second of at least four reworkings. And in three of the four manuscript versions at Harvard, these critics maintain that part of the handwriting is that of the two Irvings.[9]

This wildly implausible play shifts its setting from Naples to Barcelona with confusing rapidity. It opens in the former city where Don Alphonso Alvar and his bride Bianca, whom he met there and married on a previous trip, have returned for a visit. Some years before her marriage, Bianca had been courted by a young Italian, Hyppolito, but because of a quarrel with his father, Hyppolito had left Naples and sailed for Spain where, presumably, he died. Of course at this moment he appears, very much alive,

and on discovering that Bianca is now married, indulges in the most Romantic raving:

> Come lightnings! Launch your burning arrows here.
> I laugh your power to scorn, for here's a blow
> Deadlier than all your fire; it strikes, yet kills not.[10]

The second act takes place at Alvar's castle in Barcelona. Although Alvar had studied portrait painting in Naples, he finds his wife's beauty too great for him to capture, so he hires a visiting portraitist to try his hand. The portraitist, of course, turns out to be Hyppolito in disguise. Hyppolito soon reveals his identity, accuses Bianca of faithlessness, and threatens to stab Alvar. Poor Bianca avows her love for her husband, and cries: "Look on me, spare my husband, take my life."[11]

The scene shifts to a mansion where a masked ball is taking place. Suddenly the mansion catches fire; Bianca faints, and Hyppolito kidnaps her, taking her aboard a boat bound for Naples. Back in Italy, Hyppolito locks her up in the house of a friend. But Alvar arrives on the scene, and before he is disarmed, manages to shoot Hyppolito and take an unsuccessful pot shot at Bianca. Both she and Hyppolito swear, however, to her "purity," so Alvar takes her back, and Hyppolito promises that if he lives, he will fight the battles of the Holy Cross against the Moors and live a penitent.

As Payne's modern editors point out, the play's original source was Calderón's tragedy, El Pintor de Su Deshonra, but the immediate source, from which Payne made a close rendering, was the French prose translation by Victor Laurent Suzanne Moise Angliviel de la Beaumelle (1772-1831). Payne began writing his play soon after Le Peintre de Son Deshonneur appeared in Paris in 1822 in the collection Chefs-D'Oeuvre des Théâtres Etrangers.[12]

The "honor problem"--a third theme to be indirectly derived from the comedia--was dramatized by Payne in The Last Duel in Spain. A sort of companion-piece to The Spanish Husband, it was written during the same period--1822-1830.

The Last Duel in Spain concerns the abolition by Charles V of the public duel. As the comedy opens, Charles is returning to Spain from Flanders. In Spain, meanwhile, Don Jerome reveals to his best friend, Don Pedro, that he has fallen in love with Violante de Urrea, daughter of the recently deceased governor of Alarcón. Pedro is horrified, for unbeknown to Jerome, he himself has been courting the lovely Violante.

Pedro is now faced with a really knotty "honor problem." Since his friend has confided in him, honor requires him to return the confidence. Yet honor also obliges him to conceal his affair with Violante until her petition to the Emperor is settled. It

seems she is petitioning Charles V for a dower, for, unmarried, she is penniless--only a male may succeed to the governorship of Alarcón. To which of the two is poor Pedro more honor-bound? Come hell or high water, "Let me at least preserve honor," he cries.[13]

Pedro soon unravels the knot by quarreling with Violante. According to the honor code, this quarrel frees him from his duty to Violante, and he may confess all to his friend Jerome, who immediately arranges for a duel. Violante begs Pedro to marry her and thereby avoid bloodshed, but Pedro's honor makes any such solution out of the question. "Law of honour, tyrannic power, cursed be thy author," he moans.[14] The ensuing duel is most courteously conducted. Pedro falls from his horse; Jerome picks him up; Pedro drops his sword and asks Jerome to kill him. Pedro now owes life and honor to Jerome, so abandons his pursuit of Violante.

The honor problems begin to fly thick and fast. Violante is enraged to learn that her rival Seraphina knows of her love for Pedro. She believes Pedro has broken his promise and revealed the secret. He thinks it is Jerome who has let Seraphina in on the news. In reality, the tattletale is Seraphina's servant.

In the meantime, Charles V signs Violante's petition, and she is free to choose a husband and governor. But a new, far more elaborate duel between the two friends takes place at Valladolid, and again they fail to wound each other. Thereupon, Seraphina confesses that her servant is the source of her knowledge of recent happenings. All ends happily with Pedro asking for Violante's hand, Jerome for Seraphina's; the tattletale gracioso asks for the hand of a servant, and Charles V plans to write Pope Pius III to have the Council of Trent abolish dueling.

With its complicated honor code and its graciosos, this play is reminiscent of the comedia, and indeed its origin is again Calderón, and, in this case, his El Postrer Duelo de España. But as recent critics point out, the scattering of French phrases throughout Payne's manuscript, and his close rendering, indicate his direct source was probably a French prose translation.[15] Jean Baptiste Esménard (1772-1842), a French devotee of the Spanish theatre, published his Le Dernier Duel en Espagne in the first volume of Chefs D'Oeuvre des Théâtres Etrangers (1822), which also contains Payne's aforementioned Spanish Husband.

Thus American writers borrowed from French dramatists plays whose plots and characters harkened back to prototypes produced during Spain's Golden Age. Whether the French

translations were necessitated by the Americans' inability to read Spanish, or because the Spanish originals were unavailable, is conjectural. But the immediacy of the French sources does not detract from the essentially Spanish flavor and inspiration of the work.

The cause of this North American interest in Spanish drama may be accounted for by the early nineteenth century search for the exotic and faraway. The three themes plucked from Spanish plays by American authors--courtly love, tragic love, and the "honor problem"--were all suitable viands for the Romantic appetite. Although one critic refers to a play after the period under discussion, Longfellow's The Spanish Student (1840-1842), his remark also applies to the foregoing plays. They were "a successful experiment in opening to the half-starved imagination a golden far away realm of Romance."[16]

The comedia, then, afforded an effete, imported type of Romantic outlet, far removed from the stories of love and adventure in nearby Spanish territories, as exemplified in Francis Berrian. It supplied what the above critic, speaking of Longfellow's Outre-Mer (1833-1834), maintained that nineteenth century America wanted from Europe in the way of Romanticism:

> This was what the New World wanted of the Old, not its facts or its theories, but its inconsistencies, its strange contrasts, its antique medley of rich and varied experience, the strange, the grotesque, the majestic heritage which the New World long insisted that the Old World must possess, even while the Old World was wearily looking to the New for the Eldorado of romance that must exist where the whole cycle of civilization is beginning anew.[17]

Footnotes

[1] J. R. Spell, "Hispanic Contributions to the Early Theater in Philadelphia," Hispanic Review, IX (January, 1941), 192-198.

[2] Williams, op. cit., I, 466, n. 8.

[3] "Hispanismo," op. cit., p. 1768.

[4] Whitman, op. cit., pp. 110 ff.

[5] Quinn, American Drama, p. 146.

[6] James Nelson Barker, How to try a Lover (New York: David Longworth, 1817), p. 8.

[7] Ibid., unpaginated introduction.

[8] Quinn, American Drama, pp. 146-147.

[9] Codman Hislop and W. R. Richardson (eds.), Trial without Jury and Other Plays (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1940), pp. 207-208.

[10] Ibid., p. 219.

[11] Ibid., p. 231.

[12] Ibid., pp. 207-208.

[13] Codman Hislop and W. R. Richardson (eds.), The Last Duel in Spain and Other Plays (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1940), p. 12.

[14] Ibid., p. 26.

[15] Ibid., p. 3.

[16] George Rice Carpenter, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (Boston, 1891), pp. 72-73, cited in Whitman, op. cit., p. 198.

[17] Carpenter, op. cit., p. 37, cited in Whitman, op. cit., pp. 174-175.

CHAPTER IX

A SPANISH BACKDROP

A remarkable number of late eighteenth and early nineteenth century American novels and dramas of the adventure and Gothic type included Spain or a Spanish vessel in the hero's itinerary. Thus, a Spanish setting constitutes, if not precisely a theme, at least another important aspect of Hispanic influence.

In most cases, these brief sojourns in Spanish-speaking areas or aboard a Spanish frigate reveal little firsthand knowledge on the part of the author. Light touches of local color, if present in these tales, were probably borrowed from European and American travel books. In many instances, such adventure stories read like travel books, the hero's escapades exaggerated and sensationalized. For fictional purposes, however, such an enlargement was scarcely necessary, for the adventures described by supposedly sober travelers were already in the realm of the fabulous. Most travel books included not only baleful warnings concerning the perils encountered in Spanish inns and even in Spanish food, but at least one highway robbery. As one nineteenth century American

traveler, Severn Teackle Wallis, put it: "... no book of travels in Spain is considered orthodox, nowadays, without a robbery ..."[1]

France contributed abundantly to the field of travel books about Spain and Latin America. Victor Hugo's upbringing in Spain was reflected in his Romantic dramas and poetry with a Spanish setting. Théophile Gautier prided himself on his familiarity with the Peninsula.[2] The previously mentioned works of Charlevoix on Paraguay and Santo Domingo, and the Abbé Raynal's account of the Indies were owned by various early American libraries. In the latter half of the nineteenth century, the French published abundantly on travel in Mexico and Central America.[3]

The essence of these French travel books about Spain was evaluated by the American contemporary and fellow traveler, the ever caustic Severn Teackle Wallis:

> France has, as yet, sent no De Tocquevilles into Spain. The better class of her travelers have generally carried with them that systematic devotion to their own "idées" and national "préscriptions," which so frequently interferes with a Frenchman's judgment, and nowhere so decidedly as in the Peninsula; for France and Spain, like
>
> "Oil and water, woman and a secret,
> Are hostile properties."
>
> Joined with this usual disqualification, there is also the notion so prevalent in France, that the Peninsula is but an appandage [sic] of hers, and should be judged and dealt with on that theory. Of the less graceful and philosophical French travelers, the great majority have their ideas of the Spaniards chiefly

> from the Barber of Seville. They find you, everywhere, "des Figaro, des Almaviva," and seem to think that they are wandering among the heroes of an opera or melo-drama, who disappoint them, hugely, when they fall below the Paris standard of stage-scenery and decorations. In cookery, too, the Gaul holds his neighbors to be merely savages. He could endure them as cut-throats and banditti, but they villainously feed on garlic and garbanzos, the moral obliquity of which he can not tolerate. With feelings and ideas such as these, of course, he travels pleasantly and usefully. The Spaniards call him a "gavacho," and he writes that they are "des barbares!"[4]

Perhaps British books of travel to Spain and Spanish America outnumbered the French and influenced Americans more directly. There seems to have existed a considerable "Spanish travel" tradition in England from the sixteenth century on. Bernstein records the presence in American libraries of early British collections of travels which included Spain or Spanish territories, such as Richard Hakluyt's famous collection of 1589, The Principal Navigations, Voyages, and Discoveries of the English Nation, made by Sea, or over Land, within the Compass of these 1500 years; Churchill's collection; seventeenth century voyages by Thomas Gage and Ogilly; early eighteenth century voyages of Admiral Anson, William Dampier, Woodes Rogers, John Bulkeley and John Cummins, Captain James Cook, Frezier, and many others.[5]

Popular late eighteenth century books of travel to Spain include works by Henry Swinburne and Joseph Townsend; early nineteenth century accounts were published by Thomas Blayney and

William Jacob. The genre culminated after this date, of course, in the famous The Bible in Spain by the British missionary-traveler, George H. Borrow, and in the two works by the best known of all British travelers, Richard Ford.

But again of more interest than mere enumeration is Wallis' acidic opinion of his nineteenth century fellow travelers:

> The English traveler, though less abstract and artificial, and more practically sensible than his mercurial rival, is more impregnable, if possible, in his personal prejudices and social and individual habits, than the Frenchman in his theories and fanatical generalizations. He has, in a ten-fold proportion, what might be called the traveling-carriage-propensity--a sort of congenital affinity with the snail, in that turn of mind which suggests to him the necessity of carrying his own home, bodily, with him, wherever he goes. Educated and clever as he may be, his prejudices are a portion of his mind and education. Protestantism is the part of his moral wardrobe which he especially furbishes and puts on, for a jaunt to Catholic countries. To Spain, in particular, he carries a few of the notions and impressions which have come down from the days of the invincible Armada; not diminished, perhaps, by the view he has had, in his childhood, of the captured instruments of torture still on exhibition at the Tower. Comfort, of all the Dei minorum gentium, is the deity whose image he specially packs up among his valuables, when he goes to see a people, whom climate and circumstances have taught to despise it. To Spain, he carries the persuasion also, that he ought to be regarded by the natives as one of their national patrons and benefactors, for his services and those of his compatriots, during the war of the Peninsula; forgetting that England selected Spain as a battle-ground, for her own salvation, not that of the Spaniards, and that she has endeavored, as far as she has been able, to make Spain pay the piper. More than that, too, he forgets that the last way in the world to excite the gratitude of a proud and sensitive people, is to throw their obligations always in their teeth, and to demand as tribute, what is contemptible, unless it

> spring from a spontaneous sentiment. That a traveler, in such a frame of mind, is hardly a fair or candid judge of what he sees, it needs no ghost to tell. That he is not likely to elicit from the people whom he visits, a display of their most excellent or pleasant qualities, seems just as obvious, on a very rational theory of human nature.
>
> The book of Mr. Ford is a perfect illustration of what has just been said. It is learned, able, humorous, and full of profound acquaintance with Spanish politics, society, and history. Yet it views every thing through an exclusively English medium. It judges every thing by English taste, maxims, and prejudices. It is full of English passions, grudges, and partialities . . . .[6]

It is surprising to find among the countless American travelers before 1831 who recorded their impressions of Spain such distinguished names as Arthur Lee, Francis B. Crowninshield, John Adams, John Jay, James Monroe, and many others.[7] American books on Spanish travel before 1831 include Samuel Mordecai Noah's Travels in England, France, Spain, and the Barbary States, in 1813-15 (1819) and the much acclaimed Year in Spain by Alexander Slidell Mackenzie. Two of the best known early American travelers to Spanish America were Henry Marie Brackenridge, who wrote in 1819 his Voyage to South America by order of the American government in the years 1817 and 1818, in the frigate Congress; and Amasa Delano's A Narrative of Voyages and Travels in the Northern and Southern Hemisphere (1817).

Of his contemporary American travelers and the American opinion of Spain, Wallis wrote:

> We have added to it [the English notion of Spain] some trifling improvements of our own, predicated upon our experience of the half-breed Indians and negroes in Mexico and South America, whom we call "Spaniards," and take to be types of the race. Seeing but few of the natives of the Peninsula among us--knowing but little of their language, and still less of their literature--rarely visiting their country, too--we have a sort of indefinite idea of the Spaniard, which places him about half-way between a bloody-minded grand-inquisitor and an "illustrious hidalgo" of Major Monsoon's Portuguese regiment. I speak of vulgar opinion, merely, as it shows itself, upon occasions, in Congress, in "literary essays," schoolbooks, and the less cultivated branches of the periodical press.[8]

Further publicity on travel in Spain was afforded not only by New England scholars like Ticknor and Longfellow, but also by American diplomats who, in that day, were often well-known literati as well as wealthy and indolent politicians. At the end of the eighteenth century, for instance, such distinguished men of culture as the prolific poet, David Humphreys, served as Minister to Spain. In 1804, President Jefferson appointed as Minister James Bowdoin, son of the man in whose honor Bowdoin College was named; and George Erving served from 1805 to 1809. Alexander Everett, brother of Edward--Ticknor's traveling companion in Europe--was serving as Minister in Madrid when Irving first visited in 1826. At that time Irving was appointed attaché to the Legation, and later, of course, became Minister. Irving's travel-writer friend, Mackenzie, also occupied a post in the Legation. After

1830, the United States continued to send famous writers to Spain --including James Russell Lowell and John Hay.

Fiction made use of Spain, then, as exotic background. For instance, Thomas Atwood Digges (1741-1821), considered by some critics as the first American novelist,[9] sketched in Portuguese, English, Spanish, Brazilian, and Cuban settings in his Adventures of Alonzo (1775). Born a Catholic in Warburton Manor, Maryland, he seems, according to letters written to Benjamin Franklin, to have spent his life in Portugal and Spain.[10] Abroad he worked for Franklin, smuggled arms, and ferreted out secrets for the United States. Since he was suspected (probably unjustly) of being in the pay of the British, he was finally jailed.

Digges was thus one of the few American novelists who actually possessed firsthand knowledge of the Peninsula:

> It appears, to begin with, that he had first-hand knowledge of Portugal and the neighboring countries. Native words enter naturally into his sentences; familiarity with the region's physical aspects, distances and topography characterizes his descriptions; and personal acquaintance with the events and the locale colors his political as well as fictional anecdotes. Moreover, a few of the characters with active roles seem to be persons who really existed and were known by the writer.[11]

Adventures of Alonzo concerns a young Portuguese, Alonzo, who elopes to Spain with a married woman, Eugenia. When he has spent his last cent, he places his beloved in a convent for safekeeping and starts out to recoup his fortune. This he manages to

accomplish by smuggling diamonds out of Brazil and trading in contraband with Spanish settlements in the New World. His adventures include an escape from a Spanish sloop, a trip through the interior of Panama, and enslavement to a perverted Moor. He finally returns home where he learns of his wife's death; but Alonzo's grief is somewhat allayed by his father's pardon. He decides to spend his last years conforting the elderly man and following the mercantile profession.

With its accurately described setting, this novel captures more Spanish atmosphere than most. It also captures the spirit of travel books about Spain. In fact, it seems to be only a partly fictionized account of the author's own adventurous travels. Digges refers frequently to the poor Spanish roads and inns--annoyances which are criticized in almost all travel books: "The badness of the roads--the uneasiness of the calashes--the tiresome ding-dong pace of the mules, with the continued tinkling of their bells, and above all, the forlorn accommodation of their inns, render travelling in Spain fit only for Lovers or Philosophers . . . ."[12]

A similar tale of adventure is Fortune's Football: or, the Adventures of Mercutio (1797)[13] by James Butler (c.1755-1842), an Englishman classed as an American writer, since he lived out his life near Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. But while The Adventures

of Alonzo showed some knowledge of Spain, this implausible yarn reveals none. Digges contributed some Spanish local color, but Butler devoted his time to action, not to description of background. And while Alonzo spent most of his time in Spanish or Portuguese regions, Butler's novel is more typical of these adventure tales in including Spain and a Spanish ship of war as only two short pauses in the hero's long itinerary.

Like Alonzo, Mercutio is more concerned with adventure than with love. Son of a rich Londoner, Mercutio studies at Oxford and London, then falls mildly in love several times, but each object of his affections dies on his hands. He then embarks on a series of adventures by land and by sea, which lead him to Quebec, Italy, Spain, Russia, et cetera. He makes hairbreadth escapes from improbable situations, such as shipwrecks and capture by pirates. His plight, as one critic points out, when the young Londoner is chained to an oar "is viewed as a romantic hardship."[14] In episodic fashion, the main narration is frequently interrupted by encounters with long-lost friends who recount their adventures since last seeing Mercutio.

Another adventure story, this time with a Mexican setting, was written by Anne Royall (1769-1854), whose own life makes for more engrossing reading than her novel. Born in Maryland, this

hardy woman spent her childhood in Pennsylvania as a pioneer, then married an officer in the American Revolutionary War. On his death, she proceeded to Washington to fight for a pension held up by queries concerning the legality of her marriage. She traveled extensively in the United States from 1824 to 1831, producing a ten-volume account of these rambles. Then she became an editor, attacking all and sundry with her venomous pen, until she was tried as a common scold.[15]

In Mrs. Royall's The Tennesseean (1827),[16] probably inspired by Flint's Francis Berrian,[17] the hero's early adventures are set in Mexico. The impoverished youth passes from one escapade and amour to another, including a Mexican prison, a Spanish governor's lovely daughter, a sojourn in Cuba, pirates, and a cave full of monsters. As in Mercutio, the hero is forever being reunited with long-lost friends, finally even with his father's horse.

Typical of the authors who quickly added, for exotic purposes, a little Spanish local color to only one or two scenes is Charles Brockden Brown (1771-1810), who had planned epics on Columbus, Pizarro, and Cortés. Born of a wealthy Quaker family, Brown was an early professional man of letters, managing to earn a living at novel writing and magazine editing. He sought American

settings, but his treatment was usually that of the British Gothic novelists.[18]

Jane Talbot (1801)[19] consists of a series of letters outlining the many implausible obstacles which prevent the marriage of the hero and heroine. The former, disillusioned by his so far unsuccessful courtship, sets out with a friend on an adventurous sea journey to the West Indies and the Orient. The only Spanish touch occurs during this voyage--a friendly Spanish vessel seizes the men's mutinying crew. At the end of this tiresome epistolary nonsense, it appears possible that Jane and her lover will be united.

Dramas of the period also made use of a colorful Spanish setting, with or without the author's real knowledge of things Hispanic. The Rose of Arragon (1822) by Samuel Benjamin Helbert Judah (1799-1876) affords an excellent example of an author's total ignorance of authentic Spanish setting. This Jewish bachelor lawyer and playwright is best known for his Gotham and the Gothamites, a libelous satire on prominent New Yorkers. On its publication in 1823, Judah was fined and sent to prison. He boasted that he wrote The Rose of Arragon in about two days, "and the reader has no reason to doubt him."[20]

This wild "Melo-Drama in two acts" concerns the Prince of Arragon's love for a country maid, Rosaline. To assure himself

that her affections are not motivated by greed, he has passed himself off to her and her father as a peasant. His true identity is revealed, however, when a powerful Count arrives on the scene and makes love to Rosaline. Unsuccessful in his courtship, the angry Count, with the aid of a friend, abducts the country maid and imprisons her father and the Prince. She must marry the Count by St. Mark's Vigil, or the Prince will be executed.

The Prince escapes in the nick of time, however, and stabs the Count's friend. To save his own life, the cowardly Count holds a knife at Rosaline's throat, but one of his men turns traitor, and knocks the weapon to the floor. The Count then tries to stab Rosaline's father, but she grabs the dagger and stabs the Count instead. All ends happily.

The play's only Spanish elements are the title and mise en scène. The dialogue sounds anything but Spanish. For instance, the father's favorite expression is "Hoity, toity!"[21] On one occasion, he says admiringly to the Prince: "Zounds! you was born to be a soldier!"[22]

Another writer to make use of a Spanish setting was Robert Montgomery Bird (1806-1856), who became, after 1830, one of the leading Hispanic Romanticists in America. But Bird, unlike most of the others, read widely on Spanish America, in the works of

Bernal Díaz del Castillo, De Solís, and Clavijero.[23] It is to be particularly noted that, in addition, he immersed himself in travel books to Spanish America, including W. B. Stevenson's A Historical and Descriptive Narrative of Twenty Years' Residence in South America (London, 1825); Jorge Juan and Antonio de Ulloa's A Voyage to South America (London, 1772); Edmund Temple's Travels in Various Parts of Peru (London, 1830); Peter Schmidtmeyer's Travels into Chile, over the Andes (London, 1824); and especially travel books to Mexico such as Henry George Ward's Mexico in 1827 (London, 1828); Captain George Francis Lyon's Journal of a Residence and Tour in the Republic of Mexico in the year 1826 (London, 1828); and William Bullock's Six Months' Residence and Travels in Mexico (London, 1824).[24]

Two of Bird's best plays are set in Spanish America: Oralloossa (1832), ennobling the Peruvian savage and condemning Pizarro, and The Broker of Bogota (1834), a domestic drama set in viceregal Colombia. Because of a quarrel with the famous actor Edwin Forest over lack of copyrights, Bird turned to novel writing. His first two long and fantastic novels deal with Cortés and Narváez in the New World. With their knightly hero, Don Amador, Calavar, or The Knight of the Conquest (1834) and its sequel published a year later, The Infidel: or, The Fall of Mexico, are reminiscent of the novel of chivalry.

Bird's only play written before 1831 is an incomplete manuscript, entitled Isidora; or, The Three Dukes, which critics date about 1828.[25] At this early point in his career, Spain simply provided a locale, and little or no study was made of Spanish customs and landscape.

The three acts are laid in Catalonia presumably around 1500 when Isabella was, for a price, converting counts into dukes. Rafael, Duke of Barcelona, returns to his fiancée Isidora, Countess of Cardona and the "Lady of Catalonia," after successfully routing a band of marauders. His entourage includes a handsome young man, Basilio, who saved the Duke's life during the fracas. Out of gratitude, the Duke has accepted Basilio as an equal, even though the young man is of obscure and humble birth.

Much slapstick takes place between Basilio and the Duke's other favorite, Palador, who is engaged to Angela, daughter of Gazonero, the Corregidor of Cardona. Angela's devotion is so consuming, however, that Palador has lost interest and wants Basilio to take her off his hands: "She looks at me, she stares--she casts her eyes down . . . she sighs . . . she sits under a lemon tree, and weeps and writes my name in the sand."[26]

Meanwhile one of the captured bandits, the gypsy Zingari, tries every ruse possible to escape hanging. He finally begs the

Corregidor to plead for his life. Gazonero does so, explaining that when Duke Rafael was a child, his father had ordered Gazonero to kill him, but instead he had given the child to Zingari for safe-keeping. Rafael, thus, can do little but pardon the gypsy and make him his court astrologer.

The plot thickens when Isidora suddenly declares to Basilio that she loves him, not the Duke to whom her parents betrothed her when she was a child. The honest and honor-bound Basilio tries to dissuade her, pointing out that he is only a poverty-stricken peasant, son of a muleteer. But Isidora loves him nonetheless, and begs to flee with him to a pastoral paradise:

> I will flee with thee!
> . . . to your summer hills!, among whose depths,
> In the green shady desert, we will build
> A leafy hermitage, where none will come,
> To tear us from that heaven . . . .[27]

Poor Basilio--between the devil and the deep blue sea--makes every effort possible to remain loyal to the Duke--he even begs to be allowed to join "Colon" in the conquest of new lands, but the Duke refuses to release him; in fact, he goes so far as to make him his personal petitioner to Isidora. Thereupon, Basilio can do little but fall in love with the Countess. He rejects her plan to flee, however, and insists on confessing all to the Duke.

In the meantime, however, the Duke has begun to suspect that his friend and rescuer may be spending his time with Isidora rather than with Angela. The Duke and Palador then surprise the two lovers in a garden where Basilio is, in the John Alden manner, innocently pleading the Duke's cause, and Isidora, not so innocently, is telling him to speak for himself. After much show of anger, the Duke pardons Basilio, offers him money, and orders him to leave Catalonia.

Bird has jotted down only a few suggestions concerning the play's ending. Apparently the gypsy Zingari enters the picture again, but only in a minor way. The Duke shifts his affections to Angela, and Palador feels pangs of jealousy for the first time. Isidora becomes jealous, too, that Basilio might be in love with Angela.

Spain was painted in as background to Gothic novels and dramas, too, but in a slightly different hue. Instead of loud, Romantic color, this setting lent a mysterious, sinister hue befitting the décor of the Inquisition's torture chambers and the caves of necromancers and sorcerers.

Charles Brockden Brown made such a use of Spain in his first novel, Wieland; or, The Transformation (1798). This Gothic piece, derived from William Godwin's Caleb Williams,[28] is

narrated by Clara Wieland. She tells the story of her family residing in a temple erected by her father, a religious fanatic who met a sudden and mysterious death. The family's routine is interrupted by the sinister stranger, Carwin, a traveling acquaintance of Pleyell, Clara's lover and distant relative. From the time of Carwin's arrival, mysterious voices fill the temple and warn Pleyell of Clara's infidelity. Clara leaves home on a trip, then returns to find that her brother Wieland has killed his wife and children. On returning from a second excursion, Clara learns from Carwin that he, skilled in ventriloquism, was the origin of the mysterious voices. Then the brother escapes from prison and tries to murder Clara, but Carwin stops him with his ventriloquial art. Wieland now returns to sanity, and, after taking stock of the havoc he has wrought, commits suicide. Carwin escapes, and Clara marries Pleyell.

Brown took the character of Carwin from another of his novels, the unfinished Memoirs of Carwin, the Biloquist.[29] In both works, Spain is indirectly blamed for Carwin's evil practices. It was there he acquired his sinister bearing, practiced his ventriloquism, turned Catholic, and adopted a Spanish name:

> His garb, aspect, and deportment were wholly Spanish. A residence of three years in the country, indefatigable attention to the language, and a studious conformity with the customs of the people, had made him indistinguishable from a native when he chose to assume that character.[30]

Another example of the use of a Spanish setting to add an aura of mystery is Julia, and the Illuminated baron (1800) by Mrs. Sally Sayward Barrell Keating Wood (1759-1854). This lady of the lengthy name seems to have been the first fiction writer of Maine.

Like Brown's Memoirs of Carwin, this Gothic tale derived its idea of a secret association from the Illuminati group, established in Bavaria in the eighteenth century.[31] The long and involved story traces the de Launa and Alvada families. The two heirs, lost in infancy, are led through a labyrinth of abductions, murders, and other violence, from which they make hairbreadth escapes. The leader of the villains is a baron, a corrupter of youth, and a member of the Illuminati.

The setting is the only Spanish element in this novel. Spain and France were selected, not because the author knew much about either, but because, as explained in the novel's introduction, she thereby avoided misunderstandings with friends in America, living or dead:

> It may perhaps be objected, that the annals of our own country display a vast field for the imagination, and that we need not cross the atlantic [sic] in search of materials to found the moral tale or amusing story upon . . . . But an aversion to introduce living characters, or those recently dead, rendered Europe a safer, though not a more agreeable theatre.[32]

An excellent example of a Spanish setting used in Gothic melodrama is The Mysteries of the Castle. Or the Victim of

Revenge, performed at the Charleston Theatre in 1806.[33] The author, John Blake White (1783-1859), was an artist, lawyer, and dramatist from South Carolina.[34] According to the page containing the "Dramatis Personae," the play is set in Castile, but actually the Black Forest is referred to as the locale.

A Spanish noble, Lothario, and his friend, the Italian nobleman, Persiles, get lost in the Forest en route to the Castle of De Mainfrois, and are pursued by robbers, Fauresco and Spoletto. During the flight and chase, the two noblemen meet many odd characters, whose narratives further complicate the plot. Their first encounter is a hermit (really De Mainfrois) who confesses spying on his wife one night. Seeing her embrace a man, he stabbed both the wife and her supposed lover to death--then found out the "lover" was the wife's long-lost brother. Later, in a subterranean chamber, Persiles comes across the Countess who, very much alive, has been held captive by Fauresco for twenty years. She relates that it was Fauresco who tried to stab her and her long-lost brother. The play closes with Lothario's falling in love with the Countess' daughter. The villainous Fauresco is buried in the ruins of the castle to which he has set fire. The Countess and her husband seem glad to be united, even though he may have, at one time, tried to murder her. Whether Fauresco or De Mainfrois

attempted the assassination is never explained; neither are the identities of the ghosts and spectres which fill the stage.

The indication of Castile as the locale is the only Spanish element in the play, but nothing seems really Spanish. Whether the observation that, since De Mainfrois was a Castilian, he was "proud, haughty, and mysterious in his manner,"[35] is an accurate and discerning character analysis of the Castilian type seems dubious. But this brief description does indicate that, for Gothic writers and readers, Spain implied the mysterious and sinister.

In general, the reason for the American habit of setting certain novels and dramas in Spain or Spanish America was the gradually awakening Romantic drive which sought the exotic and remote. Spain met these requirements, perhaps, as one historian maintains, because of her medieval character: "In Spain he [an American traveler] could find a state of life so little changed from olden time that he seemed almost to travel into that vanished past itself."[36] Because of the exaggerated reports of the horrors of the Inquisition, Spain afforded a suitably sinister setting for the mysterious machinations of Gothic villains.

The impact of three different literary genres also influenced American fiction set in Spain. First and foremost were the already discussed travel books.[37] Their popularity is substantiated

by a famous publisher's observation to one of the most distinguished of the nineteenth century American travelers to Central America, John L. Stephens.[38] On the latter's query as to what forms of literature Harper Brothers favored, Harper replied:

> Travels sell about the best of anything we get hold of. They don't always go with a rush, like a novel by a celebrated author, but they sell longer, and in the end, pay better.[39]

The fascination exerted by these travel accounts is further attested to by Washington Irving's reaction to Slidell Mackenzie's Year in Spain. Pierre M. Irving writes:

> One of his [Washington's] favorite books, during his long illness, was Year in Spain. He read it again and again. Its graphic pictures seemed to carry him back to pleasant scenes, and out of himself. When reading it to him, as we did constantly, to produce sleep, we always avoided it, as we found it excited his imagination, and roused rather than soothed him.[40]

In Francis Berrian, the adventurous hero confesses to the influence on his life, and probably on that of the author, of travel books. As Francis begins his life story, he mentions: "I became extravagantly fond of books of voyages and travels."[41]

A second literary genre to influence tales of adventure set in Spain was the picaresque travel novel. Gil Blas (I, II, 1715; III, 1724; IV, 1735) by Alain-René Lesage (1668-1747) was an American favorite. Slidell Mackenzie, for instance, knew it by heart.[42] Hugh Henry Brackenridge's reference to it has already been cited.

One historian of the American novel credits not only travel books, but Smollett for the rise of the Romantic tale of adventure:

> Another popular genre in the British fiction of the day, allied with the romantic rather than the didactic novel, was the tale of adventurous travel, whose rise is due partly to the influence of Smollett, partly to that of books of travel and description which were being produced in considerable quantity.[43]

His picaresque tales such as The Adventures of Roderick Random (1748); The Adventures of Peregrine Pickle (1751); The Adventures of Ferdinand Count Fathon (1753); The Adventures of Sir Launcelot Greaves (1760); and The Expedition of Humphrey Clinker (1771) probably influenced adventure novels in America, some of which included a Spanish or Spanish American setting.

Another possible influence was the autobiographical novel which preceded Smollett's picaresque novel. It was "an outgrowth of the Richardson novel," according to another critic who is probably referring to Samuel Richardson's Pamela: or, Virtue Rewarded (I, II, 1740; III, IV, 1741); Clarissa, or, the History of a Young Lady (I, II, 1747; III-VII, 1748); and History of Sir Charles Grandison (1754):

> Richardson captured the idea from Defoe, who, copying somewhat the Spanish picaresque type of story, developed in England a sort of realistic autobiographical adventure narrative which was largely fictitious. He made a fabric of invention, a fabulous story, or a pretended argument appear absolutely real and true, for he went to recorders of facts, biographers, writers of voyages and travels, historians and annalists, for

> much of his source material. But he did not subordinate incident to the depiction of life and character. Fielding, Smollett, Sterne, Godwin and Dickens were followers of Defoe in this line of development.[44]

Thus, the awakening of Romanticism and the desire to escape the humdrum routine of American pioneer life probably accounts for early American interest in travel books about Spain and Spanish America. Another contributing factor to this interest was the publicity given to Spanish travel by the literary historians, the literary diplomats, and other well-known American travelers. Inaccurate and filled with exaggerations, these travel accounts were scarcely less fabulous than the fantastic novels and dramas of adventure to which they and the closely related autobiographical and picaresque novels gave rise.

Spain afforded a particularly mysterious backdrop for these real and fictitious travelers because it was relatively out of the way and unknown, still somewhat medieval in character, and tinged with Oriental lore and a religion foreign to Protestant Puritanism. Spanish America afforded a somewhat more virile and realistic setting for blood and battle; it was less associated with the machinations of magicians and Inquisitors.

Footnotes

[1] Severn Teackle Wallis, Glimpses of Spain; or, Notes of an Unfinished Tour in 1847 (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1849), p. 195.

[2] Wallis, op. cit., pp. 20, 23.

[3] C. Harvey Gardiner, "Foreign Travelers' Accounts of Mexico, 1810-1910," The Americas, VIII (January, 1952), 321-351.

[4] Wallis, op. cit., pp. 362-363.

[5] Bernstein, op. cit., pp. 2 ff.

[6] Wallis, op. cit., pp. 363-364.

[7] See Farnham, op. cit., for a complete list.

[8] Wallis, op. cit., p. 365.

[9] Robert H. Elias, "The First American Novel," American Literature, XII (January, 1941), 434. Also, Quinn, Literature of the American People, p. 190.

[10] Thomas Atwood Digges, Adventures of Alonzo: Containing some Striking Anecdotes of the Present Prime Minister of Portugal, ed. Rev. Thomas J. McMahon (New York: United States Catholic Historical Society, 1943), p. xvi.

[11] Elias, op. cit., p. 420.

[12] Digges, op. cit., pp. 23-24.

[13] James Butler, Fortune's Foot-ball: or, the Adventures of Mercutio, 2 vols. (Harrisburg, Penn.: Printed by John Wyeth, 1797).

[14] Loshe, op. cit., p. 25.

[15] Sarah Harvey Porter, The Life and Times of Anne Royall (Cedar Rapids, Iowa: The Torch Press Book Shop, 1909), p. 134.

[16] Anne Royall, The Tennesseean, a Novel founded on Facts (New Haven, 1827).

[17] Loshe, op. cit., p. 97.

[18] Ibid., p. 30.

[19] Charles Brockden Brown, The Novels of Charles Brockden Brown, Vol. II, Jane Talbot (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co., 1859).

[20] DAB, X, 228.

[21] Samuel B. H. Judah, The Rose of Arragon; or, The Vigil of St. Mark: A Melo-Drama, in two Acts (New York: Printed and Published by S. King, 1822), p. 7.

[22] Ibid., p. 9.

[23] Clement Edgar Foust, The Life and Dramatic Works of Robert Montgomery Bird (New York: The Knickerbocker Press, 1919), p. 80. Also, Quinn, American Drama, p. 238, n. 1.

[24] Ibid., p. 80.

[25] Ibid., p. 34. Also Quinn, American Drama, p. 224.

[26] Robert Montgomery Bird, "The Three Dukes, The Lady of Catalonia," MS, University of Pennsylvania, p. 6.

[27] Ibid., Act II, Scene II, unpaginated.

[28] Loshe, op. cit., p. 38.

[29] Ibid., pp. 38-39.

[30] Charles Brockden Brown, Wieland; or, The Transformation (Philadelphia: M. Polock, 1857), p. 84.

[31] Loshe, op. cit., pp. 41-42, 53.

[32] Sally Sayward Barrell Keating Wood, Julia, and the Illuminated baron (Portsmouth, New Hampshire: Printed at the United States' oracle press, by Charles Peirce, 1800), p. v.

[33] Quinn, American Drama, p. 189.

[34] Oscar Wegelin, Early American Plays, 1714-1830 (2d ed.; New York: The Literary Collector Press, 1905), p. 79.

[35] John Blake White, The Mysteries of the Castle, or the Victim of Revenge (Charleston: Printed for the Author by J. Hoff, 1807), p. 23.

[36] Barrett Wendell, A Literary History of America (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1901), p. 178.

[37] It might be added that travel books antedating 1830 continued to influence fiction writers long after the period under discussion. The most outstanding examples are Herman Melville's Benito Cereno (1855), based on Amasa Delano's aforementioned account of 1817; and The Encantadas; or Enchanted Isles, derived from Captain John Porter's Journal of a Cruise Made to the Pacific Ocean . . . in the years 1812, 1813, 1814. See Harold H. Scudder, "Melville's Benito Cereno and Captain Delano's Voyages," PMLA, XLIII (June, 1928), 502-532; and Russell Thomas, "Melville's Use of Some Sources in The Encantadas," American Literature, III (1931-1932), 432-456.

[38] Stephens is an example of a travel writer influenced by other travel books, most of which were written before 1831. In his Incidents of Travel in Central America, Chiapas, & Yucatan (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1949), I, 123, 334, n. 76, he refers, for instance, to Josiah Conder's study of Mexico and Guatemala (London, 1825); G. A. Thompson's Narrative of an Official Visit to Guatemala (1829); and John Baily's London translation of 1823 of Domingo Juarros --A History of the Kingdom of Guatemala.

[39] Thomas L. Nichols, Forty Years of American Life (London: John Maxwell and Co., 1864), p. 343.

[40] Pierre M. Irving, Life and Letters of Washington Irving, IV, 312, cited by Brooks, The World of Washington Irving, p. 321.

[41] Flint, op. cit., p. 19.

[42] Brooks, The World of Washington Irving, p. 320.

[43] Loshe, op. cit., p. 25.

[44] Lulu Rumsey Wiley, The Sources and Influences of the Novels of Charles Brockden Brown (New York: Vantage Press, Inc., 1950), pp. 55-56.

CHAPTER X

THE CALL OF THE CARIBBEAN

Throughout the nineteenth century, American authors felt the exotic lure of the Spanish West Indies.[1] Some early Americans visited the Islands for business reasons; others sought them as a tropical spa. Like Ernest Hemingway today, Maria Gowen Brooks (c.1794-1845) even established a permanent residence in Cuba. This eccentric early Romantic poetess, extravagantly praised by Charles Lamb and Robert Southey and named by the latter "Maria del Occidente,"[2] inherited a Cuban plantation in 1821 and settled down there to begin her best known poem, Zophiël (1824-1829). She also wrote brief verse extolling the natural beauty of Cuba, but much of this was written after 1830.

Another instance of the fascination that Cuba exerted over American writers is offered in the life of William Cullen Bryant. The publication of his travel book, Letters of a Traveller (1850), his two visits to Spain, "the elusive dream of his foreign travel,"[3] and his two visits to Cuba--in 1849 and again in 1872, when he included Mexico in his itinerary--occurred after the period under

discussion. But on his first arrival in New York he stayed with a Spanish family who entertained Cubans. Probably these contacts resulted in his A Story of Cuba, first printed in the Talisman (1828), in which he said of the Cubans: "Of all the citizens of Spanish America, I believe them to possess the best character."[4]

Incidentally, in the same article he also voiced the complaint, common today among anti-Yankee Spanish Americans, concerning foreign visitors: "Multitudes of these occasional residents never learn the language with sufficient perfection to speak it, or understand it when spoken, and thus are cut off from the best opportunity of becoming acquainted with the character of the native inhabitants."[5]

Other minor indications of literary relations before 1831 with Cuba might be noted. The father of another Romantic poetess, Mrs. Estelle Anna Lewis, who was to write exotic verse about Spain and melodramatic poems about the War with Mexico, was a Cuban. José María Heredia, whose poetry Bryant translated, joined in 1823 the large Cuban colony in New York.[6]

The interest of North American authors was not confined to Cuba, of course, but extended to all parts of the West Indies. For instance, the poet, Edward Coote Pinckney (1802-1828), author

of a poem on Ponce de Leon, The Voyager's Song, traveled as a midshipman in the West Indies around 1820.[7]

In 1775, Philip Freneau accompanied a friend to the Danish Island of Santa Cruz (St. Croix), in the West Indies, where he lived for several years, making frequent voyages to the Lesser Antilles, the Spanish Main, Honduras Bay, the Gulf of Mexico, Bermuda, and elsewhere. After visiting the town of Santa Cruz on the Island of Tenerife, a part of the Canaries, Freneau again sailed for the West Indies. It was on this trip of 1780 that he was overtaken by the British and transferred, in New York, to a British prison ship. In 1784 he went once again to the Caribbean, this time to Jamaica. In various early American magazines Freneau published prose articles on the West Indies and the miserable plight of the West Indian Negro. Many of his best poems, those of a lyric rather than patriotic character, were written in these tropics, but mainly in Danish or English localities and lack Spanish allusions or themes.

The first use of the Caribbean area in American fiction was simply as background for tales of adventure and piracy. Like the novels discussed in the preceding chapter, many of these reveal the same ignorance of things Hispanic. But whether or not authors possessed a firsthand knowledge of the Caribbean was a matter of little consequence. With a setting of tropical islands--

associated in the public mind with piratical activities, these publications were assured of success.

Typical of the fiction about Caribbean pirates is the series of works on Jean Lafitte (1780?-c.1825), the French corsair who cruised in the Gulf of Mexico. The best known novel on this subject is Joseph Holt Ingraham's Lafitte: The Pirate of the Gulf, published in 1836, although an anonymous version was published earlier, being dated 1825 by the latest critic.[8]

Lafitte, or the Baratarian Chief is narrated by a young American who meets Lafitte, disguised, on board ship, en route from New Orleans to New York. Another pirate attacks their vessel, and Lafitte is so impressed by the narrator's bravery that he proffers his friendship and saves his life: "'Touch but the hair of this man's head to injure him,' answered Lafitte in a voice which showed he was accustomed to command, 'and your life shall answer for the crime.'"[9]

In an effort to reform "the man whose very name carries terror from Carthagena to Havanna,"[10] the hero persuades him to relate his life story. It is soon evident that, in the Romantic fashion, Lafitte is an outlaw only because of "unfortunate circumstances."[11] Born of honorable parents in Westchester County,

New York, Lafitte moves to his uncle's home in New York. Later he proceeds to Charleston on business for his uncle and there falls in love with a Mary Morton. She returns his affection, but fears the jealousy of George Hanson, her first suitor and brother of her friend Annette. When George, the villain, discovers that he has a rival, he challenges him to a duel. George shoots first, misses, then in disgust hurls his pistol at Lafitte, thereby causing the latter's pistol to discharge and mortally wound the antagonist.

Lafitte is sent to Havana to escape the wrath of the deceased George's parents. En route he is captured by a Spanish vessel and left abandoned on a key. On returning to Charleston, he learns that Mary, believing him murdered, has died of grief. Lafitte then becomes second in command of a South American privateer working out of Buenos Aires, but when the government falls into the hands of royalists, Lafitte is outlawed. The story closes happily--the narrator obtains a pardon from Washington so that Mortimer Wilson, alias Lafitte, may join the American forces against Great Britain in the West Indies. Then Lafitte suddenly encounters Annette Hanson once again. They rush into each other's arms, for "Lafitte had never forgotten Annette: she was second only to Mary."[12]

In this ultra-Romantic tale, only the setting--parts of the Caribbean sector and Buenos Aires--are Spanish. In addition, a Spanish vessel enters the picture, as it does in so many of these adventure stories.

Another similar tale of Caribbean corsairs is the novel, Ramon, the Rover of Cuba (1829), also published anonymously. The narrator, living in Havana, picks up a manuscript which a strange figure has dropped on the street after leaving a confessional. The figure and author of the manuscript turns out to be the Cuban pirate, Ramon, "the scourge to the commerce of nations."[13] The discoverer then supposedly translates the journal from "the Original Spanish."

Ramon explains that while regaining his health in a cavern, he has decided to write down the history of his life just as "Caesar wrote his Commentaries."[14] Then he will deposit the manuscript with a confessor in Havana, to be read ten years after the author's death.

Like Lafitte, Ramon had an innocent enough childhood and was well behaved until love and unfortunate circumstances made him an outlaw. In Cuba he fell madly in love with his brother's betrothed. Since Juanita loved Ramon and despised his brother, Ramon thought he had every right to elope with her. But during their escape, Juanita was killed.

Thus estranged from his family and society, Ramon took to piracy. He and thirty seamen selected from the dregs of society commandeer a vessel and proceed to prey on American ships. Finally they sail to Colombia to offer their services to the Patriots and to "embrace the glorious cause of South American liberty."[15] After making a fortune, Ramon retires in Havana, passing himself off as a Grandee from Castile.

Ramon never finds peace of mind, however, for his conscience catches up with him: "I writhe, I groan in agony . . . ."[16] The didactic enters here. Ramon hopes that, in partial expiation of his sins, his manuscript may be read by those so blinded by his financial success as to contemplate following in his footsteps. They will thereby learn of the mental agony which his privateering has cost him.

Ramon's journal terminates at this point. The translator returns to Cuba and finds the pirate about to be married under the name of "Don Julio Hxxxxx." The translator then attends the wedding and sees Ramon stabbed before reaching the altar. The assassin proves to be one of Ramon's seamen whom he had abandoned for the life of a cavalier.

Again, the treatment of the Caribbean theme is only as a backdrop. The novel contains practically no description of Cuban

scenery or customs. The author made only one effort to delineate the Cuban or Spanish character: "The poorest Montero of Cuba or the common sailor of a Spanish man of war has a sense of honour, which he is ever ready to vindicate with his blood . . . ."[17]

An example of the type of novel that makes only a passing use of a Caribbean setting is Constantia Neville; or, The West Indian (1800)[18] by Helena Wells, whose novels were published in England. This lengthy narrative traces the Neville family whose descendants flit between the Caribbean area and England. The only Spanish episode in this tiresome tale occurs in Puerto Rico. One member of the family, Robert, on leaving the English Leeward Islands where he has gone on business, is caught in a storm. His ship pulls into "Porto Rico" where he and his friends are arrested by the Spanish governor on the grounds that Neville was illegally trading with the natives.

The second treatment of the Caribbean theme is likewise Romantic in impulse. But instead of using this area merely as a setting, hair-raising accounts of atrocities committed by the French during the Negro insurrection on the Island of Hispaniola were exploited with relish.

Mary Hassal dwelt upon scenes of blood and torture in her Secret History; or, the Horrors of St. Domingo (1808). This

epistolary novel describes the jaunts from one Caribbean island to another of two sisters, Mary and Clara, who were forced to leave Santo Domingo at the beginning of the insurrection. En route to "St. Jago de Cuba," the sisters are captured by a British frigate and taken to Baracoa. Finally reaching Santiago, they set sail for Jamaica.

Through this travelogue of the Caribbean Islands is threaded a faint semblance of a plot and love story. Clara leaves her French husband when he threatens to rub "agua-fortis" in her face, then falls in love with a Spaniard, Don Alonzo. Mary does her best to keep her sister's affections for the Spaniard from going too far.

Mary, presumably Mary Hassal, apparently had some first-hand knowledge of her subject, even though superficial and grossly inaccurate. She liked to indulge in comparisons between the Spanish and French, showing much preference for the latter. Of Spanish husbands, she says: "A man may pass his own wife in the street without knowing her. Their attachments are merely sensual."[19] On another occasion she observes: "Certainly there are here no traces of that magnanimous spirit, which once animated the Spanish cavalier, who was considered by the whole world as a model of constancy, tenderness and heroism."[20] In a comparison of French with Spanish ladies, she declares: "Their neatness is worthy of

admiration, and their taste gives to their attire an air of fashion which the expensive, but ill-chosen, ornaments of the Spanish ladies cannot attain."[21]

Sister Clara, however, prefers the Spanish, probably as a result of her unsuccessful marriage with a Frenchman and her present interest in a Spaniard. "From early prejudice she loves not the French character."[22] When on Spanish islands, Clara studies the language, her first teacher being a "seignora Jacinta."[23] Midway through the book, she is speaking Spanish "with the facility of a native."[24]

Of a more nationalistic character is James Gates Percival's poem, Apostrophe to the Island of Cuba (1822). Damning the Island as an outpost of slave trade and scene of slaughter, Percival places all the blame on Cubans and neglects to mention the cupidity of England, France, Spain, and America:

> There is blood on thy desolate shore,
> Thou island of plunder and slaves!

He sided with those who advocated seizure of the Island from Spain:

> Thou art guilty or weak,--and the rod
> Should be wrenched from thy palsied hand;[25]

Some favored such an appropriation in order to increase American slave territory; others were motivated by early "manifest destiny."

Percival's reason seems to be simply that America had already overexerted herself in protecting the weak Island from foreign aggressors:

> Enough of our life has been shed,
> In watching and fighting for thee;[26]

American literary interest in the Caribbean Islands was motivated by the Romantic drive which caused writers to seek for exotic and colorful settings. Cuba and Hispaniola offered a suitably glamorous tropical background. Thus, the travel accounts, picaresque and autobiographical novels, discussed in the preceding chapter may also be considered an influence on novels exploiting the Caribbean mise en scène. Helena Wells, for instance, made a passing reference to "Gil Glas de Santillane" in her novel, Constantia Neville, suggesting an acquaintance with such fiction.[27]

But the Caribbean furnished not only exotic scenery, but a political history lurid and sensational enough to attract North American writers. On this stage were performed dramas of international rivalry and conflict, the actors including not only Great Britain, France, Spain, and the United States, but even Mexico and Colombia. The Islands were coveted not only for their produce, but their strategic location. From there, mainland possessions could be protected, and slave trade fostered.

Cuba's relations with America were front page news even then, though of course they increased in importance later. Among those vying for Cuban favor were the British, who had captured the Island in 1762. Against their protest, it was returned to mother Spain the following year. For Spain, Cuba served as a strategic fulcrum from which Spanish fleets regained the Floridas and controlled the commerce of the Mississippi River. In 1807, when Napoleon crossed the Pyrenees and claimed the right to rule Spanish America, Jefferson toyed with the idea of annexing the Island. From 1819 to 1826 America again feared British occupation; and the French constituted a threat from 1823 to 1825. In this last year Colombia and Mexico proposed to set the Island free from Spain. And from then on, America practically guaranteed Spain's hold as long as she did not cede Cuba to France or England. This period witnessed a series of conspiracies and insurrections in Cuba, and filibustering expeditions from the United States.

The history of Hispaniola, though less closely connected to that of the United States, was of more melodramatic impact. By the Treaty of Basel in 1795, France obtained this Island which now comprises Haiti and the Dominican Republic. At that time it was governed by the Negro dictator, Toussaint L'Ouverture, who in 1801 adopted a constitution and declared the Island free. But

the following year Napoleon, coveting it as a base for his occupation of the recently acquired Louisiana, seized Toussaint. A bloody insurrection took place which the French, apparently with the most brutal methods, tried to subdue. But Napoleon was finally defeated by the Negroes and yellow fever. In 1804, under Jacques Dessalines, the Island was again declared independent. Two years later the Spanish regained the eastern part, Santo Domingo, which, in 1821, coming under the influence of Bolívar's Colombian government, declared itself independent from Spain. In 1822 President Boyer of Haiti forcibly attached Santo Domingo to his half, where it remained until 1844.

Thus Romantically inclined writers found in the curve of the Greater Antilles a paradise for like-minded readers. And this exotic setting, with its rustle of palms, its associations with pirates, torture, slave trade, and international intrigue, was constantly kept in the public mind by political events on whose outcome depended America's freedom from foreign aggression.

Footnotes

[1] Interest in Cuba continued throughout the nineteenth century. Bryant published other prose articles on the Caribbean, the best known being his travel sketch, Cuba and the Cubans, written after his 1849 trip. The author of a play about the Cid, Epes Sargent, made a trip to Cuba in 1835 which resulted in his

Records of a Summer Voyage to Cuba. The younger Dana published To Cuba and Back in 1859, and according to Longfellow's Book of Suggestions, he planned a poetic tale set on the "Island of Cuba." See Whitman, op. cit., p. 231. Cf. Frank Luther Mott, A History of American Magazines, 1741-1850 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1939), p. 465: "Cuba's troubles, with their political implications, also furnished a topic for the magazines."

[2] Rufus Wilmot Griswold (ed.), The Female Poets of America (Philadelphia: Moss & Co., 1863), p. 79. Also Spiller, op. cit., III, 110.

[3] William Aspenwall Bradley, William Cullen Bryant (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1905), p. 161.

[4] Parke Godwin (ed.), Prose Writings of William Cullen Bryant (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1884), I, 263.

[5] Ibid., p. 262.

[6] Brooks, World of Washington Irving, pp. 238, 241.

[7] Thomas Ollive Mabbott and Frank Lester Pleadwell, The Life and Works of Edward Coote Pinckney (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1926), pp. 4 ff.

[8] G. Harrison Orians, "Lafitte: A Bibliographical Note," American Literature, IX (November, 1937), 351-353.

[9] Lafitte, or the Baratarian Chief, A Tale Founded on Facts (New York, 1828), p. 31.

[10] Ibid., p. 36.

[11] Ibid., p. 37.

[12] Ibid., p. 100.

[13] Ramon, the Rover of Cuba. The Personal Narration of that Celebrated Pirate. Translated from the Original Spanish (Boston: Richardson, Lord and Holbrook, 1829), p. xi.

[14] Ibid., p. 15.

[15] Ibid., p. 74.

[16] Ibid., p. 146.

[17] Ibid., p. viii.

[18] Helena Wells, Constantia Neville; or, the West Indian (2d ed.; London: Printed by C. Whittingham For T. Cadell, Jun. and W. Davies, Strand; and W. Creech, Edinburgh, 1800).

[19] Mary Hassal, Secret History; or, the Horrors of St. Domingo, in A Series of Letters, Written by a Lady at Cape Francois, to Colonel Burr, Late Vice-President of the United States (Philadelphia: Published by Bradford & Inskeep, 1808), p. 123.

[20] Ibid., p. 140.

[21] Ibid., p. 138.

[22] Ibid., p. 111.

[23] Ibid., p. 110.

[24] Ibid., p. 121.

[25] James Gates Percival, The Poetical Works of James Gates Percival (Boston: Ticknor and Fields, 1863), I, 356.

[26] Ibid., p. 357.

[27] Helena Wells, op. cit., p. 2.

CHAPTER XI

CONCLUSION

Ten major themes of Spanish inspiration, or, in some cases, important aspects of Spanish influence have been considered in this study of North American novels, plays, and verse. The fundamental reasons for such Hispanic interest are two; perhaps because two centuries are bridged, each with its different outlook on life.

The eighteenth century attitude encouraged the didactic tendency, the urge to preach, often in epic stanzas. Great Britain's example of tyranny taught American writers like Freneau and Barlow the Sunday School lesson of freedom and patriotism, an ideal outlet for the didactic impulse. Thus conditioned, America looked for other examples of oppression and popular revolt to exemplify her own righteousness. Here Spain was useful, for Peninsular history was that of almost ceaseless political conflict.

David Paul Brown, Simms, Warren, Bryant, and others took the side of the Spanish people in their fight for survival against Rome, the Moors, Charles V, Napoleon, and Ferdinand. Then

authors like Simms and Dunlap performed a volte-face, censoring Spain for her earlier conquests; Percival and others denounced Spain's domination of American colonies. Some, animated by more immediate considerations, objected to Peninsular control of the Mississippi River, Cuba, and other regions too close to the United States for comfort.

American writers' infatuation with the cause of freedom in Spain and Spanish territories was not entirely motivated by noble and altruistic reasons, however. America's plea for Spain's liberation from Napoleon and Ferdinand partly arose from her own fear of these dictators. Seduced by visions of "manifest destiny," she, for commercial and imperialistic reasons, opposed Spain's hold on American colonies.

Cervantes offered a convenient literary pattern for the didactic urge. Brackenridge used it to express his disgust with contemporary politics and to plead for moderation in government. Tenney found it suitable for ridiculing literary vogues and for advocating a more sensible education for women.

During the nineteenth century, the Romantic drive had free rein. In North America this exoticism offered an escape from the heavy monotony of pioneering and preaching, and constitutes the second major reason why American writers turned to the Peninsula.

One historian of American literature explains Spain's emotional appeal as follows:

> For Americans, Spain has sometimes had more romantic charm than all the rest of Europe put together. In the first place, as the very name of Columbus should remind us, its history is inextricably connected with our own. In the second place, at the very moment when this lasting connection between Spain and the New World declared itself, the eight hundred years' struggle between Moors and Spaniards had at length ended in the triumph of the Christians . . . . In the third place, the decline of Spain began almost immediately; so in the early nineteenth century, Spain had altered less since the middle ages than any other part of Europe.[1]

But this Romanticism was reflected in various subtly differing hues. The first type was that cultivated by erudite writers such as Bryant and Longfellow; the historians, Ticknor, Irving, and later Prescott; and by distinguished travelers and diplomats in Spain. Some members of this group dallied with goddesses as remote from everyday American life as medieval and Renaissance Spanish poetry and the comedia.

Other writers, much less erudite, also sought in Spain the faraway and the long ago, but for its glamor, rather than recondite learning. Rowson's treatment of Columbus, Percival's Zamor, Bird's Isidora, and Judah's Rose of Arragon exemplify this disposition to wallow in exotic escapism. An even more extreme group, represented by White and his Mysteries of the Castle, and by the

novelists Wood and Charles Brockden Brown, added a sinister, lugubrious note to Romantic Spain.

When one critic wrote: "Eventually Italy and Spain as natural sources for the romantic were bound to give out; the unexplored fields at home had the charm of novelty and two fighting issues, the treatment of the Indians and negro slavery,"[2] he should have added the "treatment" of Spanish America. Adventures in Mexico and other outlying Spanish territories played an equally important part in American Romantic writing.

This variety of exoticism seems more rugged, virile, and indigenous--concerned not with translations of Moorish ballads, charming though they were, but with the amorous and adventurous exploits of hardy, handsome heroes, such as Francis Berrian, Lafitte, Ramon, and Alonzo, on the Spanish American frontier; or, in some cases, such as that of Mercutio, in Peninsular waters. In general this genre was fostered by articulate pioneers in the American West, such as Timothy Flint and Anne Royall, and by travel writers, usually those journeying to South America rather than Spain.

It is to be noted that many themes received both the didactic-patriotic and Romantic treatments. For instance, Columbus, symbol of political liberty with Freneau and Barlow, was treated

in a fantastic fashion by Rowson. The heroes or villains of the "black legend," a tradition established long before the nineteenth century, were, in that century, romanticized; and the "noble savage," a concept perfected during the "Enlightenment," was further exaggerated by Romantic writers of the nineteenth century. Spain's hold on American colonies symbolized oppression to Freneau, Percival, and Bryant, but in Flint inspired a rugged, native Romanticism. The history of Peninsular Spain also furnished symbols of tyranny to politically inclined writers and Romantic motifs to poets like Percival and Simms. Even in the Quijote, with its didactic, eighteenth century appeal, Mrs. Rowson found an exotic story to use in her Slaves in Algiers.

The majority of direct literary sources which influenced the North American interpretation of Spanish themes were probably British, for as the much traveled Wallis observed: "In our country, the common opinion of Spain is mostly based upon the English notion, which we principally read and follow, as indeed we frequently do, in regard to other countries and matters, to our manifest stultification."[3]

Before the advent of such historians of Spain as Irving and Prescott, North American knowledge of Spanish history seems to have been derived from Scottish or English sources such as

Robertson, and from London translations of Las Casas, Kotzebue, and others. And American literary vogues were influenced by British imitations of the Quijote, autobiographical and picaresque novels, and English travel books.

But France must also receive credit. Either in the original or in British translations, her works were present in many early American libraries. Marmontel, Charlevoix, Raynal, Voltaire, Chateaubriand, and French travel books had much to do with perfecting the theme of the "noble savage," and with promoting the "black legend." Gil Blas furthered the cause of the adventure novel. And, in this early period, before the advent of Ticknor's History of Spanish Literature, knowledge of the comedia came via Paris.

The last but not least source of foreign literary influence was Spain. Although many creative writers made no claim to being scholars or linguists, there is no reason to believe that all North Americans were unable to read not only French, but Spanish. In fact, many of the authors discussed, such as Percival, Bryant, and Sands, were more than proficient in Castilian. But whether original Spanish works or English translations were read seems of little importance; the source was ultimately Spanish.

Evidence has been cited of the presence in early American libraries of histories by Herrera, Clavijero, Solís, Mariana, and Acosta, to mention only the most outstanding, and of the chronicles of the Inca Garcilaso de la Vega, Bernal Díaz del Castillo, Las Casas, and others. Editions of Cervantes were available, and a few libraries even owned the Celestina and other works of Spanish fiction.

Certain unequivocable and direct influences of Spanish works on American fiction writers before 1831 have been noted. Barlow admitted his dependence on the Inca Garcilaso de la Vega, and longed to obtain a copy of Ercilla's Araucana. Sands' familiarity with some of Cortés' Letters and with the works of certain Spanish historians has been referred to. Bird read Clavijero, Solís, the Ulloas, and Bernal Díaz del Castillo. Bryant was well versed in the originals of a great many Spanish poems. Brackenridge, Rowson, Tyler, and Tenney were well acquainted with the Quijote. Barker and Payne knew something of Calderón.

The question naturally arises whether American interest in these ten Spanish themes and aspects was sufficient to speak of a Spanish fashion in American letters. A case could easily be made for the two decades following this foundation period, when political events--the annexation of Texas, the Mexican War, Isthmian

Canal Projects, the Gold Rush--kept Spain in the news.

During this later period, Romanticism reached its peak in America and dramatists such as Bird and George Henry Boker flooded the American stage with exotic pieces set in Spain or Spanish America; lesser dramatists such as Caroline Hentz, Epes Sargent, Bayard Taylor, and Simms also contributed plays based on Spanish historical subjects. Simms kept the novel market supplied with lengthy tales of Spanish discoverers of the New World; Bird published equally forbidding tomes on Cortés in Mexico. Even James Fenimore Cooper and Herman Melville published novels with Spanish settings. Poets as distinguished as Poe, Longfellow, Emerson, and Whitman--to mention only a few--found something to say about Romantic Spain.

But even during the sixty formative years under discussion, Spain's magnetism seems to have attracted America sufficiently to answer the question affirmatively. One has only to recall the stature and influence of the early Americans whose lives were more than touched by Spanish influences. What more influential poets could be mentioned than Freneau, Bryant, and Longfellow? All three evinced a lively interest in contemporary political affairs in Spain, wrote on Spanish subjects, and traveled to Spanish-speaking countries. Two of them translated from Spanish. Barlow

and Percival, likewise au courant of Spanish affairs, were almost equally popular in their day.

Dunlap, who saw to the American production of many plays of Spanish theme, was, "during the last decade of the eighteenth century and the first of the nineteenth, the dominating force in the American drama . . . ."[4] Then Barker and Payne, authors of plays with Spanish themes, played an almost equally important role in the development of the American theatre:

> During the twenty years that elapsed from Dunlap's retirement in 1805 to the end of the first quarter century, two figures stand out prominently in our drama, and represent in a striking way the influences of native and foreign inspiration. James Nelson Barker and John Howard Payne stand for these two opposite forces, and around them may be grouped the writers of less significance who contributed to the development of the types the two leaders represented.[5]

During this early, pre-Cooper period, the novel was in an embryonic stage, and few American novelists have captured posterity's favor. But certainly Brackenridge and Charles Brockden Brown, both influenced by things Spanish, are as distinguished as any other novelists of the period.

Most of the novels and dramas discussed in this study have not stood the test of time. Their relegation to oblivion is due, however, not to a lack of popularity when first published, but to time and unsympathetic critics. They may reflect contemporary



interests as clearly as better known works, and thereby merit as much attention, for, according to one scholar:

> If a literature is the expression of the mind and emotions of a community, a record of its ideas, our definition of literary value must be broad enough to include not only artistic masterpieces but other documents which show what we as a people have and have not thought . . . . The only definition of literature fully useful for the student or historian of colonial writing is one which covers all the work in recognizable literary form which reveals intelligibly and competently the ideas and acts of the colonists.[6]

To this list of Hispanic-minded American fiction writers--many of first rank--may be added the names of the real cultural leaders of early America, the "literary historians." They, too, devoted significant portions of their lives to writing about Spain and Spanish America. Furthermore, the avid Spanish interests of other outstanding intellectual figures such as Franklin, Jefferson, and Thoreau should be remembered.

With a complete list in mind, surely it may be maintained that a Spanish vogue did indeed exist in American literature before 1831. In comparison with certain minor foreign influences in the United States, about which so much has been written,[7] the Spanish one would seem of prime importance; and the question arises why so much research has been carried out on these relatively minor foreign movements and so little on the Spanish.

Footnotes

[1] Wendell, op. cit., pp. 177-178.

[2] George Boas (ed.), Romanticism in America (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1940), p. 71.

[3] Wallis, op. cit., p. 365.

[4] Quinn, American Drama, p. 74.

[5] Ibid., p. 136.

[6] Quinn, Literature of the American People, pp. 4-5.

[7] For works on the major foreign influences in American literature, such as German and French, and works on minor influences such as Italian, Scandinavian, Oriental, Hebrew, Mexican, etc., see Spiller, op. cit., III, 284-303.

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