

Literary Department.

CERVANTES.

There is a country unfortunately much ignored by those who have the precious privilege of visiting the Old world and viewing the wonders it offers to the New. Tourists, content to follow in the well-beaten track, remain for the most part on the gay, sunnier side of the Pyrenees, unmindful of the interest and charm that lie beyond the dividing-line. An excursion into the ancient kingdom of Spain, once glorious, now decadent, but forever interesting, would well repay the studious traveller, and the fact that it is so often neglected is the reason for the greatest difficulty we meet with it in the study of Spanish literature. It is ignored by those who know not what they miss when they pass it by for more alluring hunting-grounds.

Spain has a charm all her own as peculiar as her history and her character. Though fallen from greatness and power, she still retains that character unchanged as in the days when she held sway as the richest province of the Roman Empire and the sun never set on her dominions. Haughty, exclusive, reserved, grandiloquent, such is the Spaniard of today, such was the Spaniard of the proud centuries past. The beggar in his rags accepts your crust or your coin in a way that makes you feel that HE, not you, bestows a favor. Time has changed his country from a vast world power to a crumbling dynasty but has left his quiet dignity untouched.

Intensely interesting as this strange land has ever been, its chief glory lies in the fact of its being the birth-place of one of the world's immortal geniuses, Don Miguel Cervantes, the Shakespeare of Spain. Spanish genius reveals itself more in literature than in any other line and has found its highest expression in those two great romantic works, the *Cid*, representing chivalry in its brightest flower, and *Don Quixote*, its melancholy counterpart showing its decline. In another paper this famous novel will furnish material for pleasant study, but as the artist is ever greater than his greatest work, we shall first consider the author, Cervantes, one of the noblest and most beautiful characters the world has ever known and learned