

**LOVE THE GREATEST
ENCHANTMENT; THE
SORCERIES OF SIN; THE
DEVOTION OF THE CROSS**

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Love the Greatest Enchantment; The Sorceries of Sin; The Devotion of the Cross by Pedro Calderón de la Barca & Denis Florence MacCarthy

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PEDRO CALDERÓN DE LA BARCA & DENIS FLORENCE MACCARTHY

**LOVE THE GREATEST
ENCHANTMENT; THE
SORCERIES OF SIN; THE
DEVOTION OF THE CROSS**

By the same Author.

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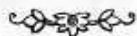
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THE SORCERIES OF SIN, AND THE
DEVOTION OF THE CROSS.



Calderon de la Barca

LOVE THE GREATEST ENCHANTMENT:

THE SORCERIES OF SIN:

THE DEVOTION OF THE CROSS.

FROM THE SPANISH OF CALDERON.

ATTEMPTED STRICTLY IN ENGLISH ASONANTE AND

OTHER IMITATIVE VERSE,

BY DENIS FLORENCE MAC-CARTHY, M.R.I.A.

WITH AN INTRODUCTION TO EACH DRAMA, AND NOTES BY THE TRANSLATOR, AND THE

SPANISH TEXT FROM THE EDITIONS OF HARTZENBUSCH,

KEIL, AND APONTES.



LONDON:

LONGMAN, GREEN, LONGMAN AND ROBERTS.

1861.

TO
GEORGE TICKNOR, ESQ.

THE HISTORIAN OF SPANISH LITERATURE,

This Volume

IS INSCRIBED IN GRATEFUL REMEMBRANCE OF INFORMATION

LIBERALLY COMMUNICATED,

AND PRAISE GENEROUSLY BESTOWED.



PREFACE.

IN 1853 I published two volumes of translations from the Spanish of Calderon, which contained the first (as it still continues to be the only) complete version of any of his plays that has ever been presented to the English reader.* This attempt met with as much success as I could have reasonably anticipated for it, considering the circumstances under which the work grew up, as detailed in the preface, and the timidity with which I shrunk from the whole metrical difficulties of my task—difficulties which then appeared to me to be so insurmountable, that, had I the time, I scarcely would have had the courage to try and overcome. A forced leisure, however, of many months, occurring at irregular intervals, but extending through the whole of the intervening period,

* The dramas contained in those volumes are the following:—*The Purgatory of Saint Patrick, The Constant Prince, The Scarf and the Flower, The Physician of his own Honour, The Secret in Words, and Love after Death.* The remark in the text is by no means meant to disparage Mr. Fitzgerald's *Six Plays of Calderon freely translated*, London, 1853, the nervous blank verse of which, though I think unsuited to Calderon, I greatly admire; but surely a translator who confesses that he has "funkt, reduced, altered, and replaced" whatever did not seem to him particularly "fine" in his author, can scarcely be taken as a satisfactory interpreter of a poet whose very defects and extravagances are as characteristic of his genius as are his beauties.

having again induced me to resume my labours upon Calderon, I felt the very difficulties, which before I had left unattempted, an attraction and an incentive, as supplying a more laborious occupation, and a more engrossing distraction. I felt, too, a sincere artistic conviction that I was bound to do my best for a poet whom I had been, to some extent, instrumental in introducing to a foreign audience, and a determination that he should not suffer in their estimation by any wilful omission or neglect on the part of him at whose invitation he had appeared before them. Two things I set before me at the beginning of my renewed task, which, I trust, I have pretty faithfully observed to the end; namely, in the first place, to give the meaning of my author exactly, and in its integrity, neither departing from it through diffuseness, nor cramping it through condensation; and, secondly, to express it strictly in the form of the original, or not to express it at all.

It is by no means my intention to enter into the oft-debated question as to the principles which should guide or coerce the translator in his task. As far as the translator is concerned, it is a much easier thing to produce a popular and flowing version of any foreign poem or play, than a faithful and exact one; and the effect to be produced will so depend upon the capacity and culture of the reader,—whether, in a word, he will have his German or Spanish so thoroughly “done into English,” as to have every particle of its original nature eliminated out of it, or will have it faithfully presented to him, with all its native peculiarities preserved,—is so much a matter of taste, that no definite rule can ever be arrived at in the matter. What Mr. Newman has said upon this subject so entirely agrees with my own impressions, that I print his observations here, the more readily, that I have been actuated independently by the same convictions long before I was aware that they were shared by him. Mr. Newman, alluding to some of his own critics, who had laid down, as axioms, certain principles which he considers to be utterly

false and ruinous to translation, thus proceeds:—"One of these is, that the reader ought, if possible, to forget that it is a translation at all, and be lulled into the illusion that he is reading an original work. Of course, a necessary inference from such a dogma is, that whatever has a foreign colour is undesirable, and is even a grave defect. The translator, it seems, must carefully obliterate all that is characteristic of the original, unless it happens to be identical in spirit to something already familiar in English. From such a notion I cannot too strongly express my intense dissent. I aim at precisely the opposite;—to retain every peculiarity of the original, as far as I am able, *with the greater care, the more foreign it may happen to be*, whether it be matter of taste, of intellect, or of morals."*

On this principle I have acted throughout the entire of this volume, with what success, however, of course remains to be seen.

The peculiar feature, then, of this Translation is its rigid adherence to the metres of the original, and particularly to that especial Spanish one, the *afonante* vowel rhyme, of which but a few scattered specimens exist in English, and these rather as samples of what our language was incapable of producing to any considerable extent, than of what it could achieve. This metre is so very peculiar, and so opposed to anything that bears the semblance of rhyme in English, that I have known several persons, who were able to read in the original a romance, or a scene from a Spanish play, and who, notwithstanding, never perceived the delicate and most elaborate form of versification they had been enjoying, until their attention was drawn to it; when once seen or heard, however, the discovery is hailed with delight, and we look or listen for the ever-recurring similarity of cadence or construction, "the manifold wild chimes" of the Spanish *afonance*, with pleasure and surprise. The numerous examples of it throughout this volume will show the reader

* *The Iliad of Homer, faithfully translated into unrhymed English Metre*, by F. W. Newman. (London, 1856.) Preface, p. xv.