

THE PLAYS OF LINARES RIVAS

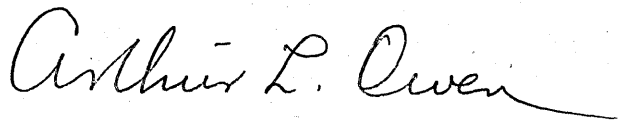
by

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Submitted to the Department of
Spanish and
the Faculty of the Graduate
School of the University of
Kansas in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the de-
gree of Master of Arts.

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A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Arthur L. Owen". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the "Approved by:" text.

Chairman of Department.

May 23, 1929.

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CHAPTER I

GENERAL ASPECT OF THE PLAYS

The reader of the plays of Linares Rivas sees unfolded to him a panorama of human life comprising emotions, tragedy, comedy, evil traits, good character, efforts for improvement, the interchange of human thought, the weaving together of lives, and their effect upon each other. A critic in one of the plays might well be speaking of Linares Rivas himself when he says of the writer of a novel that it is an "estudio de caracteres, disección¹ de almas, filosofías." The plays of Linares Rivas, read as a whole, present a composite picture of human society; taken together, they form one large novel in which the characters are real men and women. There is a depth in the plays that does not appear to one who reads them lightly. It is necessary to search below the surface of the subject matter to discover the depth of original thought that lies in the plays. They are like people who do not reveal themselves on first acquaintance.

Linares Rivas is an observer of life, he transfers to the stage what he sees in daily life; some of it beautiful and ennobling, much of it distressing and

1. La Estripe de Júpiter, p. 187.

sordid; a great deal of it prosaic and commonplace, as it is in the average daily family life. Fundamentally it is not prosaic and commonplace; forces are at work which sooner or later resolve into action. Individuals with their own concrete problems form currents of thought which unite in larger interests, affecting many persons and producing general social problems, involving politics, progress in laws, civic interest, family life, marriage relations, divorce, rights of young people, freedom in religion, tolerance, appreciation of different races, and an international outlook. Nor are the people and the problems presented in the plays peculiar only to Spain; but, for the most part, given a change in language and certain local customs, the men and women in Linares Rivas' plays find their counterparts with similar problems in any country. They are the kind of people one knows, and in a larger sense, the people read about in the newspapers. The general style of the plays consists in thoughtful dialogue, usually witty, often elliptical. The conversation in the plays shows the skill and versatility of the author. In this respect the plays are somewhat similar to those of George Bernard Shaw. Problems and situations are thought out and talked through in an intelligent manner.

Most of the plays are in prose and depict modern life. Some plays contain charming bits of poetry;

one play, Lady Godiva, is written entirely in verse. It shows the author's skill and delicacy of treatment in his interpretation of the English historical legend of Lady Godiva, an episode dating from the eleventh century in the reign of Edward III. This episode is one that has been treated by many writers, among them Maeterlinck, and has been used by many painters such as Lefebre. Distinctly original is Linares Rivas' solution of the problem presented in the unique legend of Lady Godiva. Another play, El Caballero Lobo, is an allegorical fable, in which animals represent human traits. The wolf, the lamb, and the bear typify the redeeming power of goodness and foreshadow world peace. This play is admirably suited for Marionette performance.

Some plays move along slowly, representing commonplace pictures of daily life; others have exaggerated situations and appear overdrawn in plot and action; many have tense dramatic situations which require the best talent that actors can command.

Linares Rivas counts among his theatrical offerings excellent zarzuelas and musical farces and a Spanish adaptation of the musical comedy *La Viuda Alegre* in collaboration with Federico Reparaz with music by the Viennese, Franz Lehar. This operetta is similar in many respects to one of the most charming of Linares Rivas' plays, *Doña Desdenes*. Other

zarzuelas have music by Chapí, Vives, Calleja, and Lleó y Baldomir.

The plays for the most part are written in two or three acts with a few in four acts. There are also many delightful little one act sketches, sparkling in gayety, with well defined plots and exegesis compressed in small compass. Among the plays is a dramatization of the well known novel La Casa de la Troya by Pérez Lugín, the theatrical adaptation consisting of four chapters. The dramatization is an excellent one; Linares Rivas is at home in the scenes, songs, and customs of Galician student life portrayed in the novel, as Galicia is his own native country.

This versatile production amounts to about 63 plays written between the years 1903 and 1929. The sources of the plays result for the most part from Linares Rivas' own observation of life, but include, as stated above, one historical legend and one dramatization of a novel and two others influenced by writers of other countries, Dofia Desdenes by a Hungarian writer, and El Conde de Valmoreda by a work of Count Leo Tolstoy.

In the Prensa Popular edition of La Garra there is a facsimile of an account, in Linares Rivas' own handwriting, of the events which brought about the

2. The Man Who Was Dead, Dodd, Mead and Co., New York, 1900.

writing of the tragedy La Garra, a play pronounced by critics as unreal and improbable but which, as the author explains in his introduction to the play, is based on actual events -- events which he has discussed with the friend around whose life revolve the main events of the play. Linares Rivas says of the critics who condemn this play as improbable and fantastic, "They know nothing of struggles, of tragedy in the daily life, of heartaches, of masks which conceal pathetic lives; their only life battles consist in obtaining the proper promotions in the literary staff; their horizon is limited by the café table talk or by vicarious travelling experiences with a hero of a novel; they would naturally dispose of actual life dramas as absurd."³

The author tells us, moreover, that similar cases exist in great numbers and that since the production of La Garra, people have confided in him personally and by letter proving to him that he has not exaggerated the situation; in fact, the situation in the play is eclipsed by similar situations in real life, situations more desperate and hopeless.

This play produced different reactions in different parts of Spain; northern cities were scandalized, central districts protested, those of the western part

3. See Introduction to La Garra, Prensa Popular, Madrid, n. d.

applauded. An interesting little point in connection with the play is that it was produced in different parts of Spain with different endings. The regular and only authentic version of the play ends in the death of the husband as the only solution of the problems of himself and his wife, while in the Barcelona production, the wife upholds her husband in his attitude toward divorce and she leaves with him to resume life in a foreign land, a conclusion which appeals to many readers of the play as the logical and fitting one.

The dedication of various plays, as we read between the lines, reveal to us something of the writer's own personal life, his affection and kindness. Of particular interest is the dedication made to his daughter, Elisita, of the play Cobardías (1919) in which the father says he had been wanting for some time to dedicate a play to his daughter but that he wanted for her a play that would be worthy of being united to her name and her youthful simplicity. Other plays, he says, regardless of their success may have had in them some thought or expression that would not correspond to the high ideals cherished for his daughter. But, at last, in Cobardías, he finds the one he was seeking. It is one that strives to portray true honor and integrity; one that is wholesome and loyal to the best ideals. The father dedicates this work to his daughter with the conviction that in future years when she re-

reads it with the increased understanding that life will have brought to her she will find in it no word that will offend, no thought that she, herself, will not consider just.⁴ It is a charming dedication, one that gives us an insight into the comradeship and mutual love that exist between father and daughter, and the father's fine feeling and noble nature. In the dedication of the play Cristobalón, the author states, "puse toda mi alma en esta obra."⁵ Another dedication of interest is the one of La Jaula de la Leona to Elisa S. de Linares Rivas in which the writer states that he dedicated to her a work when he first began to write, not knowing what success the years might bring to him; now that his work has met with some measure of success, he dedicated to her another work, but these two dedications are really only one that extends through the space of years which brought to him her affection and her good counsel.⁶

The characters portrayed in the plays are, for the most part, people of upper middle class, well educated and moderately well off, but in many plays, persons of nobility and highest social standing are presented, while in others, as Cristobalón, we see simple peasant folk; in Mal Año de Lobos, villagers, and in the tavern

4. See Dedication to Cobardias, Hispania, Madrid, 1919.

5. See Dedication in Cristobalón, Hispania, Madrid, 1919

6. See Dedication in La Jaula de la Leona, Hispania, Madrid, 1924

scene of El Conde de Valmoreda, the rough underworld types are delineated. Thus across the pages of the various plays appears a cross section of society, rich and poor, high and low; but whatever their rank or standing, all are one in their struggle in life, although this struggle is manifested in a wide variety of aspect.

Many of the titles of the plays are significant and suggest briefly the main point in the argument of the plays; a few of the representative titles are La Garra, which signifies the claws of ecclesiastical and state laws which hinder progress and fetter happiness; Como Buitres, the relatives, like vultures after their prey, flock together with hopes of inherited wealth at the death of a rich relative; El Nido de Águilas, in which snobbish pride of family lineage causes the young girl to renounce the love of a worthy man and leaves her isolated and lonely in her ancestral palace, her eagle's nest; here she begins to realize that the sacrifice to ancestry is, perhaps, after all, a vain one: "¡yo, sola!...¿El vivir tan alta, valdrá la pena de vivir tan aislada?" ⁷ Aire de Fuera, in which life in a foreign country, denaturalization and foreign laws

7. El Nido de Aguilas, p. 117.

are sought to solve the divorce problem; Mal Año de Lobos, in which the wolves driven by hunger and cold seek shelter in the village; the worst wolf is the man who has broken up the happiness of a home; En Cuarto Creciente, the half moon in a state of increase, the points turning upward, symbolizes the honeymoon of the ideally happy young married couple who experience the bliss of "marido y mujer que se quieren de lo más santo y más bueno que hay por el mundo;" ⁸...Frete a la Vida, the struggles which women have who are "up against life" financially, who are untrained for business but who must learn to work and support the mother and sisters; Añoranzas, the return of homesick longings for love that has been rejected to satisfy business and political standing; El ídolo, the idol of the people who falls from his own high pedestal of noble efforts for political reform; Cobardías, the weak cowardice of relatives who yield to demands of idle, vicious young men and supply them with money.

Idealism combined with the symbolical and figurative illustrate in some plays the redeeming power

8. En Cuarto Creciente, p. 418.

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of genuine goodness. A notable illustration of this¹⁰ is presented in the historical drama, Lady Godiva, which recounts the caprice of the Duke of Foringdor when he conceives his plan for the humiliation of Lady Godiva, the most beautiful and modest woman in England. At her plea for her husband's release and pardon, the Duke exacts from her the tremendous sacrifice of traversing unclothed the entire length of the village, continuing to the Convent where the Duke is staying, to ask of him there the release of the prisoners:

"Crusando del pueblo
 las calles y plazas
 sin traje ni manto
 que cubra su cuerpo."¹¹

The people of the village are at first swayed by vulgar brutality in their desires to look at Lady Godiva but this is entirely lost when their better nature asserts itself; deep silence and perfect privacy prevail as, at night in the pale moonlight on a white horse, Lady Godiva naked, passes through the village, in humility and purity clothed with the gar-

9. See below, next paragraph.

10. See above, p. 3.

ment of respect and consideration which the collective thinking of the villagers weaves for her:

"Por la ciudad desierta y silenciosa

Lady Godiva pasará desnuda...

y ese mismo silencio ha de formarle

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una espléndida y casta vestidura!"

She is protected from every vestige of shame; even at her approach to the Convent, the healing force of purity and humility has reached the Duke and his cloak is provided for her before she reaches the Convent. The Duke is transformed; he humbly entreats Lady Godiva's pardon; he frees the prisoners and departs without booty or ransom.

The strength of gentleness and of goodness conquers the lowest animal traits in El Caballero Lobo. The only weapon which the Cordera used to preserve the sanctity of her home is goodness; "Tienes la fuerza de los débiles, la excelsa bondad, única triunfadora de la fuerza material..."¹³ In the same play, happiness experienced through unselfish joy in the welfare of others is a force that fortells the advancement of the world; "¡Lo más hermoso de la tierra...! Lo que cambiará al mundo, si el mundo ha

12. Ibid, p. 168.

13. El Caballero Lobo, p. 255-256.

de cambiar alguna vez; la alegría del bien ajeno."¹⁴

The power of kindness is illustrated in an allegory related by one of the personages in Como Hormigas which recounts the experience of a man who judged the ants to decide whether or not they were worthy of continuing their existence. As the ants tell the man their worst sins, sins of theft, murder, immorality, unkindness, the man at first is overwhelmed with laughter at the idea of sins of ants and they seem absolutely trivial to him; he wonders how ants whom he has crushed under foot so many times could consider these trivialities as sins. By all means they are worthy of continuing their existence and he declares:

"Lo suyo no es nada a los ojos de un hombre."¹⁵

Later the same man must appear before God to tell of his sins, the angel who accompanies him, on seeing him fearful and dejected, says to him: "¿Por qué tiembias, Alma? ¿Eres tú más con relación a los hormigas, de lo que es Dios con relación a los hombres?...¿por qué temes que la bondad divina sea implacable con vosotros, hombres, que en la inmensidad de la Creación sois menos aun que los puntitos negros

14. Ibid., p. 261.

15. Como Hormigas, p. 200.

y blancos y rojos que tú mismo has perdonado?"¹⁶

Idealistic lessons are sometimes not brought forth by the strong and successful but by the apparently weak and foolish; Pastoriza in Flor de los Pazos sees the vision of Peregrina as the "sembradora de bienes...Dios fecundará la tierra que ella pise. ...Peregrina tiene misión de consolar espíritus... Peregrina tiene destino de salvadora...Los Pazos no se hundirán mientras ella viva."¹⁷ A similar vision and prophesy is made by the beggar, Galana, in La Casa de la Troya, who foretells the happiness and betrothal of Carmina: "Hace ya tiempo que la Galana vió en el aire a los ángeles, que traían una corona blanca para esta novia."¹⁸

In Cobardías, symbolism is illustrated by business accounts; numbers prove fascinating when regarded as ideas. One can see in them one's own welfare and that of one's dear ones. In the cash-book one can read usefulness and in the annual balance sheet one can even read poetry. Net profit, so many thousand pesetas; pesetas to invest or pesetas trans-

16. Ibid, p. 201.

17. Flor de los Pazos, p. 268-269.

18. La Casa de la Troya, p. 105.

formed into clothing and trinkets; pesetas to give to charity and pesetas to maintain the house, to train the children and to sustain love in the home:
 ...¹⁹"En los números se lee todo."

Words are symbolical, they may be caresses or daggers; they fly through the air, they hold themselves back at times to arrange themselves according to the attitude of the person they encounter:
 "...mis malas respuestas aun las más rápidas, se detienen un momento en el aire para hacer su toilette antes de que tú las oigas."²⁰ Words may cut more than daggers. The French composer, Bizet, in his Spanish Opera, Carmen, represents the girls as having daggers or knives concealed in their garters, reference is made to this in Doña Desdenes in speaking of words that cut; "si te hiciera tu retrato un francés, no te ponía la navaja en la liga,²¹ sino en las palabras."

The atmosphere of a place or of a home is often used in the plays with a figurative meaning. The gloomy atmosphere of a city when there is literally

19. Cobardías, p. 41

20. Como Buitres, p. 90.

21. Doña Desdenes, p. 782.

and figuratively little sunshine and much rain is expressed as follows: "...una ciudad...que conserva gustosa los viejos caserones y los muebles viejos ...deja una ciudad que ama las nubes durante el día y los fantasmas durante la noche y elige una ciudad que goce en la luz y en el bullicio y que ame la alegría que es el único bien de los mortales."²²

The "ambiente" is referred to often; it is an "ambiente" which is located in the one individual's viewpoint; this same place may be described by one person who thinks it gloomy and by another who loves it, as does the student when he sings of Santiago de Compostela:

"Airiños, airiños, aires,
 Airiños de miña terra,
 Airiños, airiños, aires,
 Airiños, deixadme en ela."²³

Many kinds of thoughts that fly around, the fancies that come and go, the accumulation of experiences, some gay, some sad, some prosaic, are compared in Como Hormigas to doves flying in and out of the dove cot: "¿qué pensamientos traes?..... Eso es

22. La Garra, p. 86-87.

23. La Casa de la Troya, p. 137.

preguntar qué palomas hay en los palomares. De todos colores;...blancas, negras, tordas, cenizas, doradas, rojas....vuelven siempre al palomar."²⁴

Nature is at times symbolical of the mood of the people; the rain in La Garra is referred to continuously as part of the figurative "ambiente" surrounding the people; also in Mal Año de Lobos cold and wind typify cruelty of human nature; in Como Hormigas, the burning sun of Castile is invoked to warm the stony hearts of men.

The citations quoted in this study will illustrate somewhat the style of the author; they will also serve to bring out some of the author's ideas. The chapters are not arbitrary divisions; the points presented, moral lessons, philosophy of life, family problems, social and political questions are interwoven in the majority of plays. It is hoped that the reader will acquire an interest in one of Spain's broadminded thinkers.

24. Como Hormigas, p. 170.

CHAPTER II

PARENTS AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Spain's problems with young people are not essentially different from those of any other country; however, local conditions, traditions and customs accentuate certain questions dealing with the relations of young people and their parents. Linares Rivas believes in giving young people the right to choose their own careers in life and to decide their own marriage problems. These questions are treated in several plays, noticeable in Bodas de Plata and La Fuerza del Mal, which portray opposite parental points of view. In La Fuerza del Mal there is a hard father whose attitude may be summed up in the words of Hartzenbusch, describing the father in Los Amantes de Teruel:

"Prenderse de quien le cuadre
no es lícito a una doncella,
no hay mas voluntad en ella
que la que tenga su padre."¹

The stubborn father will not yield to his daughter's entreaties to recognize her lover. His unwilling consent is finally forced from him by threats

1. In Obras de Hartzenbusch, Teatro, Vol. 1, Tello. Madrid, 1888, p. 50.

and veiled allusions to the necessity for an immediate marriage to protect the daughter's honor and that of the family; only through forces of evil can one reason with him, if it can be called reason. The father has built up around him a wall of mistrust, hate and deceit, he cannot realize that goodness is a greater force than evil. In reasoning with him, a friend says;..."usted no comprende que la bondad pueda ser otra cosa más que debilidad; que reverencia usted únicamente al dios de la fuerza y a los ángeles del mal..."²

In the play Bodas de Plata, an opposite picture is presented. The wise father has confidence in his children, he encourages their dignity and self-respect, he believes in their ability to select for themselves the right matrimonial alliances. This father, unlike the one in La Fuerza del Mal, lives close to his children, he understands them and sympathizes with them, he has their respect and confidence. He realizes that parents are not very far removed from children in virtues or faults: "Aquel respeto a la antigua usanza, ver en los padres seres superiores, semidioses, retrae a los hijos, y en las horas difíciles de la vida suele ser perjudicial

2. La Fuerza del Mal, p. 224.

para los hijos...y para los padres."³ He respects his daughter's rights even in the little things, and does not permit the mother to open and read her daughter's letters: "Abrirla es curiosidad o desconfianza."⁴ Freedom for his daughter's choice in marriage does not mean indifference on the father's part; on the contrary, he is particular about his daughter's friends. His daughter comes to him and tells him her love affairs, and the father carefully investigates the young man's standing. On finding him worthy, he allows the young people to arrange their own affairs: "yo no he de meter prisa ni de poner obstáculos. Eso es cosa de ellos."⁵ At his daughter's marriage he does not feel that he has lost his daughter; on the contrary, he has gained a son. "Que mayor felicidad para unos padres, que la de casar a su hija honradamente, a gusto, con un hombre que trabaja!"⁶

In the same play there is another father similar to the one in La Fuerza del Mal. His idea is to break the will of his children. He cannot real-

3. Bodas de Plata, p. 281.

4. Ibid, p. 296.

5. Ibid, p. 400.

6. Ibid, p. 480.

ize that his son is a grown man, capable of thinking for himself; to him a son is always a child subject to his father's wishes: "Tan hijo es ahora como a los seis años, o como a los cincuenta. Los hijos, siempre son hijos."⁷ When the children finally manage their lives in their own way, in spite of their father's mistaken view point, the father who really at heart loves them, undergoes a tremendous upheaval in his life; he overcomes his stubbornness; the entire atmosphere of hostility between the father and his children is changed to mutual respect and love. He learns to free his children from his dominating thought. He sees his children as individuals with a right to their freedom.

This same play teaches the rights of young people to choose their own careers: The young people should be guided and led by their parents but not forced by them. The ambitious mother forces her son into study for ecclesiastical life for which he has no inspiration nor real understanding. Through the influence of relatives who are prominent church officials she obtains promotions for him. He is never allowed to think for himself. This is pointed out to his mother by a relative who sees the situation

7. Ibid., p. 408.

clearly: "Tú has encerrado la voluntad y las inclinaciones de Sebastián en el molde mezquino de tus piadosos temores y aun estás orgullosa de esta alma contrahecha."⁸ He urges the mother to give her son a little freedom, to allow him to develop his own individuality: "¿Por qué no le dejas un año siquiera, libre y solo, para que se asome al mundo?...y que se encamine luego por donde más le llame su vocación."⁹ The mother does not give up her ideas, her son becomes a mere puppet who is submerged in her ambitious worldly plans, which are masked in the name of religion.

The socially ambitious mother is a type who appears in every country; in the United States the daughter is sometimes sacrificed to a foreign title, and in Spain the same kind of mother sacrifices her daughter's happiness on the altar of family pride and lineage.¹⁰ The young girl in the play, Nido de Águilas, is influenced by her mother to throw away her happiness because she is of noble descent. She is not allowed to marry the worthy young man who loves her, although he is the son of a wealthy gen-

8. Ibid., p. 423.

9. Ibid., p. 418-419.

10. See Chapter I, p. 8, reference to Nido de Águilas.

tleman and he has been educated in foreign countries,¹¹
yet he is "nieto de unos labradores."

The mother's influence is disclosed as vanity in the play, El Abolengo. The father by plain straightforward advice shows his daughter how wrong she has been in allowing her mother's false ideas to influence her; he points out that true nobility consists in honest work and noble achievement as it is exemplified in his daughter's husband; the daughter must learn this lesson, she is living in the modern world and her ancestors can rest in peace: "los muertos de mi abolengo, que no conocí siquiera, dejé¹² moslos dormir en paz."

Family lineage realizes its own precarious position; no longer does the world consider simply a family name per se, there must be true worth connected with the name, regardless of noble deeds of illustrious ancestors; one must show his own intrinsic value as an individual and not claim vicarious glory reflected from a past now grown dim. Both economic pressure and the need for renewed vitality are forcing hitherto exclusive families of nobility to seek matrimonial and financial alliances with

11. Nido de Águilas, p. 80.

12. El Abolengo, p. 58.

those of a so-called lower class: "...las razas nobles, para no extinguirse, con las plebeyas se alían, se cruzan, se unen, y cuando corre mucha prisa, con mucha prisa se venden..."¹³

A fine mother with strength of character who governs her home wisely and teaches her daughters to be self-reliant and trustworthy appears in the play,¹⁴
La Cizafia.

Foreign education for young people is advocated in a number of plays: A young girl who has returned from a school in London where she spent three years comes back much improved: "tiene un aire distinto de las demás muchachas."¹⁵

A father in speaking of his little daughter intends to send her abroad as soon as she is old enough. He has studied and had professional training in the United States and in Belgium, and he knows the value of foreign intercourse. He wants his daughter to travel and to learn from the world.¹⁶

Not only do parents need to allow freedom for their children; young people have to learn the les-

13. Nido de Aguilas, p. 83.

14. La Cizafia, p. 153.

15. Aire de Fuera, p. 218.

16. Ibid., p. 218-219.

son that their parents also have a right to lead their own lives. Unintentional cruelty of self-sufficient youth that would deprive, quite unconsciously, but none the less mercilessly, older persons of any right or claim to love and happiness is brought out in the play, El mismo Amor. Gay, happy, carefree youth, at eighteen years of age regards a person of forty years as though life had nothing more in store for him; arrogant youth that thoughtlessly takes all rights to happiness to itself, exuberant youth that sees eons between itself and persons of forty or fifty years of age: "La juventud implacable, que no admite pasión, ni ansia, ni amores, sino como gala y feudo de la misma juventud...La juventud inconsciente, que apenas sabe donde empieza y tardará mucho en saber donde termina su propia juventud, y ya pretende leer la edad del alma en las arrugas del cuerpo."¹⁷

In this play two former lovers are brought together again after years of separation; he is a widower with a grown son and she is a widow with a grown daughter. The son and daughter have met, love each other and are to be married. It is a strange coincidence, a mysterious force that renews and awakens the former love of their parents. Twenty

17. El mismo Amor, p. 214-215.

years have passed since this love was frustrated by parental opposition and by diverging paths of life. Now it has an opportunity to revive based upon real mature love and a need for home and companionship; but this "mismo amor" is again frustrated. Twenty years ago the parents were the obstacle, now this same love fears to show itself before arrogant youth. The mother hears her daughter express her opinions of the mother of one of her friends who married again, opinions full of contempt and scorn which so depress the mother that she is afraid to tell her daughter of her own desire for marriage, and so this same love again yields to obstacles; "Amor débil. Hecho de resignacione y de temores; que no quiere luchar y se espanta de los obstáculos, aunque el obstáculo no sea mas que una sombra..."¹⁸

At social events there may be seen the mother with her daughter; the kind of mother who relates bits of scandal and who does not expect her daughter to understand nor to listen but who reproves her if she seems to do so. To this type of mother, marriage is the dividing line in the liberty of gossip; this is realized by a daughter who says: "Tengo gana

18. Ibid., p. 216.

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de casarme...para hablar."

The young man who broods over his troubles and who goes off by himself is understood by the father who respects his son and who waits for his confidence and for the right time to give him loving advice: "Los muchachos piensan que la primera demostración de ser hombre y valerse por sí mismos, es ²⁰ ocultarse de los hombres en todo lo grave."

The love for her son prompts the mother in the play Cobardías, to supply him with money and yield to his demands against her own better judgment; there is only one reason for doing this, he is her son; "¿piensas tú que no sé que es un canalla?... ¡Pues lo sé! Pero es mi hijo y...y se acabó la razón...! ¡Es mi hijo!" ²¹

The mother who protects her son against the wiles of an older woman is illustrated in the play, La Jaula de la Leona. The poetic lad with a dreamy, sensitive nature bestows his love on an older woman who is trifling with his affections. He suffers a disillusionment that nearly kills him when the woman, impelled by the boy's mother, lets him see that she

19. La Estirpe de Júpiter, p. 212.

20. La Cizaña, p. 139.

21. Cobardías, p. 86.

has no real love for him.

In the dramatization of La Casa de la Troya, there runs through the entire play an account of the deep love between Carmen and her father. After his death he still seems to be advising her; she thinks of him in the old home; he seems to say to her: "No comprendías que el venir y atendernos era una prueba de cariño... ¡que nunca fue señal de amor para los muertos, ni para los que viven, el desatender y ar-²³rinconar lo que ellos cuidaron y han querido!"

Proof of Linares Rivas' affection for his own daughter has already been related in the account of²⁴ the beautiful dedication of a play to her.

A plea is made in the play Frente a la Vida for giving to girls the same or an equivalent education as to boys. It is not right to take the family income and spend it on the boys, leaving nothing for²⁵ the girls. The girls should be prepared to take their place in life, modern conditions require it, life is becoming every day more complicated and more

22. La Jaula de la Leona, p. 100-118.

23. La Casa de la Troya, p. 125.

24. See Chapter I, p. 7.

25. Frente a la Vida, p. 90.

26
 difficult. Whether marriage comes to the girls or not, they should be fitted to take their place in life and to become self-reliant.

Nor is it right to bring boys and girls up on luxury above the means of the family: "Con todo el amor de los padres más cariños^o cometéis una crueldad...El criar a los hijos en un ambiente de lujo y de comodidades, a sabiendas de que ellos después no lo podrán sostener."²⁷

The right education for girls and their training for a useful position in the world's work need not unfit them for their capacity to become successful home makers; on the contrary, a properly directed understanding of the difficulties of business situations and the capacity to deal with people in different ranks of life should be an asset in their married life. It is no wonder that girls who are not properly fitted for marriage make such failures of it: "...la mujer acepta al que viene, unas veces a gusto y otras sin él...el hombre es quien trae la casa y la comida que ella no la sabe ganar, ni la enseñaron a eso."²⁸ If the wife has some experience

26. Ibid., p. 94.

27. Frente a la Vida, p. 93.

28. Ibid., p. 94.

with actual money values, she can aid her husband with her intelligence and with the worthy ambition to conduct their home on a well arranged budget, in a manner that is conducive to increasing satisfaction and to more harmonious family life.

One of Linares Rivas' best plays, comprising various problems is La Mala Ley. It has a direct bearing upon the relations between parents and their sons and daughters. The scene is laid in Galicia and the play brings up a law which may be enforced there although it does not exist in certain other districts of Spain. The law is that which allows the children to claim their inheritance if one of their parents has died, while the other is still living. This may work a great hardship on the parent who is living, depriving him of all his property, forcing him to sell it at a loss to meet the demands of the children who insist upon cash payments; "...la ley inicua, la mala ley es la que otorga derecho para reclamar la herencia á los padres mientras uno de ellos vive todavia.....Por esta ley han de tenerle miedo los padres a los hijos;...es inicuo...el despertar en los hijos la codicia y el despertar en los padres recelo."²⁹

29. La Mala Ley, p. 87-88.

In this play the father has two children who are hard, cruel, avaricious; they insist upon what they call their rights, they are not satisfied with the income that has been agreed upon and they demand the capital: "¡Reclaman su legítima!...No les basta la renta convenida y exigen el capital."³⁰

The two children receive their inheritance, the money separates them from the love of their father; it is rather not the money but the law which is the cause of the evil; the father realizes this as he says: "...no les culpo a ellos del todo, que una mala ley contra los padres por fuerza ha de ser una mala tentación para los hijos."³¹ The third child is the joy and consolation of her father; she saves him from financial ruin and from sorrow. She keeps his estate intact for him and through her intelligence and love restores happiness to him: "...la hija menor, suma de ternuras y de sacrificios, espíritu superior, mujer complicada, pero mujer al fin."³²

30. Ibid, p. 51.

31. Ibid, p. 123.

32. Arturo Mori: Informaciones. Juicios de la prensa, in La Mala Ley, p. 131.

CHAPTER III

LOVE AND MARRIAGE

Since all the plays portray a general picture of life as it is observed by Linares Rivas, there is scarcely one that does not deal in some way with the question of love and marriage; only the outstanding situations are discussed here, others are included as they appear in connection with the subjects of other chapters of this study.

Of all of Linares Rivas' plays, the one that has attracted most attention is La Garra, which deals with the problem of divorce. La Garra is a masterpiece in style, plot, and portrayal of characters. A critic has said of it: "El Ambiente de Santiago de Compostela (Campanela en la geografía ideal del teatro) está maravillosamente reproducido. Aquellas figuras de canónigos, militares y aristócratas, son de una estupenda realidad y de una fuerza dramática insuperable. Sólo la figura de Santa bastaría para inmortalizar a un dramaturgo. La escena con la criada vieja es por sí sola un poema."¹ As before stated, Linares Rivas is a

1. Gonzales-Blanco, Los Dramaturgos Españoles Contemporáneos, p. 194. Primera Serie. Editorial Cervantes, Valencia 1917.

native Galician, Santiago is his birthplace, and through his own intimate perception of his native province he is well fitted to give to his readers a peculiarly lifelike interpretation to the events unfolded in La Garra.²

This play, which has been translated into English under the title, "The Claws", describes the "ambiente" or atmosphere composed of conservative family opinions, local traditions and customs, state and ecclesiastical laws, all of which represent Spain's adverse attitude toward divorce. Linares Rivas quotes laws accurately and intelligently, he is well grounded in the study of law and was actively engaged in its practise before turning his attention exclusively to the field of literature.

La Garra brought forth a tremendous amount of criticism favorable and unfavorable.³ It is still discussed pro and con. A careful study of the play reveals the fact that it is not against church institutions, but rather against existing social conditions which retard and do not permit progress. The action of the play is represented as taking place in Campanela, that is, Santiago de Compostela:

2. See Chapter I, p. 4.

3. Chapter I, p. 5.

"Campanela, una ciudad que vive muerta como Brujas,
como Salamanca, como Toledo, como Santiago..."⁴

The play deals with the peculiar situation arising from the story of Antonio Wilson, who is the son of a Spanish mother and a North American father. Born in Spain, he lived later in the United States where he became a naturalized citizen, a "Yanqui", as the Spaniards say. He married when very young. The marriage proved an unfortunate one, ending in divorce. Returning to Spain, Antonio lived a quiet secluded life for ten years with an uncle, at whose death, he inherited a title and a fortune. Antonio, now the Marqués de Montrove, marries again. His past life is unknown to his wife and her family, and is like a closed book to Antonio himself. Antonio and his wife Sol experience eleven years of perfect married life; but this ideal existence is suddenly changed when through a friend who has known Antonio in the United States the entire story of his past life comes to light.

Family pride and noble lineage typified by Sol's mother; state laws represented by Don Acisclo; church decrees personified by Sol's uncle, a cardinal, all unite in horrified agreement and pronounce Sol's mar-

4. La Garra, p. 2.

riage, her children, her social standing, her title, illegal.

This ambiente is the Garra which destroys the happiness of Sol and Antonio, and brings about Antonio's death. Antonio denounces this ambiente which gives to humanity only a formula of death, when humanity wants to live. Sol has a tremendous conflict when she is confronted with the necessity of choosing between the arguments which are presented by church and state on one side and by her husband on the other.

Antonio maintains that as mankind progresses in it's understanding, so should laws progress: "que vayan las leyes con los tiempos, que no apliquen a la vida de hoy las actas conciliares del siglo XVI."⁵ New laws should appear as modern life advances. Deep⁶ rooted prejudice preserves "duendes y fantasmas." Those who are happy in their married life are the very ones who should see situations clearly enough in order to work to change the laws to protect the unhappy ones: "...Los felices, los dichosos, con mas razón, con más deber."⁷ There is a similar plea

5. Ibid., p. 73-74.

6. Aire de Fuera, p. 232.

7. Ibid., p. 233.

expressed by Azorín in his story, El buen Juez,⁸ in which the judge departs from the usual formula of decisions, for which he is criticized by the other lawyers, who complain that such decisions would destroy the existing social order. The good judge in Azorín's story is a prophet, who realized that justice is a progressive understanding and that until new laws are made to meet this unfolding of justice, a good judge must make his own provisional little laws in advance of present statutes which will be changes as this advanced understanding becomes more general.

Antonio in the play La Garra argues that concessions must be made as humanity advances in its understanding: "A Dios lo que es de Dios, al César lo que es de César."⁹ His wife, Sol, knows that she is in the sight of God married to Antonio, regardless of the ambiente which says she is not; "...las leyes no pueden borrar los años de vida íntima, ni los hijos..."¹⁰

Antonio offers one solution, that of going to a

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8. Azorín in Los Pueblos. (See Las Confesiones de un pequeño filósofo.) Heath & Co. N.Y. 1923, p. 48
9. La Garra, p. 74.
10. Ibid, p. 97.

foreign country: "...el mundo es muy grande, y otras leyes nos ampararán."¹¹ Their children in a foreign country will have their rightful parentage: "...un poco mas allá, salvando sólo una línea de la frontera tendrán padre y madre y situación legal y honrada."¹²

To Antonio's ideas, family pride, church laws and state laws say no; Sol is temporarily overcome by this ambiente; but she turns against it at her husband's death and cries out in despair that God and her husband would have been sufficient for her life.

Interwoven with Sol and Antonio's story in La Garra occurs another problem dealing with divorce in the case of Santa, Sol's cousin, who lives in her home. Santa has had an unhappy experience from which laws allow no escape. Ten years have passed since her husband deserted her, and robbed her of her fortune; no one has seen him nor heard from him since that time; no one knows whether he is alive or dead. Santa cannot procure a divorce, she is bound to him by law. She is dependent on relatives for protection and for a home. A friend of the family, Don Álvaro, loves her, and she loves him but they cannot be married, and the forming of a new home is denied her.

11. Ibid., p. 112.

12. Ibid., p. 113.

Santo and Álvaro are the victims of false laws and false moral standards. Linares Rivas does not uphold divorce except as it relieves a condition that is worse than that without divorce: an unjust law that prohibits divorce may be worse than divorce it-
 13
 self.

Although the Barcelona public in an attitude similar to the cinematograph public in the United States that clamors for a "happy ending" resolved the problem in La Garra by demanding that the protagonists in the play be taken to a foreign country, there to begin life anew, yet the author gave only one ending to the play, that of Antonio's death. In the play, if Antonio and Sol had freed themselves from the surrounding ambiente, the claws would have ceased being claws. Linares Rivas, moreover, avoided giving his own solution, he does not wish to dogmatize nor to theorize, his work consists merely in the exposition of the problem, in calling the attention of church and state to their neglect and indifference in the innumerable cases that need protection and relief. The author states it in this way: "La Garra nunca tuvo más forma que la actual. Si

13. See Linares Rivas' introduction to La Garra, Edition Prensa Popular, Madrid, n.d.

los marqueses de Mon rove se decidieran a libertarse de los consejos de los que les rodean, la garra dejaría de ser garra. Además, si el conflicto lo resolviera yo, en cualquier sentido que fuere, sería parcial y no he querido serlo. Mi labor no ha sido más que de exposición."¹⁴ ..."Llamar la atención de la Iglesia y del Estado sobre los infinitos casos en que resulta cruel su abandono y su indiferencia. No pretendí teorizar, ni mucho menos dogmatizar, sino sencillamente exponer."¹⁵

Another play, Aire de Fuera, has also two interwoven stories dealing with divorce. The main story differs from the one in La Garra in that in the latter the difficulty is placed in the family of an ideally happy married couple; the question is concerned with past events in the life of the husband, events which carry with them no stigma of immorality while in Aire de Fuera the reason for divorce is the infidelity of the wife. The husband, Baltasar, has lived abroad and is familiar with the divorce laws of other countries. Baltasar is a splendid man and

14. Gonzales-Blanco. Los Dramaturgos españoles contemporáneos. Editorial Cervantes, Valencia, 1917, p. 193-194.

15. Ibid, p. 197.

his home is a happy one until his wife's vanity leads her to accept money, jewels and beautiful gowns from a wealthy man, Baltasar's friend and business partner. The denouement in the play is written in a masterly way, a scene of deep dramatic feeling is portrayed as Baltasar realizes that his home is broken up; "¡Cómo se va hundiendo en la nada aquel altar de cariño y de respeto que fué mi vida!"¹⁶

When Baltasar learns the facts in the case he acts peremptorily. He arranges matters quietly and decisively, so that his wife's name shall be protected from open scandal: "Resolvamos este problema serenamente, que el porvenir vale la pena de una hora de frialdad. Una hora rabiosa de angustia y de cólera, pero fría..."¹⁷

All love for his wife is gone, he considers their marriage annulled, but he wishes her to keep her outward form of honor; he tells his plan, the next day he and his wife and daughter will leave for Holland or Belgium or Switzerland, seemingly for the sake of his wife's health. They will place their little daughter in a boarding school, (her father's plans for her had been foreign education, but they

16. Aire de Fuera, p. 364.

17. Ibid, p. 383.

are being carried out in an unexpected way.)¹⁸ they will take up residence in the foreign country and in the course of time required by law they will become naturalized citizens of that country; then Baltasar's wife will be the one who asks for the divorce. On receiving the divorce, the courts will allow her the custody of their daughter, but it will be understood that she will renounce all claims to her. As Baltasar considers the situation in Spain, expatriation is the only solution for him: "¡Estas miserias de dos seres encadenados, con la discordia en medio, no tienen más solución que...la de expatriarse para los que aun tienen fe en el porvenir!"¹⁹

The other story in Aire de Fuera concerning divorce is that of Magdalena; in many respects similar to Santa's case in La Garra. Magdalena is married to a man who is a scoundrel, a "mal bicho";²⁰ after six years of married life, years of quarrels, of unhappiness, of hate ending in a day of brutal beating, Magdalena appealed to the courts for protection, then followed a year and a half of legal discussion in which Magdalena's private life was aired to pub-

18. See Chapter II, p. 23.

19. Aire de Fuera, p. 393.

20. Ibid, p. 234.

lic view; the courts decreed five years of separation at the end of which the husband could claim his wife again. After a scandal and a fight in a gambling den, the husband disappears, no one knows where he is nor when he may return. Magdalena lives in constant fear: "Siempre azorada, palideciendo al menor ruido, sin atreverse a salir sola a la calle..."²¹

The five year separation expires and Magdalena's husband reappears to claim her. The law requires her to go with him, to try again the married life and if it is not successful to reopen the suit for another separation. Magdalena cannot go with him: "Es horrible pensar el martirio que me aguarda a su lado...¿y de nuevo hemos de empezar por vivir juntos esperando que me maltrate, y queden señalados los golpes, para obtener otro fallo igual?"²²

Magdalena realizes vaguely that if she could escape to a foreign country she could get help but she does not see her way clear to do that.²³ For Magdalena, terrified and helpless, the only solution that opens itself to her is death.

21. Ibid, p. 233.

22. Ibid, p. 305-306.

23. Ibid, p. 308.

Marriage separation is viewed from a different angle in the play Fantasmas. Raimundo and Rosario are supposedly husband and wife, they are so considered in the eyes of their friends and relatives. Their common law marriage of twelve years standing dates from an affair that started in Paris when Raimundo was ill and Rosario took care of him. Rosario has tired of her husband and plans to leave him. Her neighbor Enrique has supplanted Raimundo in her affections. She leaves Raimundo's home expecting to meet Enrique in a distant country. Raimundo learns of the plan, sends for Enrique under a plea of business, discloses the fact to him that Rosario is not really his wife and that he is free to marry her.

There is a sort of grim humor in Enrique's horrified attitude on hearing that Rosario is not legally married, he no longer wishes to carry on his love affair with her. He had been willing to run away with her when he thought she was another man's wife but now he finds himself in a different situation. He had claimed that he wished to marry her but could not as she was already married; now that he is free to do so he finds he does not wish to do so, and Rosario is left in the lurch; thus Enrique unconsciously shows his respect for marriage conven-

tions.

Instances occur in several plays of married couples who are saved from separation based on imaginary difficulties or incompatibility of disposition which if allowed to continue would result in breaking up a home. Reconciliation saves the difficult temporary situation. The influence of the mother nearly succeeds in breaking up the home in the play El Abolengo,²⁴ but a happy solution is reached as Pilar learns that her home is not with her mother but with her husband, she grows up in the true sense of the word as she learns to take her rightful place in life; "Lo mío y lo suyo no lo he comprendido por él ni por mi. El cariño va más adentro cuando lo empujan las penas...Esta hora²⁵ fué muy provechosa; aprendí mucho."

In the play En cuarto creciente the story of Patrocínio and Pepe Uceda is humorous and pathetic. The wife is influenced by her mother who nearly destroys the home for no reason whatever. The mother and daughter have too much idle time on their hands. They imagine that all women are unhappy with their husbands. Patrocínio goes home to her mother and

24. See Chapter II, p. 22.

25. El Abolengo, p. 56-57.

her unhappy husband does not get a chance to talk things over with her. He follows her to a friend's home one day and after lively arguments the reconciliation is brought about and an unhappy separation avoided. He says to his wife: "En este pleito de divorcio por incompatibilidades...yo me aferro a no ver más que malos consejos de tus padres y una chiquillada tuya...Persuadido firmemente de que estas desavenencias no responden a una verdadera animosidad tuya contra mi...te hablo con la esperanza de borrar pronto estos resquemores...buscando esta ocasión...en que pude hablar contigo sin la rémora²⁶ materna." In situations like these, after the reconciliation is made and the wife takes a firm stand for her husband's rights, the mother often agrees with her. It seems to be a question of a testing time for the wife to see whether she has the strength to learn to think for herself.

This understanding of one's real happiness comes too late to the wife in Aire de Fuera. As she loses her husband's love she sees the folly of her vanity; shame and repentance come to her: "¡Si pudieras ver dentro de mi como la vergüenza me ha cog-

26. En Cuarto Creciente, p. 378-380.

ido entera, te daría lástima!"²⁷ A similar situation is presented in Mal Año de Lobos. The same principle applies in circles of high social standing as in Aire de Fuera and in the peasant class, as in Mal Año de Lobos. The returning repentant wife in the latter finds that she has sacrificed her real happiness: "Qué ceguera tan grande fui la mía!"²⁸ ¡Perdóname! ¡Seré para ti como un perro fiel y humilde!"²⁹

The story is also told of the woman who fights for her home in the play La Jaula de la Leona, when another woman who is visiting in the home tries to steal her husband's love; she is the type, man or woman, who is described as the homewrecker, in Aire de Fuera: "En la vida no hay nada más infame que penetrar rastreramente en un hogar."³⁰ The woman who sees her home in danger becomes like a lioness in a cage; ordinarily gentle, she shows that she is absolute in the home as she drives out the person who does not belong there: "Aquí soy lo que es preciso que sea; la única mujer, más señora aun que mujer y

27. Aire de Fuera, p. 392.

28. Mal Año de Lobos, p. 69.

29. Ibid. p. 84.

30. Aire de Fuera, p. 351.

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 más reina que señora." In another play, María Victoria, the temptation comes to the wife who is unhappily married to a wealthy, dissolute husband to leave her home and escape with the man who had been her fiancé before her marriage. The engagement had been broken on account of financial reasons and long years of waiting.

Now happiness seems to be in her grasp; but she renounces the impulse to flee, knowing that it would bring only a seeming temporary happiness; duty and fidelity are the keynotes of her character and true to her principles, she makes her decision: "No³² no ...la conciencia vale tanto como la felicidad." The time and the opportunity for marriage with her former fiancé has past, and according to her way of thinking, her place is with her husband, pitiful wreckage that he may be, and with her children and her home.

An illustration of love that comes after marriage is given in the play, Cobardías; a "marriage of convenience" becomes one of genuine love; the tact, the wisdom, gentleness and goodness of the husband, a wealthy Jew, a merchant and "self made man"

31. La Jaula de la Leona, p. 133.

32. María Victoria, p. 356.

who marries the woman whom he loves, but who marries him for financial reasons, succeeds in winning the love of his wife after marriage. In another play, La Raza, there is portrayed the wealthy Jew also, a gentleman, superior to race, who wins the love of a girl of noble family: "...todo lo resolvemos, sabedores ya de que la familia, La Raza, el mundo para nosotros somos nosotros dos."³³

In the delightful little sketch, Cuando ellas quieren, the successful business woman reserves the right to choose her own husband. She refuses her many suitors and she, herself, makes the offer of marriage to the man she loves; who, she knows, has loved her without venturing to speak of his love. She has some difficulty in making him see that he is actually the favored one, but when he does, his happiness is complete, but he admits that after all, in love affairs it turns out as the women wish: "aunque nuestra vanidad de hombres se mortifique, una vez más, hay que confesar que en cuestión de amores los hombres no cojen si no lo que las mujeres les dejen;..cuando ellas quieren."³⁴

Broken engagements on account of financial dif-

33. La Raza, p. 82.

34. Cuando ellas quieren, p. 335-336.

are mentioned in several plays; for example, Frente a la vida, and María Victoria. An engagement is broken in the play La Divina Palabra when the verdict of the physician and the pressure of friends and relatives of Mauricio pronounce his diseased condition such that marriage is impossible. The development of the character of Mauricio is a study of the growing realization of the worthlessness of selfishness and dissipation. His illness causes him to think seriously of the real values of life.

A strange case is presented in the play, El Conde de Valmoreda; (inspired, as stated above, on Tolstoy's drama, *The Man Who Was Dead*, but treated by Linares Rivas in a distinctly original manner.) The disappearance of the husband and a mistaken identity of his supposed dead body result in unintentional bigamy when the wife marries again. This play is full of dramatic situations and variety of scene. During the years of disappearance the husband lived with a circus girl and entered into the life of the circus as clown and as ringmaster. After the discovery of his real name and social position there is a courtroom scene where his wife is tried for bigamy, a strong scene full of restrained emotion and tense brevity of speech. The story of the dissipated life of the Count, his disappearance, his dual life and

temporary reform and happiness, his downfall and enforced return to his real name, his ultimate death, present an interesting study.

The play La Espuma de Champagne teaches the value of real love contrasted with its commercialized imitation: "No vayas a la feria del amor...que el amor de uno es divino y el amor de todos es repugnante: no vayas al negocio del amor...que el amor es negocio una vez por casualidad, y las otras veces es una mala tienda situada en una mala calle: no vayas alucinada en la seguridad de lograr la fortuna que tú ves a las que brillan y no ves a las que se hunden, y el hotel del amor se llama una vez hotel y mil veces hospital..."³⁵

This strange case of the fatherly, effective advice of a so-called man of the world to a young girl who has not yet taken a wrong step reminds one somewhat of a story by Blasco Ibáñez called El Lujo.³⁶ The situation is very different, the girl in this story is one who voluntarily lives in a house of ill repute; however a certain habitué of the house surprises himself as well as the girl by admonishing her and preaching a sermon to her on the evils of

35. La Espuma de Champagne, p. 229.

36. Blasco Ibáñez, El Lujo in Luna Benamor, F. Sempere y Comp.^a, Valencia, n.d.

the life she is leading, vainly urging her to think of the future and to return to her home.

In the one act play, Lo Posible, the wife thinks that what the husband can do, she can do. She goes to a masked ball to prove to her husband that there is equality for husband and wife in their diversions. By her quick wit and clever arguments for fair play she brings her husband to terms and he learns that he has more charming companionship in that of his own wife than in that of alluring, strange women of doubtful social standing.

The same woman rebukes a gentleman who thinks he is in love with her by saying that his only defect is that of thinking that he must make love to the ladies as a matter of courtesy, he is: "un cumplido caballero, sin más defecto visible que el ingénito a la raza española, de creerse obligado a cortejar a todas las mujeres, para que las mujeres no se sientan desairadas por su desvío."³⁷

The young man who is in love but who waits until he has a firm financial standing before declaring his love is illustrated by Eduardo in Nido de Águilas: "yo mismo, que me muero por hablar, no hablaré hasta el año próximo, que mi padre me ofre-

37. Lo Posible, p. 396.

ció una participación en su despacho."³⁸

The girl who encourages her fiancé to study and make good before she will give her consent to marriage is portrayed in La Casa de la Troya, where Carmen says: "Estudie...Marche a su hora, que ya junio viene pronto..."³⁹

Man in active business or political life has need of a home as a place of refuge, a place where he can be sure of encouragement and help: "...no es nada si no tiene un refugio...En la lucha de la vida el hombre conquista las posiciones: la mujer las conserva."⁴⁰

38. Nido de Águilas, p. 98.

39. La Casa de la Troya, p. 103.

40. El ídolo, p. 331.

CHAPTER IV

POLITICAL AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS

References are frequently made in the plays to social and political questions; they often have a direct bearing upon the development of the plot but occasionally they are incidental remarks in the course of a conversation which serve to show the author's attitude toward existing conditions.

Regret is expressed about the loss of Spain's art treasures. A business house of New York is negotiating for the purchase of paintings through their agent Stmit (sic); the artist hopes that the paintings may remain in Spain but Stmit asserts that there is no market in Spain or anywhere in Europe for that class of paintings; he adds, as he tries to lower the artist's charge, that the insurance rates in transportation are enormous.

At the artist's hopes that the Spanish Government may buy his paintings, Stmit replies: "¿El gobierno de España? Esta Nación no es nunca nuestro adversario en Arte. Nos lo deja llevar todo. El Estado español no compra, vende. Ahora mismo andamos en platos para una coleccion de tapices mag-

nífica."¹ The artist replies that it will be a great grief to visit their beautiful old buildings only to see bare walls. Stmit cheerfully observes that they are taking even the old buildings and patios: "Nos llevaremos los monumentos también. El patio de la casa de la Infanta ya está en París."²

A man asks a friend where he bought a certain beautiful cameo; he is asked if he remembers Paca who was married to a custom house inspector who was discharged from the custom house employ because he lost all the valuable objects. The former custom house inspector later dies and now his widow is selling in her home all that was lost in the custom house.³

A plea for the use of plain Spanish in prayers and greetings instead of Latin is made by Manuela in the play Flor de los Pazos. She says that God will hear Spanish as well as Latin and that it will be much clearer for her and the others: "¿Por qué no habla siempre en castellano, que se le entiende mejor?...¿y que adelanta si no le comprenden?..."⁴

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1. La Estirpe de Júpiter, p. 49.
 2. Ibid., p. 50
 3. Bodas de Plata, p. 429.
 4. Flor de los Pazos, p. 168-169.

At the answer that God hears and understands the Latin, Manuela replies: "También lo oiría en romance. Para Él, igual, y para nosotros, más claro."⁵

A play that involves many political problems is El ídolo. César starts out with noble ambitions and plans for government reform. He hopes he can leave in his ideas "una semilla fructífera."⁶ He idealizes the work of himself and his friends: "...sería tan hermoso reunirnos un puñado de hombres de buena fe e ir rectos a predicar nuestra doctrina y a implantarla luego, apartando envidias y egoísmos, como quien aparta malezas para seguir camino arriba hasta lo alto..."⁷ Later when his friends fail him, he still has faith in himself to carry out his work; "Me impondré a todos ellos para realizar mi obra de regeneración, de honradez, de sinceridad."⁸ He feels free to carry out his work independently as he has risen to his high standing by his own efforts: "A nadie le debo, más que a mi propio esfuerzo, el lugar que ocupo."⁹ César has received government

5. Ibid. p. 169.

6. El ídolo, p. 258.

7. Ibid., p. 257.

8. Ibid. p. 334.

9. Ibid. p. 357.

authority to form a new cabinet; he is trying to bring together certain men of the conservative element and others who are radical in their ideas. He starts out eagerly and full of confidence: "Mucha ansia tengo de empezar la obra verdaderamente provechosa planteando mis reformas."¹⁰

Among the different reforms he wished to inaugurate is the separation of church and state; in the written manifesto that he and his friends present are the words: "Como en todas, en la cuestión religiosa, la soberanía del Estado es absoluta."¹¹

Another desired reform is the suppression of worthless high salaried officials: "En los ministerios se acabaron los fondos de reptiles, las comisiones sin justificación, los favores oficiales que pagan favores íntimos."¹² He wishes to destroy all political favors, all bribes, the misuse of public funds. He wishes to reorganize the state budget, leaving it in condition to carry on his ideas when the time comes for him to retire: "...dejaré todas mis reformas planteadas y con presupuesto sobrante para ejecutarlas."¹³

10. Ibid. p. 387.

11. Ibid. p. 289.

12. Ibid. p. 363.

13. Ibid. p. 363.

He plans to have no favoritism in appointments; he wishes all positions of ambassadors, ministers and officials to be filled by worthy and honorable men. he is against appointments made for personal and family reasons. Moreover, he wishes gambling to cease, irrespective of place; he sends instructions to governors: "Usía no consentirá al juego en la provincia de su mando."¹⁴ He plans to make no concessions to places: "... no puede tolerarse que sea delito en Salamanca lo que es diversión y atractivo en San Sebastián."¹⁵

One by one these ideals of César are destroyed; his friends desert him, he finds his feet in a net, he is surrounded by a crowd of office seekers, pressure is brought to bear upon him for political favors. He begins to yield, he makes one compromise after another, he is forced to appoint weak, unworthy men of bad reputation, he is obliged to yield in the question of church and state, his own private life becomes an influence for granting political favors; scandals, lies, past obligations, present favors sweep away his ideals, his hopes for reform; he finds his hands tied; he wonders if freedom will

14. Ibid. p. 399.

15. Ibid. p. 399.

ever come in political life: "¡Cuando los hombres no tengan familia ni amistades, ni odios ni afectos ...cuando no tengan un pasado que les arrastre y se les imponga, llegará!"¹⁶

César starts with genuine noble aspirations but in another play, Añoranzas, there is quite a different sort of ambition based on personal and selfish reasons. His friends say of Florencio's ambitions: "...es usted ambicioso, que se ha propuesto usted llegar, y llegará."¹⁷

Florencio sacrifices his life for his ambition but he obtains no satisfaction from it: "He conseguido todo lo que soñara mi ambición. Riqueza, nombradía, puestos oficiales...mirándome desde lejos todo es mío...¡pero de cerca es una soledad y una desesperación...!...Mi vida es amarga."¹⁸

In the same play, a government official denounces strikes as existing merely for leaders who harangue and collect money from their followers, who let themselves be led about like sheep. The only way to resolve the problem of strikes is to increase the Guardia Civil.¹⁹

16. Ibid. p. 464.

17. Añoranzas, p. 40.

18. Ibid. p. 223.

19. Ibid. p. 163.

But his friend says there are some problems that cannot be controlled by military methods; take the floods for instance; there is a case where the Government should make a study of rivers, etc., and instead of allowing floods and freshets to become a menace, they should be turned to good advantage and made profitable: "En lo que te sobra razón es en culpar al Gobierno que no previene y encauza esas crecidas para que fuesen provechosas solamente." ²⁰ In this remark the reader may detect, perhaps, the influence of Lin-
ares Rivas' father in his understanding of civil en-
gineering. ²¹

A number of plays have references to woman's activity in politics; sometimes in a really helpful way, other times for selfish and personal reasons. At times she succeeds in obtaining professional and political favors for friends and relatives.

The Duquesa in the play La Estirpe de Júpiter disposes of the appointment for painting the frescos ²² on the ceilings of a Government building. In the play El ídolo, numerous appointments are made through

20. Ibid. p. 164.

21. See page 60 of this chapter.

22. La Estirpe de Júpiter, p. 162-166.

woman's influence. ²³ César's wife, Paula, stated early in her husband's political career that she had the determination never to allow the personal influence of friends and relatives to cause her to intercede with her husband in the granting of professional favors. She asserts: "No quiero intervenir en política." ²⁴ But a friend, who is determined to have her husband receive an Embassy appointment says that Paula in her confidential talks can easily influence her husband by giving her opinions about persons and events: "Cuando el marido es presidente del Consejo las impresiones de la mujer se traducen en credenciales." ²⁵

In the formation of a new political party, a woman who calls herself "la madrina oficial" ²⁶ interests young men in politics who have hitherto given their attentions to sports and society events but have not yet affiliated themselves with political life; her efforts are considered valuable and she receives the following praise: "Con unas cuantas amigas como usted, podríamos tener una porción

23. El ídolo, p. 418-427 and p. 455-458.

24. Ibid. p. 381.

25. Ibid. p. 382.

26. Ibid. p. 265.

de chicos de gran porvenir en el partido."²⁷

Linares Rivas' father was a man advanced in his ideas, the influence of his life and work appears in his worthy son's writings, not in plot but in little incidental observations: "...Su padre era un hombre muy inteligente, muy avisado, muy moderno, que había inundado de beneficios la provincia de La Coruña y, an consecuencia, gozaba en ella de una popularidad extrema y de un prestigio sin mácula...Era ingeniero de caminos canales y puertos..."²⁸

His father's experiences in civil engineering may have led Linares Rivas to cause one of his characters to express the desire for the advancement of his country, he is a man who is proud of being a Spaniard but who is saddened by certain conditions: "...entristecido viendo que en mi patria se apedrean los trenes; que en las ciudades donde se bañan doscientas personas, se quedan sin agua para beber los treinta y ocho o cuarenta mil restantes; viendo los campos cultivados como en tiempo del rey Wamba."²⁹

27. Ibid. p. 266.

28. Gonzalez-blanco, Los dramaturgos españoles contemporáneos. Primera serie. Editorial Cervantes, Valencia, 1917, p. 176.

29. Aire de Fuera, p. 219.

Linares Rivas has a wealth of first hand experiences, legal, political and journalistic to draw upon and to reproduce in his writings. His father was a minister and he himself has been congressman and senator. His early studies and activities were law. He has also been an active contributor to newspapers and magazines, especially to El Liberal and Blanco y Negro. He turns to good account his experiences and observations by building them up in his writings in a shrewd, witty, and penetrating manner that gains the attention and interest of the reader of his plays.

CHAPTER V

WOMEN IN BUSINESS

Spain has made rapid progress in the last few years in the freedom of women, in business, and in social circles. Linares Rivas, who heeds the signs of the times, makes numerous references to the freedom of women. Many of the problems connected with women in business are not peculiar to Spain, but apply also to the women in the United States and elsewhere. There is the difficult situation of the woman whose husband dies and who finds herself without an income and compelled in some way or other to support her family; very often it is the unmarried daughter of the family who has to shoulder the responsibilities and provide a home for her mother and sisters. This is a situation that may arise in any country but the background of Spain makes the problem more difficult and requires more courage for the Spanish woman than does the corresponding situation for a woman in the United States.

The play Frente a la Vida treats of this problem in various aspects. Pilar, who is obliged to become the wage earner of the family, finds in her Aunt Florence a worthy advisor. Florencia has be-

come a successful business woman. She is the proprietor of a thriving shop and has worked out original profit sharing plans with her employees. She loves her work and she tells her niece that if she knew the satisfaction of earning money, her own money that she has not had to ask of someone, nor money that had been given to her unwillingly, she would long since have been at work in some work shop or factory or even in the street selling postcards!¹ Florencia thinks everyone should work: "tan arrai- gadas llevo en mí esas ideas de independencia y de trabajo, y tanta felicidad las debo, que todos los que están conmigo las practican..."²

Florencia comes of a rich family and so as a girl she was brought up in luxury, receiving her education in Paris; the family fortune disappeared and she found herself alone in the world with only seven thousand pesetas. She wept a little, then she went to work in a milliner's shop, greatly to the horror and ridicule of her friends. She finally decided to start out for herself to work in earnest: "un día pensé: 'Hay que ser una cosa, una, y esa una serlo de veras.' Y en tal día cogí el sombrero, puse den-

1. Frente a la Vida, p. 97-98.

2. Ibid. p. 95.

tro los moños, los del pelo y los de la vanidad..."³

She and her husband have experimented and tried out original and advanced ideas with the clerks, instituting a profit sharing plan, and thus succeeding in solving the social question as far as they are concerned. At first she and her husband paid the usual wages to their clerks. They had to change clerks constantly, old ones would be going and new ones coming without any particular interest in the business. They finally decided that they would have to change the class of people they had as clerks, they wished employees who were ambitious to become owners. They began with allowing five per cent and now they share with twelve per cent: "Interésales en parte del negocio y verás como ponen interés en la totalidad."⁴ Pilucha follows in her aunt's footsteps. The way seems very hard; she has a mother and two sisters to support; she manages to keep the home going; "...siempre adelante con mi rumbo y con mi carga."⁵

Another successful business woman in Micaela in Quando ellas quieren. She has a shop and is happy

3. Ibid. p. 17-18.

4. Ibid. p. 19.

5. Ibid. p. 137.

in her work and advanced in her business ideas. Other women, not so successful, lack initiative and training for congenial work, they struggle to eke out an existence by doing sewing. Sebastiana in the play La Espuma del Champagne tries to maintain a home for herself and her invalid mother, at times self pity nearly gets the better of her: "¡No puedo más!...Me fatiga el trabajo enormemente y se me nuble la vista...¡Pobre de mí!..."⁶ A similar complaint is made by Mercedes in Frente a la Vida: "El día entero cosiendo y de noche, para no variar, sueño que me cosen a mí." But she and her mother, as does also Pilucha, catch the spirit of their Aunt Florencia. They quote her as they keep steadily on with their work: "¡...el reglamento casero...! ¡Aquí todo Dios trabaja!...¡Aquí nadie gruñe ni pone mala cara...! ¡Hale, a las puntadas, hale!"⁸

Reference has already been made to the mother in the play La Cizaña,⁹ who trains her daughters to earn their own living: if she were rich she would still teach them to work. She knows that riches

6. La Espuma del Champagne, p. 147.

7. Frente a la Vida, p. 101.

8. Ibid. p. 103.

9. See Chapter II, p. 23.

take wings and she has experienced the difficulties of being without support: "aunque me sobrasen los millones, os enseñaría a ganáros la vida. Ya sé cómo se van las fortunas, y ya sé cómo se quedan las mujeres sin amparo."¹⁰

The experiences of women as artists' models are given in the play, La Estirpe de Júpiter. Putting one's self in one's work is necessary for success: the artist complains of the lack of intelligent effort of the models: "Les pido un gesto que salga del alma, y así de pronto, estas pobricellas no saben buscar el alma."¹¹

The effort to acquire independence as an actress through her own talent and work is illustrated by Guadalupe in the play Las Zarzas del Camino. Her only relatives are two young sisters for whose support and education she is responsible.

She recognizes her own talent for the theater and she obtains her first experience in a cabaret, where she sings and dances and recites monologues. Her first business experience brings also the requirement that she mingle with the guests, she is not free to do her work and depart; the program an-

10. La Cizaña, p. 157.

11. La Estirpe de Júpiter, p. 232.

nounces: "Las artistas, al concluir su trabajo, fraternizarán con el público en el salón."¹² She finds herself surrounded by a rough class of people who take for granted that a girl on the stage has a low idea of morality.

Guadalupe considers her stage work as honorable a profession as any other and she sees no reason why she should lower her standards to the level of an easy going public. The years pass and Guadalupe steadily advances in her work until she becomes a leading actress. Difficulties, the "zarzas del camino", beset her continuously as she combines her high standards of living with her high ideals of an actress' life: She exclaims in despair: "Mal haya la mujer que se ve sola!"¹³ This play takes one behind the scenes in the theater where in the story of Guadalupe's life are enacted the conflicting forces and the struggles of life which are mirrored on the stage.

A married woman who becomes interested in business not through necessity but naturally, and who develops a latent talent and instinct for perspicacious business methods is Cecilia, the wife of a

12. Las Zarzas del Camino, p. 9.

13. Ibid. p. 144.

wealthy merchant, in the play Cobardías. Cecilia when studying a fashion journal one day, remarked to her husband that women would be wearing gaberdine that year. Her husband said nothing but opening a separate account for his wife began to buy gaberdine. When the final balance was made, he gave her a ten percent commission of the gaberdine profits. From that day she studied materials, watched the markets, learned how and when to buy and sell, and became a shrewd business woman. Her husband says of her: "Mi mujer me salió un hombre de negocios admirable."¹⁴

To the objections that a woman in business has to meet tiresome people, the answer is made that in social life there are tiresome people who talk and bores who do not talk, and if one can tolerate that type of person through social courtesy, one certainly can endure them in the business world.¹⁵ Exactness in business accounts and amiability in business relations constitute skill in business.¹⁶

One of the characters in the play Frente a la Vida comments upon the changing standards of women:

14. Cobardías, p. 56.

15. Frente a la Vida, p. 23.

16. Ibid. p. 22.

the women used to be like dolls or puppets, and now they are really women, a state of affairs that is not so good for the men, but much more just for the women: "Antes las mujeres no eran mas que muñecas, y ahora ya van siendo mujeres de veras. Es una desgracia para los hombres, pero es una gran justicia para las mujeres."¹⁷

The time honored custom of not allowing Spanish women of a high social class to appear unaccompanied on the street still prevails to a certain extent in Spain, but it is a custom that has been compelled to yield to modern life, and business women feel as free in Spain to go about unaccompanied as do their sisters in the United States.

The question comes up in Frente a la Vida whether the young women should be allowed to attend the University or Normal School unaccompanied by a servant. The family cannot afford to pay a servant for accompanying them. If the girls go alone, they will be subjected to the rude sayings of the people on the streets, but as one of the characters in the play observes, the rude sayings in the street are not any worse than the gossip of high society: "Que vayan solas...;Exponiéndolas en la calle a las gro-

17. Ibid. p. 112.

serias de la clase baja!...¡Pues así que las dicen
 18
 tibas los de la clase alta!"

Antonia, in the play El Abolengo tells of the "piropos" that are said to her on the street, she pays no attention to them and laughs them away:

"...para esta epidemia de los piropos, ya estoy vacunada...Reírme a veces, y siempre pasar de largo."¹⁹

Hardships in the business world are preferable to indifference and resignation to poverty. Women without an independent income are compelled to rise above this submission to poverty, and to make the effort to work: "...no es eso lo que me disgusta, sino la indiferencia, la resignación de borregos para vivir en la pobreza...Lo absurdo es que no trabajan los pobres...por llegar ellos a ricos o siquiera a menos pobres."²⁰

After years of success in the business world, Florencia, in Frente a la Vida, encourages her niece who has become discouraged with business problems. She tells her that joys and sorrows in life should be counted in the sum total as are gains and losses in the business world: "...el balance de penas y

18. Ibid. p. 68.

19. El Abalengo, p. 6-7.

20. Frente a la Vida, p. 13.

alegrías en cada persona, lo mismo que el balance de pérdidas y ganancias en cada comercio, no se debe contar por partidas, sino por totales...¿Sales gananciosa? Pues buen año, aunque el año haya tenido malos días."²¹

Representing modern life, the situations in the plays often revolve around economic problems. Modern life demands a new viewpoint toward money and work. The lower class of women prove by their hard toiling in the fields that they are capable of carrying their share of work and their sisters in high circles of life are beginning to assume their responsibilities through choice and through necessity. These situations are brought out in several plays, need of work for both men and women is emphasized.

The latest play of Linares Rivas deals also with the economic question. In Hilos de Araña, the problem is presented of a young married couple of aristocratic background but without means of support. An engineering enterprise in which the husband was engaged failed. The young wife rises to the occasion, enters the business world, and becomes the successful proprietor of an art shop. There is a review of this play in the Vanguardia of Barcelona,

21. Ibid. p. 122.

which says in part: "El dinero, efectivamente es el eje de esta comedia, borrando los propósitos del autor en relación con el orgullo de los aristócratas empobrecidos, a quienes repugna entrar en la batalla del trabajo, y en lo que respecta al derecho de la mujer para colaborar en el sostenimiento del hogar, en virtud de la traída y llevada emancipación femenina."²²

22. Review by Jose Alsina of the play Hilos de Araña. In La Vanguardia, Barcelona, February 25, 1929.

CHAPTER VI

VARIOUS TYPES

Certain types recur so frequently that one learns to look for their appearance in the different plays; although they may be grouped together in general classes, yet they are so well portrayed that each one manifests his own separate individuality, each one is distinctive and complete.

Notable among these types is the good friend of the family who is always on hand to advise, to give help in difficult experiences, to console in times of sorrow and to rejoice in times of happiness. His own personal interests and life story are subordinated to those of his friends; he serves as a background for the main characters, exerting his influence as a confidant who sympathizes, reproves, and encourages. He understands his friends, and through his unselfish interests and his real love he is able to help them when they cannot see their way clearly to help themselves. He tides them over the dangerous moments when, but for his help, they might be lost. He restores to them confidence

in themselves and their ability to help themselves. Through his moral support expressed in silent sympathy, or in arguments and reasoning, or by financial aid or whatever the individual case may require, he is on hand to help.

Echevarrieta in Camino Adelante saves Augustín from business ruin as he is about to yield to discouragement caused by ingratitude and misunderstanding; he tells Augustín that if others praise...very well; if they bark, let them bark; if they bite, give them a kick. Keep on going, and keep serene; one cannot resolve business problems through bad humor, that adds to one's troubles and prevents the ability to see one's way out of a difficult situation: "¿Qué labrador no ha tenido en su campo una mala cosecha? Y por eso no deja el campo...Estábamos frescos si todos nos dejásemos llevar de una impresión de mal humor para resolver los negocios."¹

Perucho in La Estirpe de Júpiter jokingly refers to himself as everybody's friend: "Esa es mi clasificación oficial: Amigo de todos."² He says that people do not know him by his real name, he thinks he will have his cards engraved with the name

1. Camino Adelante, p. 224-225.

2. La Estirpe de Júpiter, p. 20.

Perucho. He proves to be more than an "amigo de todos" when he devotes himself to one friend in particular who is in special need of his help.

It is interesting to note that this type of friend often grows in dignity and force of character as he forgets himself in his efforts to help others, and so it is with Perucho, when he sees the needs of his friend the artist; an artist who has fallen from a high position in life as a painter of unusual talent and success. Perucho casts aside his flippant manner and puts forth every effort to save his friend who has lost his grip on life. Perucho saves him from moral and physical destruction and restores to him his work, his talent, his inspiration and life itself.³

This type of protector sometimes conceals his goodness beneath a gruff exterior, as does Don Perfecto in Como Buitres, who skilfully brings to light the joker in the will, thereby protecting the rightful heir. At other times this type of good friend tries to avoid an expression of gratitude for favors rendered by accompanying his actions and covering his real thought by a light bantering manner. This type is illustrated by Tio Ignacio in Frente a la

3. Ibid. p. 258-266.

Vida. In the same play there is another variation of this type, Carvajales, who is an old man, simple and unassuming in his tastes, living alone and spending little of his small salary. In times of financial difficulty he aids his friends with his savings, showing a delicacy of feeling as he urges the acceptance of the money in the name of his dead daughter. It is as though she advised him to do it, when she seems to say to him: "Si yo viviera, ¿no te gastarías conmigo todos tus ahorros?...dale algo siquiera de mi parte."⁴

Mateo, the good friend of Braulio in Mal Año de Lobos is always at hand to help with his understanding companionship. He feels Braulio's sorrow as though it were his own. He shows Braulio the example of forgiveness when the repentant Mariblanca returns home. He knows what to say and what to leave unsaid, he is stirred to the depths of his nature in his desire to help Braulio and Mariblanca: "...te daré una palabra de buen amigo, si me das⁵ licencia para entrar en tu alma."

Many other examples of this type occur, too numerous to mention; there is scarcely a play in which

4. Frente a la Vida, p. 132.

5. Mal Año de Lobos, p. 81.

one does not see them. They may be summed up in general as the good friend, man or woman, who sees circumstances more clearly than those who are in trouble and who does not sidestep his obligations, one who gives his help freely and unselfishly.

Another frequent type is that of the idle young man with social aspirations beyond his means. He is usually of a good family; he is snobbish in his attitude and much pleased with himself although his manner of living does not justify his selfcomplacence. He disdains work, it does not occur to him that work may be a pleasure. He is always in need of money and although he expresses a contempt for money, he stoops to dishonorable methods for procuring it. He gambles and he considers his gambling debts as debts of honor, while he cheerfully permits the bills of the tailor and the merchant to remain unpaid. He is usually a "corredor de dotes",⁶ with the ambition or rather the desperate need of marrying a rich girl who will relieve his financial difficulties and who will permit him to continue his dissipated way unmolested. Very often he has some friend, preferably a woman, who is seeking the right wife for him and who arranges the match. Eduardo in

6. El Abolengo, p. 61.

Aire de Fuera does not object to the exceedingly ugly girl who has been chosen for him, her millions will allow him a chance to amuse himself and her ugliness will justify his need for amusement.⁷ It occurs to him, moreover, that a pretty girl might develop defects of character and an ugly one might reveal a good disposition: "Entre la guapa y la fea, para un capricho la guapa; para in eternum quizás la fea, que a la fea le vas descubriendo encantos, y a la guapa tienes que irle viendo ya los defectos."⁸

Before the "corredor de dotes"⁹ succeeds in resolving his financial difficulties by marriage he is often helped by weak indulgent relatives who cannot resist his demands for money.

In Cobardías this type is illustrated by Lucas, twenty-eight years old, who lives with his widowed mother. To meet Lucas' demands for money his mother has pawned all her old family silver and precious heirlooms. Lucas' brother-in-law Joaquín offers to establish him in business and to help him learn the realities of life: "Si quieres enmendarte yo te doy la mano; si quieres seguir de vividor, aprovechán-

7. Aire de Fuera, p. 248.

8. Ibid. p. 248.

9. El Abolengo, p. 61.

dote de las ventajas que encuentres por el mundo y sin tomarte la molestia de levantar ninguna carga, como si la vida se compusiera únicamente de diversiones y de días buenos, y contigo no rezaran los días malos de trabajo y de fatigas...¡no, para eso no te sirvo!"¹⁰

Joaquín points out to Lucas that his life is based on fear, fear of poverty, fear of work, fear of losing so-called social position combined with false pride: he is not a man, he is a puppet:

"...te acomodas a vivir a lo pobre porque te falta coraje para luchar y le tienes miedo a la fatiga y a la constancia con que se logra la riqueza."¹¹

Joaquín recognizes the harm that is done by meeting the demands of extravagant idlers, they will continue in existence as long as they know that someone is at hand to help them out: "...si compliéramos nuestro deber, los pillos serían exterminados. Por muchas y muy provechosas que sean sus rapiños los granujas no viven de sus granujadas, no...¡viven de nuestras cobardías!"¹²

Another method of idle young men for obtaining

10. Cobardías, p. 72.

11. Ibid. p. 73-74.

12. Ibid. p. 99-100.

money is that of resorting to the money lender. The loan shark knows that the young man's relatives will be forced to pay the money in order to avoid disgrace and the notoriety of a lawsuit or imprisonment. This type is illustrated by Raposo in the play Camino Adelante. Clemente, who is not yet of age, borrows eight thousand pesetas from Raposo, for which he gives him promissory notes. Raposo presents the promissory notes to Clemente's older brother Agustin for payment. To Augustin's statement that Clemente is a minor and cannot contract legal responsibility Raposo asserts that if the notes are not paid Clemente will have to go to jail for presenting a false identification slip which certified that he is of age. ¹³ This "cédula falsa" ¹⁴ was furnished Clemente by Raposo himself; the young and the old scoundrels are working together to advance their separate malicious enterprises.

Not all the rich young men are worthless; money may be a power for good, according to the way in which it is used. Linares Rivas presents in the play La Mala Ley the fine young man of noble character who knows how to use his wealth. In times of

13. Camino Adelante, p. 208-210.

14. Ibid. p. 212.

15. La Mala Ley, p. 111.

great stress, Dionisio helps his friends in a wise and tactful manner. As he explains: "Yo soy rico, nada mas que un rico...y un hombre rico, donde hace falta dinero y no acude con dinero inmediatamente, queda ya en una situación muy desairada."¹⁵

In direct contrast to the role of the worthless idler is the splendid type of man or woman who has risen in life through his own efforts to a high position of wealth and social standing. His companions may attribute his success to luck or chance, but it is not luck nor chance, it is the result of years of work and study in preparation for any advancement that may present itself: "La suerte es suerte y es elestar preparado para ella, que si no pasa de largo y no aprovecha."¹⁶

Joaquin Figueredo in Cobardías is a self-made man in the best sense of the word. He tells how he began work at ten years of age, sweeping out a store. The following ten years were passed in work by day and study by night with no time for amusements. A sudden vacancy in the cashier's position gave him a chance to substitute, which he did so well that he was given a permanent position.¹⁷

15. La Mala Ley, p. 111.

16. Cobardías, p. 40.

17. Ibid, p. 39-40.

In the play Fantasmas the protagonist tells of his boyhood days of hard work in a mine: "En mi niñez, cuando otros tienen juguetes y caricias, yo necesitaba ganarme el pan, recibiendo poco pan y muchos golpes."¹⁸

As he progressed he also spent his wages for books and his spare time in study. Success has come to him now, but he does not cease to advance in his work, he keeps up with the times and the new ideas that appear: "...hasta conseguir lo que me propuse no cejé ni un día en el trabajo y en el estudio. Aun ahora, que ya no lo necesito por mi suerte, estoy al tanto de lo que se inventa o se perfecciona en minería."¹⁹

Another man who started hard work when a boy is Braulio who describes in the play Mal Año de Lobos his many years of life on the sea: "...desde poco más de los doce me embarcaron ya para buscarme la vida...la necesidad no entiende de años ni le da pena el destrozar las juventudes."²⁰ Success has come to him now in his establishment of a whaling industry, but his thoughts go back to those early

18. Fantasmas, p. 172.

19. Ibid. p. 173.

20. Mal Año de Lobos, p. 16.

days of hardship and he would gladly live them over again: "¡Con qué gusto volvería a revivir las fatigas, los peligros y hasta los miedos enormes que en más de una ocasión hemos pasado!"²¹

Similar instances of this type occur often in the plays; they show an appreciation on the part of the author of honest work, industry, dignity of character and genuine worth, regardless of race, religion, or social standing.

With success comes leisure. This type of man, who through study and work has risen by his own efforts from poverty and hardships in boyhood to success and financial standing in manhood, usually is presented as appreciating the leisure that comes to him by his enjoyment of continued reading and study. He occupies himself in subjects such as history or astronomy or the formation of collections of art or nature studies.

In the play Cobardías,²² leisure time is spent by Joaquín Figueredo in the reading of history in which he takes great delight.²³ History is alive to him, he talks about the historical characters he m

21. Ibid. p. 36-37.

22. See pages 78 and 81 of this chapter.

23. Cobardías, p. 54, 55, 57.

meets in his reading, revesting them with life and action. Joaquín's study meets with his wife's approval, she wishes her husband to advance in learning: "Que le guste leer e instruirse está muy bien...Joaquín acaba en sabio."²⁴ On the other hand, Joaquín's wife takes enjoyment in spending her leisure in the study of business methods and the market prices of merchandise;²⁵ she expresses her enthusiasm:²⁶ "Es que son interesantísimos!"

Amateur astronomy as a special hobby absorbs Don Francisco's attention in the play El Abolengo; he would like to inculcate in his daughter-in-law's mind his interest for it, he realizes that she needs something with which to occupy her leisure time: "Me agradería que tomase afición a los estudios astronómicos...Es un gran entretenimiento para una mujer."²⁷

Another type which is referred to in many plays is the English governess, the "institutriz" or "señorita dd compañía". She is almost invariably represented as a person of doubtful moral standing,

24. Ibid. p. 55 and p. 60.

25. See Chapter V, p. 67-68.

26. Cobardías, p. 55.

27. El Abolengo, p. 4.

who enters into a home, nominally for the purpose of teaching the children English but who continues her career with a flirtation with the gentlemen of the family. Numerous instances in the plays recount a disrespect toward the foreign governess, usually a mature woman, who responds on her part with a lack of dignity and self-respect leading in some cases to scandal and dismissal.

The story is told of an English governess in the home of a Countess who was there to teach the children but who returned to London taking the Count with her: "...llevándose al Conde...se lo habrá
28
llevado como recuerdo de España."

The "institutriz" is usually referred to as the "Miss", a word which almost immediately becomes a synonym for gossip. In a letter received by one of the characters in the play La Raza reference is made to the Miss who had just arrived in the family; the report was made that she was very pretty, that the children were progressing and that their father in spite of his dullness in the study of languages was also progressing with the Miss: "...que es muy guapa, que los chicos adelantan mucho, y que el mismo, Carlos, a pesar de su torpeza para los idiomas,

29

adelanta mucho con esa Miss."

In most plays merely a reference is made to the "Miss", but in the play, María Victoria, she takes an active part, appearing in person as "Miss Ketty" and becoming the subject of a serious disagreement between Maria Victoria and her husband.

Isolated instances of other types occur in many plays; the village schoolmaster with his mannerisms is described: "Tras de veintisiete años, dándole que le das a las mismas asignaturas, yo digo por hábito y maquinalmente lo que al principio fué un recurso oratorio para conmovera a mis discípulos: 'La zona tórrida, señores,' y entreatro la americana para darles idea del calor. 'El helado Polo, señores'...y tiritito de frío para inculcarles la idea de la baja temperatura...pero comprenderás que a esta distancia no me producen frío ni calor."³⁰

The loquacious and mendacious traveller who brings back from his travels only vague and trivial memories of clubs and persons and a confused recollection of places tells his friends: "He viajado tanto, y he visitado tanto, que es difícil precisar

29. La Raza p. 11.

30. Flor de los Pazos, p. 199.

31
los clubs."

There is also the obsequious flatterer who makes a practice of going about to the different artists' studios to congratulate the receiver of awards only to give himself an opportunity of borrowing money; he is described as the type: "...los que recorren estudios de artistas premiados para felicitarles...Dándoles un sablazo."³²

There is portrayed the frequent type known not only in Spain but in all countries of the homeless woman who lives with friends or relatives, making herself more or less useful, untrained for any independent occupation and fearful of her future. She is usually treated with the utmost love and consideration and is given a real place in the home life. She is grateful for the kindness manifested toward her but it does not satisfy her. She longs for her own home: "Tu madre es como una madre...pero no es mi madre...tus hermanos son muy cariñosos conmigo...pero no son mis hermanos; en ninguna parte podría estar mejor...que lo estoy en vuestra casa...;pero no es mi casa!"³³ Variations of this type occur in

31.. La Fuente Amarga, p. 37.

32. La Estirpe de Júpiter, p. 10.

33. Camino Adelante, p. 149-150.

La Garra, Añoranzas, Aire de Fuera, Nido de Águilas, Fantasmas, and other plays.

The servants in the various plays have no small part, they are likable and very much interested in the affairs of their masters. They feel free to express their opinions and to give advice. Worthy of a careful study is the old family servant Primitiva, who plays an important part in the play, La Garra. Her portrait is painted in a masterly manner, she is one of the outstanding characters in the plays of Linares Rivas. Primitiva feels deeply the troubles that have come to her beloved master and mistress when state and church declare their marriage illegal. Their opinions do not affect Primitiva. She knows that Doña Sol is married to the Marqués, she saw the ceremony with all its churchly pomp: "...muy dignamente casada por el señor Arzobispo y en la Santa Catedral, que lo vi yo." ³⁴ Primitiva declares that love is the greatest thing in the world and that all the laws in the world cannot erase Doña Sol's love for her husband. To Primitiva's viewpoint, the grilling process that Doña Sol has to undergo in the hands of state and church authorities is worse than the fact that her husband had been previously mar-

34. La Garra, p. 97.

ried and divorced. Primitiva feels that the clergy and the lawyers need more spiritual inspiration:

"yo le voy a rezar un poco...a ver si el Espíritu Santo les alumbra los sentidos a esos señores, que a mi parecer le hay más peligro en esa reunión que en las mismas barrabasadas que hizo el señor Mar-³⁵qués."

Somewhat similar in type is the old servant in Mal Año de Lobos. The same shrewd wisdom and loving advice characterize Zoqueira's attitude toward Mariblanca, as does Primitiva's attitude toward Doña Sol. Primitiva is a servant in a home of wealth and nobility, while Zoqueira serves in a humble peasant home, but the same spirit of loyalty, devotion, and tenderness actuates them both.

The servants in the little sketch En cuarto creciente observe the ideally happy marriage of their master and mistress, they too wish similar happiness: "El ver a los señoritos tan contentos y tan felices,³⁶ da mucha gana de casarse."

Not only do the servants know the family secrets, they form accurate judgment of the character of various members of the family. This is noticeable

35. Ibid. p. 83.

36. En Cuarto Creciente, p. 352.

in the conversation of the servants in Como Hormigas, as they discuss the brothers Juan and Gabriel. Tolo admits that Juan is "honrao y honrao y honrao, pero de antipático es antipático y antipático;"³⁷ and Leona agrees: "La verdá es que el señorito Juan no se hace querer mucho."³⁸ But she is philosophical about it as she reflects: "Cada uno tie su genio... y nosotros hemos de sufrir el de los amos."³⁸ Juan is strict and permits no mistakes, he is severe in his attitude; on the other hand Gabriel is lenient in his relations with the servants; "...más generoso y más caritativo y más llano no ha nacio otro hombre como el Grabiél!"³⁹

Minor characters serve to lighten the action and to add humor to the plays. An excellent example of this type is Sebastiancito in Dofia Desdenes. In the time of local difficulties which cause a small war in the vicinity and bring soldiers to their home; Sabastián gathers together the servants, fits them out with arms, and in comic opera style puts them through a fantastic drill, mixing up his orders and producing humorous results.

37. Como Hormigas, p. 122.

38. Ibid. p. 123.

39. Ibid. p. 124.

Ambition to rise from his present position as a servant in Spain to that of administrator of the family property in Cuba is made known by Bonifacio in the play Nido de Águilas: "Pedirle a doña Salome la administración de sus haciendas de ustedes en Cuba."⁴⁰

He tells Filomena when he asks her to marry him and to go with him that she will like Cuba: "ya le he explicado yo que es una Isla, y que el clima es muy perezoso; así que en dando una mano al arreglo de la casa, el resto del día, para no sofocarse, lo va a pasar tumbada en una hamaca."⁴¹

Loyalty of servants is illustrated by Micaela in La Mala Ley who will not allow herself to be bribed by the crafty business man who is trying to get inside information of the family secrets. Micaela is clever enough to see through his insinuations and shows her indignation: "¿Valerme de la confianza y del aprecio en que me tienen para descubrirles?...Si yo lo hiciera un día íbame a quedar con mal sabor para todos los días...si no estuviera ya en negarme de por mí, el que me paguen a escondites una cantidad muy bonita ya me dice bien

40. Nido de Águilas, p. 35.

41. Ibid. p. 36.

lo fea que es la acción en que había de meterme."⁴²

As in every day life there are a few outstanding types; but, as is stated in the play Añoranzas, the majority of people seem to be much alike, talk alike, even the faces are alike, until one catches a glimpse of the real person, the reflection of the soul that brings out the individuality: "...el temor a lo ridiculo es lo que nos obliga a vestir con los mismos trajes, edificar con las mismas líneas y discurrir con las mismas ideas de los que viven a nuestro alrededor...Esa es la razón que haya tantas caras parecidas. No tienen un pensamiento propio y no pueden destacarse;...solamente lo inmaterial, pasando sobre la materia, es la gracia, el encanto, el alma de la fisonomia, lo que distingue una de otras, de toda."⁴³

42. La Mala Ley, p. 103-104.

43. Añoranzas, p. 202-203.

CHAPTER VII

GALICIAN AND CASTILIAN CHARACTERISTICS

Most of the plays have Madrid for a background, but a few take the reader to Galicia, that part of Spain of which Linares Rivas is a native. Aside from the direct interest of the plot the plays with a Galician setting disclose incidentally interesting local situations and customs. In any locality the charm of a place or the lack of it depends on a person's attitude toward it; so in Galicia distinct contrasts are offered; one viewpoint sees the country as backward, gloomy, dead, full of rain and mist, cold, a place to leave as soon as possible; to another viewpoint it represents home, love and work, a place full of hope and beauty.

In the dramatization of Pérez Lugín's novel La Casa de la Troya one reads of the stranger in Santiago, who tells of his first impressions there, of the rain, the loneliness, the silence and sadness: "Aquella noche horrenda, de lluvia torrencial, de soledad...y lo que no era silencio era ¹tristeza!"

1. La Casa de la Troya, p. 25.

The streets were dark, the calendar said there was a moon and although it was raining, they went by the calendar and the street lamps were not lighted. The voice of the night watchman kept calling the hour and adding each hour: "¡...y lloviendo!"² Then in the deep silence of the night came another voice, begging for prayers for someone who had died.

Months later, the same person expresses satisfaction at being in Santiago, as he has learned to love it: "...ya estimo un poco las grandiosas bellezas de Campostela y comprendo y me llegan las hermosuras de estos campos y de este cielo."³ A native Galician praises his country and its charm: "Es la tierra, que se le entre a uno por el alma."⁴

Reference has been made to the "ambiente" of Santiago, portrayed in La Garra, as "una ciudad que llora siempre con el agua de sus lluvias;"⁵ and this is the first impression it makes on Jacobo in the play, Flor de los Pazos, when he returns from America to take up his work as head of the family in the old home: "...me quejo de estas nieblas, que mañana

2. Ibid. p. 25.

2. Ibid. p. 43.

4. Ibid. p. 43.

5. La Garra, p. 86.

y tarde caen sobre la casa y dan frío en el cuerpo
 ...y en el alma." ⁶ He, too, learns to look at it
 differently when love for his work and his surround-
 ings gives a different outlook. He follows the ad-
 vice of a friend; "...mira el alma más que con los
 con
 ojos, porque esto que ves, con sol o con nubes, con
 penas o con alegrías, esto es la casa, esto es la
 tierra y esto es el amor con que ella te recibe." ⁷

Beggars, numerous in all parts of Spain, are
 conspicuous in Galicia; they bestow their blessings
 on those who give alms and their curses on those who
 refuse: "...la limosna, que es obligación de rico y
 nos la deben...y los que son duros de entraños no
 encontrarán nunca el camino de su salvarse..." ⁸

It is not only beggars who are superstitious;
 in all classes of people, high and low, superstition
 in Galicia is apt to make its appearance in count-
 less strange beliefs. Evil spirits are supposed to
 leave when one passes through a certain hole in the
 wall: "...van a buscar otro cuerpo de persona que
 esté en pecado." ⁹ After the evil spirits leave,

6. Flor de los Pazos, p. 266.

7. Ibid. p. 277.

8. La Casa de la Troya, p. 74.

9. Cristobalón, p. 9.

certain persons who believe themselves free from them show their gratitude by returning each year on the knees; "Para dos años van que hizo el milagro, y por tres más he de venir arrodillada desde Altamira... Mis rodillas lo saben, que en llaga vienen; pero el corazón rebrinca de contento."¹⁰

A touching scene is enacted as the women help each other through this hole which is entered with difficulty; they are serving strange gods but they have a longing to do something which will help them out of their troubles. They are ignorant, but they have faith in what they are doing and they obtain a certain comfort from it. They think at times that they see strange apparitions, and they suffer accordingly; but one who does not believe as they do, should be gentle and considerate with those who are suffering from their delusions:

"-----Es gana de intranquilizarse con un dolor imaginario.

"-----¿Usted no cree en aparecidos ni en trasgos?

"-----No, señor...¿y usted?...

"-----Yo tampoco, pero creo en los que creen

10. Ibid. p. 11.

...y tengo lástima por ellos."¹¹

Those of higher intelligence should try to help the superstitious out of their false beliefs which come to the imagination in different forms built up by local custom or tradition based on ignorance. A poor woman is driven out of town and stoned because her presence is supposed to bring disaster. They consider her a witch, they believe that if one touches her, demons run from her to the other person; to avoid touching her when they drive her from the town they take sticks or poles and push her along with them: "¡No vayamos a formar puente de carne y me pases un demonio de los tuyos!"¹²

Superstitious beliefs kill friendship, if a friend is supposed to have demons enter him, he is regarded as dangerous and no one goes near him, he seems to possess superhuman strength when he is filled with demons and his presence brings disaster or death.

The devil is supposed to go about loose on Saturdays, one must not mention his name. "We must keep him at bay, he is a deceitful enemy; Saturdays are dangerous as then he is given permission for

11. La Garra, p. 49.

12. Cristobalón, p. 30.

evil deeds. We must ward him off by prayer, do not mention him, it is Saturday and he is going about loose!"¹³ The witches also fly about on Saturday night: "Una que llamaban la Diablona...y a ésa la vieron volar un sábado de noche...La vió el sacristán,¹⁴ que aun vive y lo cuenta."

Other superstitions are similar to those of many countries; such as the barking of a dog that announces a death, the bad omen of spilling the salt, of putting a key upside down in a door, and of speaking of ghosts in a sickroom...¹⁵"Manuela habla de los trasgos y de los fantasmas como si fueron de la familia."¹⁶ It is a "mal agüero" if a bat flies into a room by day, but it brings no harm if it comes in by night; the owls are supposed to cry like children; the bells ring of their own accord; a two-tailed lizard, flattened out on a white stone is supposed to write the lottery numbers.¹⁷

Not only are the simple folk superstitious, they are skeptical also, when they are told of modern im-

13. La Garra, p. 6.

14. Cristobalon, p. 63-64.

15. See p. 204-204, Flor de los Pazos.

16. Ibid. p. 203-204.

17. Ibid. p. 237-238.

provements in large cities; such things are to them synonymous with evil. They are told of the tall buildings in Vigo and the elevators, such things are to them heresy: "Por Vigo le andan muchos judíos de esos protestantes."¹⁸

Fate is also read in the stars and the rainbow: "...los astros no mienten,..tu suerte la tengo muy leída en el más seguro de los signos...n'o arco d'a vella..."¹⁹ Destiny is not only foretold by women considered as witches; the person who is slightly mentally unbalanced or foolish also seems at times to possess a supernatural instinct for prophesy. Pastoriza in Flor de los Pazos represents this type. She is looked upon as harmless and she is treated with consideration as she wanders about in her gentle manner, singing plaintive Galician songs. She comes to one in trouble and advises him to reach out and take handfuls of health or money or sun...whatever may be lacking to him: "Y así a todos y para siempre, salud, dinero, sol...y a puñados...nadie perdió nada por una humildad, y muchos se perdieron por una soberbia."²⁰

18. Ibid. p. 232.

19. Cristobalón, p. 65 and 67.

20. Flor de los Pazos, p. 264-266.

The custom of Galician peasants who go to South America to earn a few hundred dollars returning later to Spain to be married is referred to in several of the plays. Through common law marriage they already have wives and children; the purpose of the work in South America is to earn needed money for the establishment of a home. The common law marriage is considered binding and on their return to Spain the legal ceremony takes place. They give their word to each other, "apalabrar" they call it. "Apalabrar" is to them a sacred union, promising later the regular ceremony.

In the play Cristobalón, this leave taking is described. The wives who are left behind are called "viudas de vivo."²¹ Advice is given to one of the men who has a wife and two children that he ought to be married before going: but he answers that it is not the custom and it would not be considered right, but the girls do not need to worry, the men will all return and fulfil their word: "No le es costumbre... y puede que no estea (sic) bien mirado... Pero que ninguna pase miedo, que todos volvemos y cumplimos."²²

However, if something comes up to displease the

21. Cristobalón, p. 17.

22. Ibid. p. 18.

pseudo-husband, he feels free to dissolve the "apalabrar". A girl tells a man who is about to leave for Buenos Aires that she considers herself bound to him; he answers arrogantly, that he has seen many of those apalabrar unions broken, and that he had had the intention of returning but that now he is going and he does not intend to return: "De esos ligados visoltarse muchas... Pensaba en irme a la América y volver para cumplir contigo pero ya me voy y no vuelvo."²³ Protest on the part of the girl is of no avail, she considers herself his wife but she has not the protection of a legal ceremony and she is helpless.

A gracious and charming old family custom in a Castilian village is revived on unusual days of solemnity or festivity; in all the homes of that part of the country, in wealthy families and in the poorer ones, on these special days of great significance in the family, the sons and daughters do the serving instead of the servants: "...la tradición de nuestra familia, como todas las del campo, quiere que en los días muy señalados no sean los familiares quienes nos sirvan a la mesa, sino los propios hijos, y cuanto más crecidos y de más posición social, más hermosa me

23. Ibid. p. 96-97.

parece tal costumbre."²⁴ This custom brings the family closer together, making the family life more intimate and the festal day more significant.

Many references are made in the plays to the well-known customs of the "novio" at the "reja"; the purchase of the bride's wedding outfit by her fiancé; and to the formal "día de la petición de la boda" when the parents of the young man ask the parents of the young lady for her hand in marriage.

Galician and Castilian dialect add atmosphere and naturalness to many plays. The play, Cristobalón, offers an interesting study of Galician dialect. A few of the expressions are:

as pernas (las piernas)
 non fagas (no hagas)
 aqueles homes (aqueellos hombres)
 dea (dé)
 no pelearvos (no os peléis)
 muller (mujer)
 filliña (hijita)
 dispensaredes (dispensad)
 Jasús (Jesús)
 tes (tienes)
 ¿quen chame? (¿quién llama?)

24. Como Hormigas, p. 147.

deixate (déjate)

non e mais (no es más)

Many student expressions as well as dialect are used in La Casa de la Troya; as, for example, "un choyo" for "a date" as the modern American slang has it. In La Casa de la Troya a "choyo" is defined as: "Un arreglito, Le es término local."²⁵ Other dialectical forms in La Casa de la Troya are:

veño (vengo)

lonxe (lejos)

caravel (clavel).

A few words illustrating the Castilian dialect as found in Como Hormigas are:

agüelo (abuelo)

mermures (murmures)

palca (parece)

Grabiel (Gabriel)

naide (nadie)

endenantes (antes)

dende (desde).

25. La Casa de la Troya, p. 26.

CHAPTER VIII

PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE

Moral teaching appears in the plays of Linares Rivas, but it is not forced nor unduly obvious, it develops naturally and consistently as the characters manifest their individual traits; the lessons of life come in some form to each one although the solutions are not always reached in the plays.

Human faults are exposed; the evils of slander and idle gossip are condemned; idleness, vanity, greed, selfishness, hypocrisy, and vicious qualities are denounced as unworthy and needless, resulting in dissatisfaction and unhappiness. The opposite qualities of virtue, expressed in honesty, work, good humor, love, kindness, right thinking and goodness are upheld.

The author uses satire and cynicism at times in order to turn the searchlight on evil traits; but he himself is not cynical nor satirical, he has a kindness of nature, he sympathizes with his characters as they face life in its many complexities, he tries to help them with their problems, but the choice of action is left to each individual in the plays; even though the author has created them, he is impersonal and im-

partial.

In the play, Mal Año de Lobos, an old family servant expresses her observations on life and its lessons as she advises a young girl to be careful to choose the right course. She says that one is free to choose his own manner of living, but that he should consider well what his choice is to be; she uses the simile of selecting the right cart in which to make the journey of life; ... "no se trata de vivir únicamente, sino de acomodarse en el carro que nos lleve... La vida se anda, .. pero de andarla bien a ir la andando mal hay muchas vidas de diferencia... y el andarla bien o andarla mal no es cuestión más del carro en que te subas... ¡mira bien donde subas, míralo bien!"¹

In the rustic tragedy, Cristobalón, the rivalry of adjoining villages causes the men to use lies to incite the wrath of the leaders in each village, thereby causing a feud that ends in death; "...y si fueron buenos, un poco buenos solamente, no dirían lo que no saben y va en daño de otro."² Unintentional slander and idle gossip are rebuked in the same play in the story of a poor woman and her efforts to throw off the charge of witchcraft that has been fastened upon

1. Mal Año de Lobos, p. 14.

2. Cristobalón, p. 73.

her. The word runs from one to another that her touch and her words bring evil and she is practically isolated from society. She is stoned and insulted wherever she appears. By helping others she succeeds somewhat in lifting the curse of witchcraft and she teaches the lesson of sympathy: "No hay como el dolor de uno mismo para comprender el dolor de los otros."³

The truly noble person is not apt to hear nor to be affected by slander although it may be flying around him; or if he does hear it, he pays no attention to it and knows how to protect himself against it until it ceases. In the play, La Cizaña, there is a warning against letting slander enter the thoughts: "Cierra la puerta a los envidiosos y los oídos a las murmuraciones, si quieres vivir tranquilo."⁴ Slander cannot harm, if one knows that there is no truth in it: "...no te olvides de que la calumnia no hace daño por quien la propala, sino por quien la cree."⁵

The ability to laugh is an asset that aids in adjusting oneself rightly to life. Laughter is a weapon that destroys slander: "Contra las murmuraciones

3. Ibid. p. 74-75.

4. La Cizaña, p. 200.

5. Ibid. p. 138.

y las habillas no hay más que un arma: ¡la risa!." ⁶
 Not only is laughter a weapon against gossip, it also serves to lighten the heaviness of daily tasks, it teaches the right values of life; if one thinks he cannot laugh, he can make the attempt and actually learn to laugh. In the play Frente a la Vida, Pilucha is nearly overwhelmed by bitterness and disappointments; Florencia commands her to put on a happy countenance and to laugh at the very circumstances that cause sorrow: "¡Hale, hale, a poner la cara alegre! ¡Hale a reír!" ⁷

It is not only those who find life hard who can learn to laugh; many good people well situated in life go about heavily and solemnly. They defeat their own aims by their lack of a sense of humor and by their inability to take life gaily. This is pointed out in the play El buen Demonio. A man who is in trouble goes to a friend for help and advice. The friend tells him to watch himself and when he is on the point of reproving and criticizing his friends to change his ill-naturedness into laughter. That is difficult at first, but with practice it becomes easier, until finally the habit of laughter becomes

6. Ibid. p. 136.

7. Frente a la Vida, p. 135.

a part of oneself and fills the place occupied before by anxiety: "La risa te llevó...a otra cosa distinta de lo que era tu pensamiento. Viene la risa en una hora de angustia y el corazón dolorido la rechaza; vuelves a reír y vuelve a rechazar; vuelves de nuevo y ya el corazón la soporta, y tiene juntas, dentro de sí, a la pena y a la risa...y a la otra vez ries, el corazón se rie también y la pena huye avergonzada."⁸ Genial laughter combined with humility and gentleness clears up the atmosphere, it has a real value, it gives one the upper hand in life, it enables one to control life, it is a priceless gift: "Si la humanidad supiera el don inapreciable que es la risa, más reiría...y de más cosas."⁹

This transforming helpful laughter is not the mocking laughter of the scorner; that is a different kind of laughter that receives its rebuke and that must change itself into dignity and appreciation of noble deeds. In the play Lady Godiva, on hearing of the agreement of the villagers to protect Lady Godiva and to allow her to pass unseen through the village,¹⁰ the mocking Bufón changes into a noble and

8. El buen Demonio, p. 81, 82, 83.

9. Ibid. p. 102.

10. See Chapter I, p. 10-11.

and dignified person:

"Mas cuando vemos que la gente ha hecho
 algo noble sin lucro ni provecho,
 es tan grande el asombro y la sorpresa,
 y de tal modo el acto nos complace,
 que ya el bufón las bufonadas cesa...
 y dentro del bufón un hombre nace,
 que aquello que vió hacer, aquello hace."¹¹

The call of duty which involves an immense personal sacrifice is illustrated in Camino Adelante; a young man's career and professional opportunities are given up, when his father's death requires him to take over the burden of saving the family fortunes and of assuming the responsibility as head of the family. He does this, only to meet with ingratitude and dishonesty on the part of his relatives, but he keeps steadily on, overcoming discouragement: "Por mi camino voy, y de él no deben separarme odios ni amores."¹²

This subject of shouldering family responsibilities is also treated in Flor de los Pazos; the wandering son has returned from South America willing to assume the role of head of the family; he

11. Lady Godiva, p. 170.

12. Camino Adelante, p. 225.

finds, however, conditions so different from the idealistic recollections of his boyhood point of view that he is about to leave in disgust, he cannot adapt himself, everything seems "mezquino" to him, the big old house is gloomy, the people seem sad and the climate depresses him. But gradually reason and love expressed by friends and relatives have their influence, his discontented feelings change, he learns to look at his surroundings with affection and in proportion to his love for the fields and his home they respond to him and he finds that he receives from his work what he puts into it of himself: "La tierra es mujer honesta...¡Agrádate en lo que ella tiene y ama lo que ella es!...¡Ya oirás en tu corazón la voz de la Tierra que responde!"¹³

Although the wanderer in the play Flor de los Pazos had to learn his lesson of readjustment after his return to the old home, on the other hand the prodigal son in the play Como Hormigas obtained a philosophical aspect of life in distant lands; he returns with a mature outlook. He finds that time adjusts the difficult crises of life; he recovers his serenity by asking himself what he will think

13. Flor de los Pazos, p. 272.

tomorrow of this present difficulty; perhaps he will make fun of himself and laugh at the trouble: "... todo se reduce a darle a cada momento su valor y a no exagerar las consecuencias de nada."¹⁴

The simple everyday incidents make a large part of life, the effort to make the best of one's circumstances helps to improve them. Paz in Como Buitres does not want to add to her sorrows by appearing gloomy; she opens the windows, lets in the sun and air and puts flowers everywhere: "...unas flores en el pecho, otras flores por la casa, y he mandado abrir las ventanas para que entren el aire y la luz. ¡Son alegrías chiquirriticas y un poco infantiles, pero al menos, cuando las cosas grandes vengán haciendo daño, las cosas pequeñas nos darán su pequeñísima alegría!"¹⁵

Little things in everyday life and familiar surroundings have their hold upon persons. The things one uses daily are not as inanimate as they appear as one puts his affection in them; this "apego a la vida y a las cosas" is referred to in several plays; for example, in Mal Año de Lobos; "En las vidas tranquilas, el alma de las cosas es

14. Como Hormigas, p. 173.

15. Como Buitres, p. 84.

un pedazo más del alma de las personas."¹⁶

In Flor de los Pazos preparations for the return of the prodigal son show him that the very walls of the house and the furniture as well as the persons will speak to him of their delight in receiving him as their lord and master; and in Como Hormigas not only does the return of the prodigal son evoke joyous preparations for his arrival, he also shows his thoughtfulness by returning laden with gifts for all; he says a returning member of the family should not come back empty-handed no matter how trivial the gifts may be: "¡Pobre del que llega con las manos vacías!...Si no llevan presentes, por humildes que sean, parecerá que no lleva afectos."¹⁷

Another aspect of thoughtfulness for others; thoughtfulness not unmixed with a shrewd idea of looking out for one's own welfare is presented in Cada uno a lo suyo, where it is stated that the surest way to obtain one's wishes is to adapt oneself to the convenience of others: "...el primer egoísmo, el más práctico, es el de respetar el egoísmo de los otros. Para ir cada uno a lo suyo no hay camino más firme que el de la misma conveniencia de los ce-

16. Mal Año de Lobos, p. 77.

17. Como Hormigas, p. 164.

de los demás." ¹⁸

The idea of the welfare of others and its resulting happiness to oneself is expressed in a more lofty tone in La Mala Ley, which affirms that one's happiness is not complete if it does not add to the happiness of others: "...la felicidad de uno mismo no es completa jamás si no se le añadetambién la felicidad de los que nos rodea." ¹⁹

A mistaken belief that poverty and low standing constitute a virtue brings a rebuke from Clavito in the play named for her, when she asserts that well-being is an aid to happiness, and that nothing succeeds like success: "Alla gente se la quiere por lo que demuestra y por lo que tiene...Y cuanto más se reuna de posición, de figura, de bondad y de talento, ²⁰ más cerca se anda de eso que llaman amor y suerte."

Instances of the ability to come back and make good when one has seemingly lose his hold on life occur in several plays. In the play La Fuente Amarga, a man's exemplary life shows practical repentance of a past crime which is called by some a crime and by others a mistake. Opposing forces are at work to as-

18. Cada uno a lo suyo, p. 61.

19. La Mala Ley, p. 39.

20. Clavito, p. 517.

sert their claims; on the one side hatred and a desire for vengeance, on the other, faith and love. A written confession of the crime is kept as a threat and used as a weapon, but instead of accomplishing their evil aims, they only serve to make stronger faith and love which eventually triumph in the struggle: "¡Nosotros con nuestro amor y usted con su venganza, vamos todos adelante! Y al fin triunfaremos nosotros, que para algo el amor es pasión que tiene nombre de virtud."²¹

The lost ability to work is regained in the life of the artist in La Estirpe de Júpiter; inspiration, love and life return to him after bitter lessons of disillusionment in the vanities of mistaken pleasure.

Human weakness shows itself in petty sins; as, for instance, the scheme to get more money leads a woman to tell her husband that her coat cost nearly double its actual value; the extra amount she keeps as "sisa para otras cosillas."²² She considers it lawful to fool him, one price or another, "...se lo traga igual."²³

Another instance of foolish pettiness is the ruse

21. La Fuente Amarga, p. 118-119.

22. Aire de Fuera, p. 262.

23. Ibid. p. 262.

adopted to avoid obligations by feigning illness. An illustration of this is the mother in Frente a la Vida, who does not understand the need of discussion of serious financial and family difficulties. At the mention of them she takes to her bed and adds to the difficulties by requiring members of the family to wait upon her instead of attempting to do her part in thinking out ways and means to improve conditions. Her refrain is: "¡...no puedo hablar de estas cosas, no puedo...me pongo mala!"²⁴ The day comes when her husband turns against this wail of "yo me pongo mala" and, shaking her, exclaims: "Pues si te pones mala, creo yo también que por primera vez en mi vida te sacudo contra la pared."²⁵ Needless to say, the shock proves a tonic that cures permanently her nerves.

In the play Toninadas, the prince who wishes to avoid responsibility and lead a life of idle pleasure learns a lesson from a clown in a circus. The prince does not want to sacrifice his life and his liberty, he does not want to renounce what he calls "youth's beautiful follies". The clown tells him that the lad who works in a mine renounces his youth. The clown himself who rehearses by day and performs at night

24. Frente a la Vida, p. 53.

25. Ibid. p. 85.

gives up his liberty, and for this sacrifice receives in return a mere pittance as wages and a wretched existence, a prince who sacrifices himself receives the reward of serving his country and proving useful to humanity.²⁶ Moreover, no matter in what station in life, one has some one over him, someone higher in authority; a king has over him in authority the cares²⁷ of the land and the purposes of Heaven.

Children should not be told sensational stories nor see films that deal with criminals. Stories of ghosts and witches frighten the imagination of a small boy and do not let him sleep: "En cuanto apagan la luz o cierra los ojos, ya estáviendo por los rincones aparecidos y duendes."²⁸ But they are not so bad as moving pictures which offer other demons for childhood: The film of crime may frighten children or worse still teach them how to become criminals: "El demonio de la película sangrienta, que los aterroriza, y el de la película policiaca, que los enseña el encanto y la utilidad de ser grandes ladrones."²⁹

In the play Conde de Valmoreda, weakness of char-

26. See Tononadas, p. 254-255.

27. Ibid. p. 192.

28. Fantasmas, p. 171.

29. Ibid. p. 171.

acter and excessive alcoholism bring about the protagonist's downfall: "...el maldito vino; y el maldito
30
de mi mismo! me traicionaron!"

In La Mala Ley, Cristina reflects that one's real relatives are not necessarily those of the same blood; if they are cruel and ungrateful, they may be nominally relatives but not in reality. The real relatives are those who express love; those who live and suffer together and enjoy each other: "¿Crees que los tuyos son los que llevan tu misma sangre y los que nacieron de ti?"...Tuyos son nada más los que te quieren...pero ¿los otros? Aunque lleven tu misma sangre, tu misma cara...si no te quieren no son tuyos...Y aun no basta querer...Han de estar cerca de ti, vivir contigo, disfrutar y padecer contigo
31
..."

Cristina observes moreover, that one talks about the troubles of others and the ingratitude of their relatives and accepts it as part of their history, but if such things come in one's own experience, if they come right home to one's own family, one cannot believe them possible: "...lo sabemos de otros, lo comprendemos en otros...y cuanto se presenta en uno

30. El Conde de Valmoreda, p. 102.

31. La Mala Ley, p. 70-71.

de los nuestros nos asombramos de que sea posible...
 En los otros, si; en los nuestros, no!"³²

A plea for the possibility of friendship between men and women is expressed by Asunción in the little sketch Lo Posible: "Si a los hombres pudiéramos vencerlos de que no es obligatorio hacer la corte a todas las mujeres, ¡cuántos hombres encantadores habría!"³³

Reverence and gratitude to God are a vital part of the thinking of the best characters in the plays. They turn to God for help and they praise Him for blessings. Like a Psalm are these words: "¡Dios está conmigo y con los míos! ¡Alabado sea su nombre mientras me quede voz y aliento!...cargados de años y de bienes, mi boca se complace en dar las gracias a quien tantos favores me concede."³⁴

Although Linares Rivas is impartial and impersonal in his writings, keeping himself in the background, yet a perusal of his plays reveals the author himself. As one reads between the lines, one finds that the most interesting character of all is Linares Rivas himself; one grasps his manner of thinking and

32. Ibid. p. 72.

33. La Posible, p. 398.

34. Como Hormigas, p. 137 and pl. 148.

his outlook on life. He has an enjoyment of life as he observes it in the many aspects disclosed to him. In his own station in life, he belongs to the so-called high society but it can readily be seen that he is an understanding friend of those of low degree; to him people are people, of whatever station or rank in life. His democratic attitude removes class distinction: he recognizes people for their true value; evil traits are satirized and condemned, good qualities are appreciated and encouraged.

His early legal training, his continued literary activities, his political and journalistic experiences, his efforts for reform and for bringing about that which is right in so far as he has the ability to see it give his writings a definite power, a sense of authority. They come from the pen of one who is honest and sincere. Moreover, Linares Rivas is in many respects a prophet; true it is that he adapts himself to present conditions in Spain and to his sphere of life but his thinking manifests a far-seeing state of mind and a broad point of view.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Manuel Linares Rivas y Astray was born February 3, 1867 at Santiago in Galicia, Spain. He comes of a good family and his father Aureliano Linares Rivas was noted as a lawyer and journalist, a lecturer and writer of legal treatises. His father was also active in political life. La Coruña honored the father of Linares Rivas for his good works accomplished in that city by erecting a statue of him and by naming a street and certain public works for him.

The illustrious father of Linares Rivas died March 31, 1903, the same night of the première performance of his son's first theatrical production.

Manuel Linares Rivas studied law and at first followed it actively as a profession, but he early began to write, and gradually ceased his legal activities to devote his attention to literary pursuits. His knowledge of law serves him to good advantage in the background of some of his plays, notably La Garra, Como Buitres and La Mala Ley.

He is active in political life and has served in the Cortes at Madrid as congressman and senator. Influence of his political life may also be observed in several of his plays, especially El Ídolo.

That Spain recognizes the remarkable literary

ability of Linares Rivas is proved by the fact that he has the honor to be a member of the Royal Spanish Academy.

Linares Rivas is best known as a dramatist, but he is also a writer of tales and novels and he is also experienced in the field of journalism.

Madrid serves as the setting for most of his plays, but many plays take the reader to Galicia, his native district, which he portrays so admirably; he has written many of his plays in La Coruña.

In Linares Rivas introductory note to the complete edition of his works he says in part: "No estoy muy convencido de la gran necesidad, presente ni futura, de que mis obras aparezcan coleccionadas; pero un poquito de orgullo cede siempre a un poco de súplica, y yo no he sabido resistir al amistoso requerimiento de los que me dicen que puede ser útil esta labor de recopilación literaria.

Y aquí empieza la colección completa de mis obras de teatro y de las novelas y cuentos ya publicados, amén de las que sucesivamente aparezcan, si logro vida y salud, que ya no espero curarme del crónico vicio de escribir."¹

The date of the first performance of a play by

1. Introduction to Obras Completas, Vol. I, p. 5.

Linares Rivas was, as stated above, March 31, 1903, and the last one at this present writing was in February, 1929.

A new play by Linares Rivas is received with marked interest not only because of the literary and dramatic merit it may offer, but also because its author usually brings into his plays questions of vital interest regarding the modern social welfare of his country.

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