

Cervantes' supreme hope was to arouse the slumbering spirit of his country which 800 years of bondage had almost crushed, and to convince her that that spirit was high and noble and that her mission in the world was a great one. This he meant to do by his dramatic writings. He found the Spanish stage in a very low state, its chief feature being the Spanish dance, a wonderful thing in itself but not very inspiring. Taking it as he found it, he soon transformed it into a great romantic stage worthy to be compared to that of England's although more limited. Thus he became the creator of the Spanish stage and succeeded at the same time in awakening the enthusiasm of his countrymen and inspiring them with the courage to rid themselves of the last of their Moorish oppressors. Some years later this was finally accomplished and the fetters were struck from 20,000 captives in African prisons, but the credit is due chiefly to Cervantes, and his stirring dramas. The charm for us in these plays is that the writer brings in his own story. In this he differs from his renowned contemporary, Shakespeare, whose impersonality was so remarkable. But Cervantes does not parade; he simply appeals to the feelings of his audience and seeks to give a direct lesson. In his "Treaty of Algiers" he makes one player say: "I have been a soldier many years; I have been in captivity for five years, and one thing I have learned—to be patient in adversity."

Cervantes' favorite work was a pastoral, calling Galatea which was dedicated to the future Senors Cervantes, and at which he labored lovingly for many years. It was begun at Lisbon shortly before his marriage, which took place when he was 37, but was never completed; only six books (a mere fragment) ever having been published. The busy world today has no leisure for such "linked sweetness long drawn out" but Galatea has many beauties and was written in the style in favor at the time. The author always held hopes of seeing it finished and often spoke tenderly of it. The wife of Cervantes brought him no fortune. She could boast no riches save the possession of Spain's blue blood, a beautiful character and a wonderful string of names. She was Donna Catalina de Palazos y Salazar y Vozandiano! Their married life was pathetic in its poverty. Literature did not pay then as it does now and \$40 was the price received for one play and so, although Cervantes wrote some thirty or forty, his income was not large. And besides there appeared in the dramatic firmament at the time a bright particular star in the person of Lope de Vega who became the greatest of Spanish dramatists, and Cervantes wisely saw that he had better