

**THE CASTILIAN. AN
HISTORICAL TRAGEDY
IN FIVE ACTS**

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The Castilian. An Historical Tragedy in Five Acts by T. N. Talfourd

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VI

AN HISTORICAL TRAGEDY.

IN FIVE ACTS.

BY

T. N. TAI. FOURD.

"He for God only, she for God in him."—MIRRO.

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PREFACE.

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THE following Drama is founded on the insurrection of the Commons of Castile against the Regency of the Cardinal Adrian, to whom the Emperor Charles V. committed the government of his Spanish dominions, during his long absence from them in the time occupied by his visits to Germany, England, and Flanders, which followed his acquisition of the imperial crown. The narrative of Robertson, which will be found at the commencement of the Third Book of his "History of Charles V.," appeared to the Author to present some elements of dramatic interest superior to those which the progress and the fate of popular insurrections usually involve. Although the qualities of the leading persons of this movement are but faintly indicated by the historian, he has afforded glimpses

of the character of its leader, Don John de Padilla, which suggest the idea of a soldier deeply imbued with religious faith and devotional feeling—of a leader of rebellion of mind essentially conservative and loyal—which invited an attempt to fill up the outline of his story with circumstances which might, in some degree, reconcile the apparent contradiction between his principles and his actions. The speech imputed to him in his last moments by Robertson, on a fellow-sufferer's expressing indignation on hearing him proclaimed a traitor, "That yesterday was the time to have displayed the spirit of gentlemen; this day to die with the meekness of Christians," and the two letters which, immediately before his execution, he addressed to his wife and to the city of Toledo,* suggest an example of

* Both letters will be found in a note of Robertson's History. The following is the letter addressed to the city of Toledo:—

"To thee, the Crown of Spain, and the light of the whole world, free from the time of the mighty Goths; to thee, who by shedding the blood of strangers as well as thy own blood, hast recovered liberty for thy self and thy neighbouring cities, thy legitimate son Juan de Padilla gives information how by the blood of his body thy ancient victories may be refreshed. If fate has not permitted my actions to be placed among your successful and celebrated exploits, the fault hath been in my ill fortune, not in my good will. This I request of thee as a mother to accept, since God hath given me nothing more to

Christian heroism far beyond the ordinary qualities of chivalrous valour—requiring far higher powers than the Author can command to do them justice, but capable, even in a feeble sketch, of exciting an honest sympathy. His story does not want one common element in the history of popular leaders. Like many other great men invoked by the passions of the multitude to heroic action, he was forsaken for a man of higher aristocratic claim and far lower desert—Don Pedro de Giron—and was recalled to the post of danger when it was too late to repair the consequences of the ingratitude of the insurgents, and the indiscretion of their temporary idol.

“The abstract and brief chronicle” of Robertson

leave for thy sake than that which I am now to relinquish. I am more solicitous about thy good opinion than about my own life. The shiftings of Fortune, which never stands still, are many. But this I see, with infinite consolation, that I, the least of thy children, suffer death for thee, and that thou hast nursed at thy breasts such as may take vengeance for my wrongs. Many tongues will relate the manner of my death, of which I am still ignorant, though I knew it to be near. My end will testify what was my desire. My soul I recommend to thee, as the patroness of Christianity. Of my body I say nothing, for it is not mine. I can write nothing more—for, at this very moment, I find the knife at my throat, with greater dread of thy displeasure than apprehension of my own pain.”

also suggests the character of a woman, strongly contrasted in some respects with that of the hero, in his wife Donna Maria Pacheco, whose unbounded ambition was refined by an equally unbounded admiration of her husband. The audacity with which, after Padilla's recall to power, when the troops refused to follow him without payment of their arrears, she seized on the treasures of the shrines in the Cathedral of Toledo, with the show of sorrow—(she, with her retinue of ladies “marching to the church in solemn procession, with tears in their eyes, beating their breasts, and falling on their knees to implore the pardon of the saints whose shrines they were about to violate”)—seemed capable of being presented in contrast with the disinterested piety and heroism of Padilla, without any violation of the probability of their true relations, and of exhibiting in some variety the aspects of his more simple character.

But the incident which seemed to the Author most capable of producing an interest less common than that of an ordinary tale of political conspiracy,

is the temporary resuscitation of the melancholy Joanna, the mother of the Emperor, from a state of deplorable insanity, to confer for a short time upon the revolt of the Commons the grace of her title and authority—thus giving the sanction of loyal sentiments to the popular cause. This remarkable incident is thus glanced at by Robertson, after stating the capture of her person at Tordesillas, where she resided in seclusion: “Padilla
“waited immediately on the Queen, and accosting
“her with that profound respect she exacted from
“the few persons she deigned to admit into her
“presence, acquainted her at large with the miserable condition of her Castilian subjects under the
“government of her son; who, being destitute of
“experience himself, permitted his foreign ministers to treat them with such rigour as had obliged
“them to take arms in defence of the liberties of
“their country. The Queen, as if she had been
“awakened out of a lethargy, expressed great
“astonishment at what he said, and told him that,
“as she had never heard till that moment of the