

Original.

LOPEZ DE VEGA.

It is related, in the history of the life of this great writer that no less than eighteen hundred comedies, the production of his pen, have been actually represented on the Spanish stage. His Autos Sacramentales, (a kind of sacred drama,) exceed four hundred, besides which, there is a collection of his poems, of various kinds, in twenty-one volumes. He said, of himself, that he wrote five sheets per day, which, reckoning by the time he lived, has been calculated to amount to one hundred and thirty three thousand, two hundred and twenty-five sheets. He sometimes composed a comedy in two days, which it would have been difficult for another man to copy in the same time.

John Perez de Montalban relates, that a comedy being wanted for the Carnivale at Madrid, Lopez and he united to compose one as fast as they could, Lopez took the first act, and Montalban the second which they wrote in two days, and the third act they divided, taking eight sheets each. Montalban seeing that Lopez wrote faster than he could, says he rose at two in the morning, and having finished his part at eleven, he went to look for Lopez, whom he found in the garden looking at an orange tree that was frozen; and on enquiring what progress he had made in the verses, Lopez replied—"At five I began to write, and finished the comedy an hour ago; since which I have breakfasted, written one hundred and fifty other verses, and watered the garden, and am now pretty well tired." He then read to Montalban the eight sheets, and the hundred and fifty verses.

Lopez de Vega was twice married. His last wife bore him a son, who died at about eight years of age; the mother did not long survive the child, and this double blow fell most heavily upon this great man. His domestic happiness broken up, Lopez de Vega entered the church, with enough of religious feeling to render him an exemplary priest; but not with so much as to induce him to renounce his literary career, or even abate the ardour with which he pursued it. He was admitted into the congregation of priests, natives of Madrid. So eminent a man was considered as doing honour to the society which he had chosen; and he was very speedily elected first chaplain, in compliment to his endowments; and in testimony of the exactness with which he discharged his priestly offices. Upon the publication of his *Corona Tragica*, a poem upon the death of Mary Queen of Scots, which he dedicated to *Urban the Eighth*; that Pontiff wrote him a complimentary letter, made him promoter Fiscal of the Reverend Apostolic Chamber; sent him the habit of St. John, and conferred upon him the degree of Doctor of Theology.

He probably took orders at about forty years of age; he lived to be seventy-three; but, towards the close of his life, his mind as well as body seems to have given way; abandoning himself to the Manichean superstitions, he refused to eat meat when his declining health rendered it necessary, because he thought it expedient for the health of the soul, to mortify the body, and he practised self flagellation with such severity, that it is supposed to have hastened his death: after a cruel discipline of this kind, on Friday the 22d of August, 1635, he fell ill, and expired on the Monday following.

"His death," says one of his Spanish biographers, "caused a universal commotion in the court, and in the whole kingdom." Many ministers, knights, and prelates were present when he expired; among others, the Duke of Sesa, who had been the most munificent of his patrons, whom he appointed his executor, and who was at the expense of his funeral; a mode by which the great in that country were fond of display-

ing their regard for men of letters. It was a public funeral, and it was not performed till the third day after his death, that there might be time for rendering it more splendid, and securing a more honourable attendance. The grandees and nobles who were about the court, were all invited as mourners; a *novenario*, or service of nine days, was performed for him; at which the musicians of the royal chapel assisted: after which there were exequies on three successive days, at which three bishops officiated in full pontificals; and on each day a funeral sermon was preached by one of the most famous preachers of the age. Such honours were paid to the memory of Lopez de Vega, the most prolific, and, during his life, the most popular of all poets, ancient or modern. Whatever may be the present estimate of the talents of Lopez de Vega; particularly in other countries than his own; certain it is, no writer ever enjoyed such a full share of popularity. Cardinal Barberini, (says Lord Holland,) followed Lopez, with veneration, in the streets; the king would stop to gaze on him; the people crowded round him whenever he appeared; the learned and the studious thronged to Madrid from every part of Spain to see this phoenix of their country; and even Italians, no extravagant admirers in general, of poetry that is not their own, made pilgrimages from their country for the sole purpose of conversing with Lopez. So associated was the idea of excellence with his name, that it grew a habit in common conversation to signify any thing perfect in its kind: and a Lopez diamond, a Lopez day, and a Lopez woman, became fashionable and familiar modes of expressing their good qualities.

Original.

HANNAH MORE.

A FEMALE instructor, a dramatic writer, a poetess, an author of several publications, whose moral and religious tendency, and the warm philanthropy by which they are evidently inspired, have indisputably established her claim to rank with, if not precede, the great benefactors of mankind.

How few in the paths of literature, how very few, can boast that the purity and utility of their writings have kept pace with their intellectual endowments—too often, alas! in an opposite ratio. The rare praise of not having written a page without a strong, a palpable bias to mend the manners or reform the heart, is the envied merit of Hannah More. Surely no higher tribute can be paid to the talents of an author, particularly a female, than the universal acknowledgment that every page she has written has been subservient to the cause of virtue;—that her great and only aim was, by wholesome precept to soften the ills of this life, and point out the surest, safest means, of attaining everlasting happiness.

Miss More, for many years, presided over an establishment for the education of young ladies, at Bath, in England.

Mr. Burke once observed to Sir Joshua Reynolds—
"What a delight you have in your profession!"

"No, sir," said Dr. Johnson, taking up the question.
"Reynolds only paints to get money."

A spirited argument was the consequence of this unexpected assertion, in which Miss More with an animation inspired by a love of the arts, took a decided part against Dr. Johnson, and was eloquent in defence of the disinterestedness of Sir Joshua; insisting, with much of truth, that the pleasure experienced by the artist, was derived from higher and more luxuriant sources than mere pecuniary consideration.

"Only answer me," said the moralist, in an impressive tone, "did Leander swim across the Hellespont, merely because he was fond of swimming?"