

**NUMANTIA.  
A TRAGEDY**

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Numantia. A tragedy by Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra & James Y. Gibson

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**MIGUEL DE CERVANTES SAAVEDRA & JAMES Y. GIBSON**

# **NUMANTIA. A TRAGEDY**



To Lady White-Cooper,  
in token of esteem  
and friendship from  
Margaret S. Gibb

Bookb. Brass  
Cambridge  
24<sup>th</sup> June  
1898

NUMANTIA

*BY THE SAME TRANSLATOR.*

*Uniform with this Volume.*

---

JOURNEY TO PARNASSUS.

COMPOSED BY

MIGUEL DE CERVANTES SAAVEDRA.

IN ENGLISH TERCETS,

*WITH PREFACE AND ILLUSTRATIVE NOTES.*

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LONDON: KEGAN PAUL, TRENCH & CO.

# NUMANTIA

A TRAGEDY

BY

MIGUEL DE CERVANTES SAAVEDRA

*TRANSLATED FROM THE SPANISH*

WITH INTRODUCTION AND NOTES

BY

JAMES Y. GIBSON

TRANSLATOR OF THE "JOURNEY TO PARNASSUS"



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20.9.21.

LONDON

KEGAN PAUL, TRENCH & CO

MDCCLXXXV

“A death with honour is supremest bliss,  
No fate can be more excellent than this.”

*Act ii. p. 27.*



**To the Memory of  
GENERAL GORDON,**

THE HERO OF KHARTOUM, THE MODERN PALADIN, OUR CHRISTIAN  
THEOGENES, WHOSE SUBLIME FAITH, FORTITUDE, AND SELF-SACRIFICE,  
MATCHLESS IN THESE TIMES, HAVE MADE HIS NAME SACRED IN EVERY  
HOUSEHOLD, THE TRANSLATOR HUMBLY DEDICATES THIS ENGLISH  
VERSION OF ONE OF THE SADDEST TRAGEDIES EVER PENNED;  
WHICH NEVERTHELESS IS INSTINCT WITH THAT TRAGIC  
PAIN WHICH PURIFIES THE SOUL, AND INCITES TO  
SUCH DEGREES OF SELF-DEVOTION AS DISTIN-  
GUISHED THE HERO, WHOSE LOSS  
BRITAIN MOURNS THIS DAY  
WITH A PECULIAR SOR-  
ROW, NOT UNMIXED  
WITH SHAME.

## INTRODUCTION.

THIS is an attempt to render for the first time into readable English verse the one great drama of Cervantes. It was presented on the Madrid stage about the year 1586, during the reign of Philip II., and was received with great applause as a work of national interest. It remained, however, unprinted and was supposed to be lost. In 1784, it was published for the first time by Sancha of Madrid, in a volume which contained also Cervantes' *Viaje del Parnaso*, and his *Trato de Argel*. The Editors, with a carelessness characteristic of the times, do not tell us how it was recovered or where they got it. The literary world, however, received it gladly as a work of peculiar original power, in every way worthy of the name of Cervantes. Strange to say, a number of years afterwards, it sprang to life as an acting drama during the memorable siege of Saragossa by the French, where it had a besieged city for its stage, and patriots and heroes for its actors and audience. A work that has such a history, and has shown such

persistent vitality, must have something in it worthy of the study of all lovers of the Drama, and no apology seems needful for presenting it now in an English version, which preserves the original metres, and pays due regard to accuracy and idiomatic expression.

Rightly to estimate such a production we must take into account the period during which it was written and the purpose for which it was invented. Cervantes was at this time about thirty-nine years of age. He returned from his captivity in Algiers in 1580. He was married in 1584, and with the gallantry peculiar to his nature he laid at the feet of his bride the first fruits of his genius, a pastoral romance known as *La Galatea*. The newly married pair, who lived at Esquivias, a few miles from Madrid, had the slenderest of fortunes, and as love would not fill the cupboard, Cervantes followed his natural inclination, went to Madrid, and took to writing for the stage. Though the pay was scanty it was better than could be got by writing sentimental romances. He remained at this occupation till he left for Seville in 1588, and wrote, as he tells us, between twenty and thirty plays.

At this period, throughout Europe generally, dramatic art, and tragic art especially, was still in its infancy, and its laws and principles were as yet undetermined. In Italy Tasso had produced his