

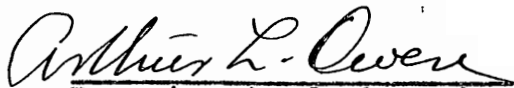
WILLIAM DEAN HOWELLS' RELATION  
TO  
SPANISH LITERATURE

by  
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Foreword.

William Dean Howells was the most important influence in American fiction during the last quarter of the nineteenth century; he had more effect upon the tone, quality, and tendencies of American novels than any other person. It is said that the influence of Tolstoy, Valdés, and Galdós is transmitted to American letters through Howells. It is my purpose to ascertain to what extent this statement is true, by making a study of Mr. Howells' knowledge and appreciation of Spanish literature, and particularly to study the influence upon him of Valdés and Galdós. To show the significance of Mr. Howells' evaluations, I have frequently quoted from his works. I wish here to express my appreciation to Miss Mildred Howells for her kindly interest and for information concerning Howells' knowledge of Spanish literature. I also wish to extend my thanks to Mr. Julio Valdés for suggestions offered, and to express my sincere gratitude to Professor Arthur L. Owen to whom I am deeply indebted for continuous cooperation in this work.

Marjorie Steele Patterson

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction - - - - -	1
I Cervantes and <u>Don Quixote</u> - - - - -	20
II Palacio Valdes, Armando - - - - -	45
III Valera, Perez Caldós, Pardo Bazán, Blasco Ibañez-114	
Conclusion - - - - -	157
Appendix A - Spanish Books read by Howells and date of reading - - - - -	162
Appendix B - W. D. Howells' reference to Spanish literature - - - - -	166

## WILLIAM DEAN HOWELLS' RELATION TO SPANISH LITERATURE.

### Introduction

Coexistent with the rapid progress made in science, and with the industrial awakening, and social and philosophical expansion throughout the world during the second half of the nineteenth century, it was only natural that the tendencies in novel writing should be in the direction of realism and character analysis. In all fields of human endeavor there was shown the desire to break away from the conventional and romantic, and to seek the truth from a close observation of natural phenomena. This scientific tendency in literature was manifested by the study and portrayal of things as they are and a withdrawal from the old theory that the end of art was the creation of beauty, a theory which caused the sordid facts of life to be omitted or idealized.

In America, the principle realists were Howells himself, who is by general consent the foremost representative of the school, and who may be looked on as the creator of the American novel of character as distinct from the novel of incident; Henry James with his subtle psychology and his peculiar style; Hjalmar Hjorth Boyesen, and Paul Leicester Ford. However, realism in American literature was not evolved from a study of the American people but imported to the United States from the continental writers who were already engaged in the search for the fundamental truths of life.



Howells himself expresses this clearly in a speech given at a banquet celebrating his seventy-fifth birthday.

"We began our national career by having no literature of our own. Our reading, except in the very noble political writings of the fathers, came from England, and then, as the rift between the two countries deepened and widened, it began to come from the European Continent. . . . Some of you may not know this, but I know it, for I am of the generation that lived it and I would fain help to have it remembered that it was from the French masters, the Continental masters, we studied to imitate nature, and gave American fiction the bent which it still keeps wherever it is vital."(1)

In 1884, Edward Gosse visited Howells in Boston and later wrote:

"My recollection of these charming relations includes the memory of endless talks about the art of writing, with the theory of which Howells was at this time particularly occupied. It was the period of what was called 'Naturalism' and Zola had just published his violent attack on the sentimentalists called Les Romanciers Naturalists. Howells was shaken by this wind of doctrine, and talked incessantly of how 'reality' was to be brought into fiction."(2)

Howells had insight sufficient to see that there was a rich field in America for the realist. With a sure sense

(1) Literary Recollections

N. Am. Rev. 195:550-8 April '12

See also: Reminiscences of an Evening with Howells  
N. Am. Rev. 212:1-14 July '20

(2) Gosse, Edward: The Passing of W. D. Howells  
Living Age July 10, 1920

for the finer elements of the national character, his genius found a way to seize upon and present them in high relief, and with a certain detachment bred of cosmopolitan culture.

No one was reading Tolstoy in those days, no better model than Turgeneff could be found, at first, but this was hardly "naturalism" in Zola's sense, which phase Howells shunned.

A kindly, democratic, unaffected, modest, humorous, healthy soul, with a rare combination of rugged virility and extreme refinement--he has consistently stood for "Reticent Realism". He has ridiculed what he is fond of calling "romantic rot", and his own novels have been a silent but emphatic protest against "mentioning the unmentionable".(3)

In 1886, Howells wrote:

"There is probably no chair of literature in this country from which the principles now shaping the literary expression of every civilized people are not denounced and confounded with certain objectionable French novels, or which teaches young men anything of the universal impulse which has given us the work, not only of Zola, but of Turgeneff and Tolstoy in Russia, Bjornson and Ibsen in Norway, Valdés and Galdós in Spain, of Verga in Italy. . . . Presently these young critics will have seen the new truth in larger and larger degree; and when it shall have become the old truth, they will perhaps see it all."(4)

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(3) Phelps, W. L.: Essays on Modern Novelists 1918  
Howells pp. 56-81

(4) Editor's Study Harper's 72:486 '86  
Also My Literary Passions 1891 p. 207

"Since Zola," wrote Howells, "a world of continental art has offered itself to us. Masterpieces have come to us from everywhere--from Norway, from Russia, from Poland, from Spain, from Italy, from Portugal--and I know no higher joy than to recognize that our best work is a response in form and spirit to that best kind which these masterpieces exemplify."(5)

Although Howells proclaims Tolstoy as his greatest literary passion and acknowledges his influence upon his own life and writings, this influence has been ethical rather than aesthetic. Howells does say that "Tolstoy has helped me as much as one merely human being can help another", (6) but he also says:

"Artistically, he has shown me a greatness that he can never teach me. I am long past the age (7) when I could wish to form myself upon another writer, and I do not think I could now insensibly take on the likeness of another."(8)

Thus, although critics seem to agree (9) that Howells' career has two rather distinct periods and that the break was caused largely by Tolstoy, the influence was upon his social consciousness, not upon his style and standards of art. The style and methods of both periods were the same; the difference was in the matter of social problems and res-

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(5) N. Am. Review June '20

(6) My Literary Passions p. 183.

(7) Fifty-four years old.

(8) My Literary Passions p. 108.

(9) Phelps, W. L.: op. cit. pp. 56-81.

Bass, A. L.: Social Consciousness of W. D. Howells  
New Repub. 26:192-4 Ap. 13 '21

possibilities.(10) Whereas in the first period his novels are accurate representations of American characters and their ways of living as he observed them, in the latter he is concerned with characters as they meet their responsibilities or as people and conditions affect them.

Next to Tolstoy, among his literary idols, Howells places Armando Palacio Valdés (1853-) and Pérez Galdós (1845-1920) leading representatives of the realistic school of Spanish literature, and we find it said that "In the United States many realistic writers sprang up in the wake of the propaganda which William Dean Howells under the influence of Tolstoy, Valdés and Galdós, carried on for many months in Harper's Magazine."(11)

It is, therefore, my purpose, by a comparative study based upon representative novels of Howells and these Spanish realists, and by a study of Howells' autobiographical and critical work, to ascertain to what extent Howells is influenced by Valdés and Galdós in his realistic propaganda and to show to what degree the Spanish literature which he knew has been a source of inspiration in Howells' literary development. It may be that by showing, step by step, Howells' knowledge of, love for, and appreciation of Spanish literature and culture, something may be done to correct certain prejudices against the literature of a race, "which," says Howells, "we have always tried to believe so

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(10) First period: 1871 and middle eighties.  
Second period: 1887 to his death.  
He first read Tolstoy in 1887.

(11) Professor P. J. Lennox: Realism and Naturalism in Literature. Ency. Americana Vol. 23, p. 258.

atrocious, and which a few years ago we were trying so hard to destroy and humiliate in a war of inexorable aggression."(12)

Since, in the study of the novels, my work must be suggestive rather than exhaustive, I have chosen those novels which the majority of critics have agreed to be his best; those novels of Valdés, Galdós, Cervantes and other Spanish writers which Howells has read and which seem to have particularly impressed him; and those books of Howells written when the influence, if any, might be supposed to be fresh. From some three hundred critical articles written for the Editor's Study and the Editor's Easy Chair, departments of Harpers, I have chosen all those pertaining to literature, especially Spanish literature;(13) and from the Atlantic Monthly those literary reviews and essays which throw light upon his early literary development.(14)

I shall attempt to do what no critic of Howells seems to have done; viz: to give in a biographical sketch the general development, step by step, of his knowledge of and interest in Spanish. Among some thirty articles(15) on Howells it is surprising to find scarcely any mention of Spanish. In most cases it was completely ignored and this too, when these writers had quoted from the very books in which Howells has so greatly emphasized his passion for things Spanish; this phase of influence in his literary

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(12) Easy Chair  
Harper's 123:958-61 1911

(15) Bibliography

(13) Editor's Study  
Dec. 1885-Mar. 1892

(14) Atlantic Monthly 1872-1881

development was passed over as something of too small importance to be considered, whereas every one dwelled on his love for Tolstoy and the latter's influence upon him.

For the position of Howells as Dean of American letters see (16).

Howells was born at Martins Ferry, Ohio, in 1837. His father was a journalist and Howells in turn became typesetter, reporter, and editor of various newspapers and periodicals. His ability as a writer was not developed by any formal school, correspondence or otherwise.(17) Although he held degrees from five colleges--Harvard, Yale, Columbia, Oxford, and Adelbert--he was not a college graduate.(18) He received some schooling in the little Ohio town where his father published a country newspaper, but

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(16) Phelps, W. L.: Howells as a Novelist  
Yale Review 10:99-109 0 '20

Nation 110:673 May 22 '20

Erskine, John: Bookman June '20

Lit Digest 65:53-7 June '20

Chau 48:267 '07

Mark Twain: Harper's 113:221-5 June '06

Ency Americana 23:258

Bass, A. L.: op. cit. p. 4

Phelps, W. L.: " " "

Bibliography

(17) Lit Digest 65:53-7 June 12 '20

(18) Vedder, Henry C.: American Writers of Today 1895  
p. 44

the training which started him on his literary career was received in the printing office. The other great influence upon his early years was his wide reading. He has given us a pleasant picture of his literary interest in Columbus in My Literary Friends and Acquaintances, and in Years of My Youth. In My Literary Passions and in Heroines of Fiction we can see how the boy and the man selected the poets and novelists that fostered the innate preference for the truth and for the real presentation of it, which remained his constant quality.(19)

He says in My Literary Passions:(20)

"I have never greatly loved an author without wishing to write like him. I have no reluctance to confess that, and I do not see why I should not say that it was a long time before I found it best to be as like myself as I could, even when I did not think so well of myself as of some others.

"I hope I shall always be able and willing to learn something from the masters of literature and still be myself, but for the young writer this seems impossible. He must form himself from time to time upon the different authors he is in love with,--but when he has done this he must wish it not to be known, for that is natural too."

The printed word took early hold upon his imagination and, before he was thirteen, it is said (21) he had exper-

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(19) See Arthur Hobsen Quinn. Cent 100:674-81 '20

(20) See p. 16

(21) Lit Digest 65:53-7 June 12 '20

imented secretly with almost every known literary form.

"My life was full of literature to the bursting" he wrote in the story of his boyhood.(22)

His love for Spanish may be said to have begun even before he was able to read to any extent.

As a boy, his father told him of Cervantes and "I loved him with a sort of personal affection, as if he were still living and could somehow return my love.

"His name and nature endeared the Spanish name and nature to me so that they were always my romance, and to this day I cannot meet a Spanish man without clothing him in something of the honor and worship I lavished upon Cervantes when I was a child."(23)

At the age of seventy-six Howells writes:

"Just when this passion began in me I should not be able to say; but probably it was with my first reading of Don Quixote in the later eighteen-forties and of course, I read that incomparable romance, not only but sole of its kind, in English.(24)

"It was in the log cabin loft, near Dayton,--at the age of twelve--that I first read Longfellow's Spanish Student which I found in an old paper copy of his poems in one of the barrels, and I instantly conceived for it the passion which all things Spanish inspired in me.

"The Hero's rogue servant, Chispa, seemed to me, then and long afterwards, so fine a bit of Spanish character that

(22) Years of My Youth pp. 71-2

(23) My Literary Passions p. 19

(24) Familiar Spanish Travels p. 3, 1913



I chose his name for my first pseudonym when I began to write for the newspapers, and signed my legislature correspondence for a Cincinnati paper with it."(25)

It was at about the same time that Howells read Irving's Conquest of Granada, of which he later wrote:

"I really cannot say whether I loved the Moors or Spaniards more. I fought on both sides; I put both these princes into the first and last historical romance I ever wrote. I have no idea what they did in it, but as the story never came to a conclusion it does not greatly matter."(26)

In 1851, at the age of fourteen, Howells became a reporter in Columbus, perhaps one of the youngest cubs on record, and developed into a good newspaper man. He was an expert typesetter and had a valuable gift of being able to do dual composition, literary and typographical, at the same time. It is said that he once set up a Spanish story into English type, translating as he went.(27)

Howells familiarized himself with a wide range of authors in several modern tongues (28), of which Spanish was one of his favorites and which he began studying at an early age.

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(25) My Literary Passions p. 31.

(26) Id. p. 24.

(27) Lit Digest 65:53-7 June 12 '20

(28) Years of My Youth p. 100  
Read Spanish, French, German, Italian and knew some Latin and Greek.

He writes: "I could not rest satisfied with the Spanish-English Grammars I had (14 years); I was not willing to stop short of the official grammar of the Spanish Academy and sent to Madrid for it.(29)

"I do not remember how I felt my way from it to such reading of the language as has endeared Spanish literature to me. It embraced something of everything: literary and political history, drama, poetry and fiction."(30)

Of a diary begun in 1851 Howells wrote: "I could trace the books I was reading that winter of 1851-2, in the varying style of the record, but the diarist seems to have been shy in naming them. . . the record fills somewhat less than a fourth of the pages; the rest are given to grammatical exercises in Spanish, which the diarist was presently beginning to study."(31)

"I did not try to speak or write the modern tongues; to this day (1916) I could not frame a proper letter in Spanish, German, French or Italian, but I have a literary sense of them all. I wished to taste the fruit of my study before I had climbed the tree where it grew, and in a manner I did begin to gather the fruit without the interposition of the tree. Without clear knowledge of their

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(29) My Literary Passions p. 106

(30) Familiar Spanish Travels 1913 p. 3

(31) Years of My Youth 1916 p. 71.

grammatical forms, I imitated their literary forms. I cast my poetry (32), such as it was, into metres of the Spanish poets I was reading, and without instruction or direction I acquainted myself with much of their literary history. I once even knew from the archaic tragedy of her name who Ines de Castro was; I do not know now.(33)

"But after all," he says at fifty-four, "I am not a Spanish scholar and can neither speak nor write the language. I never got more than a good reading use of it, perhaps because I never really tried for more. But I am very glad of that, because it has been a great pleasure to me, and even some profit, and it has lighted up many meanings in literature which must always have remained dark to me. Not to speak now of the modern Spanish writers whom it has enabled me to know in their own homes as it were, I had even in that remote day a rapturous delight in a certain Spanish book which was well worth all the pains I had undergone to get it. This was the famous picaresque novel Lazarillo de Tormes whose name so familiarized itself to my fondness that now as I write it I feel as if it were an old personal friend whom I had known in flesh."(34)

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(32) 15 years old.--In Ashtabula, 1851-2

(33) Years of My Youth. p. 100

(34) My Literary Passions. p. 106

In My Literary Passions, Howells made full mention of the books he was reading during the winter of 1851-2 in the little village of Ashtabula.

"At the same time I was reading Spanish, more or less, but neither wisely or too well. I would not read any Spanish author with English notes. I would have him in an edition wholly Spanish from beginning to end, and I would fight my way through single handed, with only such aid as I must borrow from a lexicon."(35)

A few years later (36): "I could now master Spanish fairly well and I was sending to New York for authors in that tongue.(37) I dare say my letters were pedantic and filled with a simulated acquaintance with all Spanish literature."

Some of the books sent for were from the collection of Spanish authors published by Baudry in Paris, and "they were in saffron-colored paper covers, printed full of a perfectly intoxicating catalogue of other Spanish books which I meant to read, everyone, sometime."

Among these books were:

Moratin's: Origins of the Spanish Theatre

Conde's: Dominion of the Arabs in Spain

A volume of Spanish Dramatic Authors

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(35) My Literary Passions p. 70

(36) Id., p. 170

(37) To Messrs. Roe Lockwood and Son.

In 1855 his father was a clerk in the legislature at Columbus.(1856-7) Howells himself was legislative correspondent for the Gazette. At this time he was doing a wide range of reading of all literatures including the Spanish; of this last, particularly the plays of Lope de Vega and the old ballads.(38)

It was while he was doing newspaper work in Columbus that his first real writing began, and that his first book, "Poem of Two Friends" appeared.(39) The next year his period of travel and extensive writing began when he was given the Consulship at Venice (1861-1865). This was for Howells the realization of a dream, for he wanted to travel, and "particularly to learn the Italian and French languages, as he has already learned the Spanish".(40)

For awhile after returning to this country he lived in New York, contributing regularly to The Nation and occasionally to the New York Tribune and Times. But this was only a short period, as in 1876 he went to Boston as Associate Editor of the Atlantic Monthly, of which he was Editor from 1872 until spring of 1880, when he resigned to have more time for writing. The Contributors Club, one of the most attractive departments of the Atlantic, was started by him.

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(38) My Literary Passions. p. 104

(39) 1860

(40) Lit Digest. 65:53-7 June '20

The literary notices which he wrote for the Atlantic during these years of preparation would show, had he written nothing else, how strong and steady was his drift toward his mature creed. "Not alone by deliberate thought nor even by the stimulus of polemic was he carried forward, but rather by a natural process of growth (41), which, more than an artistic manner, included his entire philosophy.

"From his childhood he had been intensely humane, sensitive and charitable. This humaneness now revealed itself as a passionate love for the truth of human life and a suspicion, a quiet scorn, of those romantic dreams and superstitious exaggerations by which less contented lovers of life try to enrich it or escape it."(42) "Oh! Poor Real Life" he wrote in his first novel (43), can I make others share the delight I find in thy foolish and insipid face?"

But Howells had not yet shaped his final philosophy, which grew up within him after he had left Boston for New York in 1886 and had established his connection with Harper's Magazine. Again light falls upon his growth from the monthly articles which he wrote for the Editor's Study (1886-92). Chiefly discussions of current books, concerned with poetry, history and biography nearly as much as with fiction, these essays "remarkably encouraged

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(41) See chapter on Valdés pp. 64-67, 76-79.

(42) Trent, W. P. and others: A Short History of American Literature 1922 p. 264

(43) Their Wedding Journey 1871 p. 67

the growth of realism in America and most eloquently commended to native readers such Latin realists as Valdés, Galdós, Verga, and the great Russians Turgenief, Dostoievsky and Tolstoy."(44)

While editor of this critical department, he reviewed some twenty-two Spanish books, works of Valdés, Galdós, Pardo Bazán, and wrote of Cervantes and some Spanish dramatists.(45)

In 1911, another dream was fulfilled when Howells went to Spain, and in 1913 he published Familiar Spanish Travels which gives a very interesting account of this trip.

"I was now going to see, for the first time, the city where so great a part of my life was passed, and in this magical air the two epochs were blent in reciprocal sensation . . . In that dignified Spanish train I was a man of seventy-four crossing the last barrier of hills that helped keep Granada from her conquerors, and at the same time I was a boy of seventeen in the little room under the stairs in a house now practically remoter than the Alhambra, finding my unguided way through some Spanish story of the vanished kingdom of the Moors."(46)

Howells was a hard and steady worker at fiction and turned out for a great many years an average of two books a year.(47) During his literary career of sixty years

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(44) Trent, W. P. and others: op. cit. p. 267

(45) See Appendix A.

(46) Familiar Spanish Travels. Chapter I.

(47) Lit Digest 65:53-4 June 12 '20

between his earliest book and his latest, his published works number more than one hundred, exclusive of some three hundred Editor's Study and Easy Chair essays, and some one hundred and eight literary reviews and essays in the Atlantic Monthly. Aside from his many Editor's Study and Easy Chair criticisms and evaluations of Spanish works and of Spanish literature in general, Howells has accomplished the following in connection with Spanish literature:

Early in his youth he wrote some poems on Spanish themes which "no one wanted".

Somewhat later he made a translation of Un drama nuevo by Estebanez (sic)(48), under the title of Yorick's Love, for his friend the actor, Lawrence Barrett. In another version (49) Barrett had seen it fail in New York but its failure left him with the lasting desire to do it himself.

"It proved quite successful and went, as the enthusiastic Barrett used to say, 'with a shout', though I had hurt it all I could by some additions and adaptations; and though it was a most ridiculously romantic story of the tragical loves of Yorick, and ought to have remained the fiasco it began, still it gained Barrett much money and me some little."(50) This translation was never published.(51)

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(48) Apparently Howells did not know that the real name of the Spanish author is Tamayo y Baus.(1829--) who at times uses the pseudonym of Joaquín Estébanez.

(49) The Daly version, 1874; so called because it was presented at Daly's Fifth Avenue Theatre, New York; the author of the version is unknown.  
See: Fitz-Gerald-Hill Edition of Un drama nuevo 1924 Introduction p. XXVII

(50) Familiar Spanish Travels 1913 p. 95

(51) Stage Encyclopedia by Reginald Clarence, pub. 1909  
Id: gives no date of Howells version.



Un drama nuevo, considered one of the great plays of all literature, has been edited (1924) for classroom use by John D. Fitz-Gerald, Ph.D., Litt.D., University of Illinois, and John M. Hill, Ph.D., Indiana University.(52) I was unable to ascertain the date of the Howells version until the reading of the Introduction to the above edition. The most definite information that Professor Fitz-Gerald was able to find concerning the date was from Mr. Otis Skinner, who appeared with Barrett and played the part of Edmund, and who, although unable to find a copy of the theatre bill for the first time Barrett performed the play, places the date as early as 1876 and not later than 1879.(53)

Professor Fitz-Gerald's uncertainty as to the basis of the Howells version--whether or not he had a Spanish original, and about the substitution of Heywood for Shakespeare--leads one to believe that he had not seen Howells' reference to this play in 1913, from which I have already quoted and in which he says:

"A Spanish friend, now dead, but then the gifted and eccentric Consul General at Quebec, got me a copy of the play from Madrid, and I thought there was great reason in a suggestion from another friend that it had failed because it put Shakespeare on the stage as one of its characters; but it seemed to me that the trouble could be got

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(52) <sup>1</sup>Introduction by Professor Fitz-Gerald.  
Notes and Vocabulary by Professor Hills.

(53) Introduction p. XXXV.

over by making the poet, Thomas Heywood, represent the Shakespearian epoch. I did this and the sole obstacle to its success seemed removed."(54)

In 1896, Howells wrote an introduction to Mary J. Serrano's translation of Galdós's Doña Perfecta.

In 1909, Professor J. Geddes, Professor of Romance Languages in Boston University, used this introduction as a reference and quoted from it in his introduction to the same author's Marianela.

In 1913, appeared Familiar Spanish Travels giving an account of his trip through Spain in 1911.

In 1918, the poem Friends and Foes (55) appeared with Spanish translation in the Panamericana.(56)

In 1919, Howells wrote a critical introduction to Mrs. W. A. Gillispie's translation of "La Catedral" by Blasco Ibanez.

Last but far from the least of his accomplishments is his abridgement of Charles Jarvas' translation of Don Quixote made during the last years of his life and of which I will speak in the chapter on Cervantes. This was edited in 1923 with an introduction by Miss Mildred Howells.

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(54) Familiar Spanish Travels 1913 pp. 94-5

(55) Collaborated with John J. Piatt.

(56) M 27:39-9 My '18

CHAPTER I.

CERVANTES.

It is a matter of sentiment as well as of logic that I begin this study with a chapter on Cervantes. For it was with the greatest of all Spanish writers that Howells first learned to love the literature of Spain; with his love for Don Quixote which began as a boy and which was still undiminished, when, at eighty-three, he made his abridgement of Cervantes' great novel.

Howells has spoken of the book and the author so often in his various writings that it is possible to gather from them some idea of his love for both, and his reasons for it. This I am trying to do by giving in the order of their writing, the accounts from his different works, beginning with My Literary Passions.(57)

"I recall very fully the moment and the place where I first heard of Don Quixote, while as yet I could not connect it very distinctly with anybody's authorship. . . . The moment was at the close of a summer's day just before supper, which, in our house, we had lawlessly late, and the place was the kitchen where my mother was going about her work, and listening as she could to what my father was telling my brother and me and an apprentice of ours, who

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(57) My Literary Passions pp. 17-22

was like a brother to us both, of a book that he had once read. We boys were all shelling peas, but the story, as it went on, rapt us from the poor employ, and whatever our fingers were doing, our spirits were away in that strange land of adventures and mishaps, where the fevered life of the Knight truly without fear and without reproach burned itself out. He told us at random of the attack on the windmills and the flocks of sheep, of the night in the valley of the fulling mills with their trip-hammers, of the inn and the muleteers, of the tossing of Sancho in the blanket, of the island that was given him to govern, and of all the merry pranks at the duke's and duchess's, of the liberation of the galley-slaves, of the capture of Mambrino's helmet, and of Sancho's invention of the enchanted Dulcinea, and whatever else there was wonderful and delightful in the most wonderful and delightful book in the world. I do not know when or where my father got it for me, and I am aware of an appreciable time that passed between my hearing of it and my having it. The event must have been most important to me, and it is strange I cannot fix the moment when the precious story came into my hands; though for that matter there is nothing more capricious than a child's memory, what it will hold and what it will lose.

"It is certain my Don Quixote was in two small, stout volumes not much bigger each than my Goldsmith's Greece, bound in a sort of law-calf, well fitted to withstand the

wear they were destined to undergo. The translation was, of course, the old-fashioned version of Jarvas, which, whether it was a closely faithful version of Cervantes or not, was honest eighteenth-century English, and reported faithfully enough the spirit of the original. If it had any literary influence with me the influence must have been good. But I cannot make out that I was sensible of the literature; it was the forever enchanting story that I enjoyed. I exulted in the boundless freedom of the design; the open air of that immense scene, where adventure followed adventure with the natural sequence of life, and the days and the nights were not long enough for the events that thronged them, amidst the fields and woods, the streams and hills, the highways and byways, hostelries and hovels, prisons and palaces, which were the setting of that matchless history. I took it as simply as I took everything else in the world about me. It was full of meaning that I could not grasp, and there were significances of the kind that literature happily abounds in, but they were lost upon my innocence. I did not know whether it was well written or not; I never thought about that; it was simply there in its entirety, its inexhaustible opulence, and I was rich in it beyond the dreams of avarice.

"My father must have told us that night about Cervantes as well as about his Don Quixote, for I seem to have known from the beginning that he was once a slave in Algiers, and

that he had lost a hand in battle.(58). . . .

"I believe that I carried the book about with me most of the time, so as not to lose any chance moment of reading it. Even in the blank of certain years, when I added little other reading to my store, I must still have been reading it. This was after we had removed from the town where the earlier years of my boyhood were passed, and I had barely adjusted myself to the strange environment when one of my uncles asked me to come with him and learn the drug business, in the place, forty miles away, where he practised medicine. We made the long journey, longer than any I have made since, in the stage-coach of those days, and we arrived at his house about twilight, he glad to get home, and I sick to death with yearning for the home I had left. I do not know how it was that in this state, when all the world was one hopeless blackness around me, I should have got my Don Quixote out of my bag; I seemed to have had it with me as an essential part of my new career."

He continues, telling of his Aunt's surprise upon looking at the book and how as he stood there writhing in bashfulness, he had the sense that in her eyes he was a queer boy; and how he took the book off to his room, "where the confidential friend of Cervantes cried himself to sleep.(59)

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(58) See: Introduction, p. 9

(59) Literary Passions p. 21.

"The reading of Don Quixote went on throughout my boyhood, so that I cannot recall any distinctive period of it when I was not, more or less, reading that book. In a boy's way I knew it well when I was ten, and a few years ago, when fifty, I took it up in the admirable new version of Ormsby, and found it so full of myself and of my own irrevocable past that I did not find it very gay."

It was in 1888 that Howells read the Ormsby version of Don Quixote of which he wrote at that time: (60)

"I had my doubts, my reserves, where once I had given it my whole heart without question, and yet, in what formed the greatness of the book it seemed to me greater than ever. I believe that its free and simple design, where event follows event without the fettering control of intrigue, but where all grows naturally out of character and conditions, is the supreme form of fiction; and I cannot help thinking that if we ever have a great American novel it must be built upon some such large and noble lines."

This is what Howells says in 1888 and in 1920 we find critics proclaiming Howells the writer of the great American novel. (61)

As a practical illustration of this theory of the proper composition of the supreme form of fiction and of a decided Cervantic influence upon a work of Howells, we may

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(60) Harpers 76:480-1 '88

(61) Arthur Hobsin Quinn: The Art of W. D. Howells  
Cent 100:674-81 S'20

go back as early as 1871 when Their Wedding Journey, his first novel, appeared. It is almost a diary rather than a novel and is his first tentative attempt at a story; but it was quite successful and determined his career as a writer of fiction. Howells here outlined his theory of fiction and repeated more than once the description of what he believed to be the proper material for treatment.(62)

"Ah! poor Real Life, which I love, can I make others share the delight I find in thy foolish and insipid face?"(63)

"It was in all respects an ordinary careful of human beings, and it was perhaps the more worthy to be studied on that account. As in literature the true artist will shun the use even of real events if they are of an improbable character, so the sincere observer of man will not desire to look upon his heroic or occasional phases, but will seek him in his habitual moods of vacancy and tiresomeness. To me, at any rate, he is at such times very precious; and I never perceive him to be so much a man and a brother as when I feel the pressure of his vast, natural, unaffected dullness. Then I am able to enter confidently into his life and inhabit there, to think his shallow and feeble thoughts, to be moved by his dumb, stupid desires, to be dimly illumined by his stunted aspirations, to share his foolish prejudices, to practise his obtuse selfishness. Yes, it is a very amusing world, if you do not refuse to be amused; . . . "(64)

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(62) Ibid

(63) Their Wedding Journey 1871 p. 67

(64) Id. p. 86



"We shall never have a poetry of our own till we get over this absurd reluctance from facts, till we make the ideal embrace and include the real, till we consent to face the music in our simple common names, and put Smith into a lyric and Jones into a tragedy. The Germans are braver than we, and in them you find facts and dreams continually blended and confronted." Continuing, Howells gives an illustration of some Germans singing love-songs and quoting from their romantic poets, yet not forgetting and "corporeity in which their sentiment was enshrined; they fed it heartily and abundantly with the banquet whose relics we see here."(65)

"It was this willingness to find poetry in things around them that kept his life and Isabel's fresh, and they taught their children the secret of their elixir."(66)

In this novel not only does "event follow event without the fettering control of intrigue", but it has touches of truly Cervantic flavor as the following shows:(67)

"In a crowded hotel in Quebec there seems to be difficulty in obtaining rooms and confusion resulting from having assigned the wrong rooms and in Colonel Ellison and Basil March having found a member of a theatrical troop in

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(65) Their Wedding Journey p. 110

(66) Id. p. 293

(67) Id. pp. 274-7

the room they were to occupy. Readjustments follow and everyone prepares to settle down for the night.

"'Leave your door unlocked,' said Ellison to the ladies.

"This prayer uttered at parting outside the room, was answered from within by a sound of turning keys and sliding bolts, and a low thunder as of bureaus and wash-stands rolled against the door.

"'The ladies are fortifying their position,' said the Colonel to Basil, and the two returned to their own chamber. 'I don't wish any intrusions' he said, instantly shutting himself in; 'my nerves are too much shaken now. What an awfully mysterious old place this Quebec is, Mr. March! I'll tell you what: it's my opinion that this is an enchanted castle, and if my ribs are not walked over by a muleteer in the course of the night, it's all I ask.'

"In this and other discourse recalling the famous adventure of Don Quixote, the Colonel beguiled the labor of disrobing, and had got as far as his boots, when there came a startling knock at the door. With one boot in his hand and the other on his foot, the Colonel limped forward.

"'I suppose it's that clerk has sent to say he's made some other mistake,' and he flung wide the door, and then stood motionless before it, dumbly staring at a figure on the threshold,--a figure with the fringed forehead and the pale blue eyes of her whom they had so lately turned out of that room.

"Shrinking behind the side of the doorway, 'Excuse me, gentlemen,' she said with a dignity that recalled their scattered senses, 'but will you 'ave the goodness to look if my beads are on your table? O thanks, thanks, thanks!' she continued, showing her face and one hand, as Basil blushing advanced with a string of heavy black beads, piously adorned with a large cross. 'I'm sure, I'm greatly obliged to you, gentlemen, and I hask a thousand pardons for troublin' you,' she concluded in a somewhat severe tone, that left them abashed and culpable; and vanished as mysteriously as she had appeared.

"'Now, see here,' said the Colonel, with a huge sigh as he closed the door again, and this time locked it, 'I should like to know how long this sort of thing is to be kept up? Because, if it's to be regularly repeated during the night, I'm going to dress again.' Nevertheless, he finished undressing and got into bed, where he remained for some time silent. Basil put out the light. 'O, I'm sorry you did that, my dear fellow,' said the Colonel; 'but never mind, it was an idle curiosity, no doubt. It's my belief that in the landlord's extremity of bed-linen, I've been put to sleep between a pair of table-cloths; and I thought I'd like to look. It seems to me that I made out a checkered pattern on top and a flowered or arabesque pattern underneath. I wish they had given me mates. It's pretty hard having to sleep between odd

table-cloths. I shall complain to the landlord of this in the morning. I've never had to sleep between odd table-cloths at any hotel before.'

"The Colonel's voice seemed scarcely to have died away from Basil's drowsy ear, when suddenly the sounds of music and laughter from the invalid's room startled him wide awake. The sick man's watchers were coquetting with some one who stood in the little courtyard five stories below. A certain breadth of repartee was naturally allowable at that distance; the lover avowed his passion in ardent terms, and the ladies mocked him with the same freedom, now and then totally neglecting him while they sang a snatch of song to the twanging of the guitar, or talked professional gossip, and then returning to him with some tormenting expression of tenderness.

"All this, abstractly speaking was nothing to Basil; yet he could recollect few things intended for his pleasure that had given him more satisfaction. He thought, as he glanced out into the moonlight on the high-gabled silvery roofs around and on the gardens of the convents and the towers of the quaint city, that the scene wanted nothing of the proper charm of Spanish humor and romance, and he was as grateful to those poor souls as if they had meant him a favor. To us of the hither side of the footlights, there is always something fascinating in the life of the strange beings who dwell beyond them, and who are

never so unreal as in their own characters.

"In their shabby bestowel in those mean upper rooms, their tawdry poverty, their merry submission to the errors and caprices of destiny, their mutual kindness and careless friendship, these unprofitable devotees of the twinkling-footed burlesque seemed to be playing rather than living the life of strolling players; and their love-making was the last touch of a comedy that Basil could hardly accept as reality, it was so much more like something seen upon the stage. He would not have detracted anything from the commonness and cheapness of the mise en scène, for that, he reflected drowsily and confusedly, helped to give it an air of fact and made it like an episode of fiction. But above all, he was pleased with the natural eventlessness of the whole adventure, which was in perfect agreement with his taste; and just as his reveries began to lose shape in dreams, he was aware of an absurd pride in the fact that all this could have happened to him in our commonplace time and hemisphere. 'Why,' he thought, 'if I were a student in Alcalá, what better could I have asked?' And as at last his soul swung out from its moorings and lapsed down the broad slowly circling tides out in the sea of sleep, he was conscious of one subtle touch of compassion for those poor strollers,--a pity so delicate and fine and tender that it hardly seemed his own but rather a sense of the compassion that pities the whole world."

But to continue Howells' discussion of the Ormsby version of Don Quixote, I offer:

"The new translation of Don Quixote, by Mr. James Ormsby, brings Cervantes back into the literary world again as what the politicians call a 'live issue' and his excellent introduction to the novel, his very interesting sketch of Cervantes' life, and his admirable essay on the master's masterpiece, supply fresh material for a bibliographical, biographical, and critical estimate of the whole case. The version recalls in flavor that of Jarvas, which has so long been the accepted English version; but this is proof that Jarvas had imparted the true 'tang of the wine-skin' to his work, rather than that Mr. Ormsby has caught his tone: the tone must be the tone of Cervantes, and the latest translator does full justice to the faithful predecessor whom he is destined to supplant. We must trust him when he says that all other English versions are worthless, for none other have survived; and without having compared his own with the Spanish, we may safely believe that he has conscientiously reported it. Those who like can still read Cervantes in the original, though after reading Mr. Ormsby's essay they can hardly do so with the comfortable belief that its involved, careless, and rambling style is a testa de lingua: for that they had perhaps better go to any good modern Spanish novel. He has probably made a much better translation for us than more than two or three

of us could make for ourselves; and after reading the novel nearly all through again in Mr. Ormsby's English, we feel no very lively regret for Cervantes' Spanish."(68)

This shows that Howells' knowledge of the language was that of an amateur, for while there are carelessnesses, they form an infinitesimal part of the whole and scarcely constitute a blemish on the sustained excellence of his style.

In a lengthy discussion of the book(69), he writes that it is a relief to hear Mr. Ormsby say "that the story of The Curious Impertinent is dull, characterless, that many of the episodes are tiresome; and that the after-thought of that mechanism of Cid Hamet Ben-Engeli, with his Arabic manuscript is a direful bore." But he heartily agrees with Ormsby that they cannot be cut out "for they are important as a part of literary history, if not literature; they mark a fashion, a stage development, and belong properly enough with the crudity of much of the horseplay which deforms the exquisite beauty of the author's conception of Don Quixote and Sancho Panza."

Here and in following excerpts Howells seems unduly concerned about the instances of horseplay which were characteristic of the times which Don Quixote shows, and adds to this remark with a long comparison of the humor and horseplay of Irving and Cervantes.(70)

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(68) Harpers 76:480-1 '88

(69) Ibid.

(70) Ibid. Also: Cervantes and Mark Twain  
Harper's 80:320 '90

The preceding extracts show his reaction at the age of fifty to the book he loved throughout his boyhood. We see that although now he is assailed by some doubts and questions about the things he once enjoyed so wholeheartedly, nevertheless, viewing the book through the broader judgment of experience, he still retains his old love for Cervantes.

"As for the central figure, Don Quixote himself, in his dignity and generosity, his unselfish ideals, and his fearless devotion to them, he is always heroic and beautiful, and I was glad to find in my latest look at his history that I had truly conceived of him at first, and had felt the sublimity of his nature. I did not want to laugh at him so much, and I could not laugh at all anymore at some of the things done to him. Once they seemed funny, but now only cruel, and even stupid, so that it was strange to realize his qualities and indignities as both flowing from the same mind. But in my mature experience, which threw a broader light on the fable, I was happy to keep my old love of an author who had always been almost personally dear to me."(71)

As we proceed with the chronological development of Howells' interest and knowledge of things Spanish, we find that after Quixote, his interest was next centered in Irving's Conquest of Granada.

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(71) Harper's 76:480-1 '88.

Also: My Literary Passions p. 21.



"I have told how Cervantes made his race precious to me, and I am sure that it must have been he who fitted me to understand and enjoy Irving, who now stayed me on Spanish ground and kept me happy in Spanish air, though I cannot trace the tie in time and circumstance between Irving and Cervantes. The most I can make sure of is that I read the Gonquest of Granada after I read Don Quixote, and that I loved the historian so much because I had loved the novelist much more. Of course I did not perceive then that Irving's charm came largely from Cervantes and the other Spanish humorists yet unknown to me, and that he had formed himself upon them almost as much as upon Goldsmith, but I dare say that this fact had insensibly a great deal to do with my liking."(72)

"I had taught myself to read Spanish, in my passion for Don Quixote, and I was now, at the age of fifteen, intending to write a life of Cervantes.(73) Although I have since had some forty odd years to do it in, this purpose has never been fulfilled. I taught myself the language, or began to do so, when I knew nothing of the English grammar but the prosody at the end of the book. Time seemed interminable then and I thought there would be enough of it for me in which to read all Spanish literature; or, at least, I did not propose to do anything else."(74)

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(72) My Literary Passions p. 23

(73) Years of My Youth. p. 84

(74) My Literary Passions p. 25

Later we find Cervantes serving him as an illustration in the Editor's Study, where he quotes from Armando Palacio Valdés, in contrasting Don Quixote with Fersiles y Sigismunda.(75)

In 1890 he mentions Cervantes in the Editor's Study, in a comparison of Don Quixote with Mark Twain's A Connecticut Yankee at the Court of King Arthur.(76) The comparison itself seems to have a suggestiveness of Cervantic style in its rambling long-windedness.

"But we do not wish to leave the reader with the notion that Mr. Clemens' work is otherwise than obliquely serious. Upon the face of it you have a story no more openly didactic than Don Quixote, which we found ourselves more than once thinking of, as we read, though always with the sense of the kindlier and truer heart of our time. Never once, we believe, has Mark Twain been funny at the cost of the weak, the unfriended, the helpless; and this is rather more than you can say of Cid Hamet ben Engeli. But the two writers are of the same humorous largeness; and when the Connecticut man rides out at dawn, in a suit of Arthurian armor, and gradually heats up under the mounting sun in what he calls that stove; and a fly gets between the bars of his visor; and he cannot reach his handkerchief in his helmet to wipe the sweat from his streaming face; and at last when he cannot bear it any longer, and dismounts at the side of a brook, and makes the distressed damsel who has been riding behind him take off his helmet,

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(75) See Valdés chapter p. See Harper's 79:962-6 '89

(76) Harper's 80:320 '90

and fill it with water, and pour gallon after gallon down the collar of his wrought-iron cutaway, you have a situation of as huge grotesqueness as any that Cervantes conceived."

Cervantes also appears in a refutation (77) of E. J. Phelps' statement that "The enduring achievements of the human intellect were brought forth chiefly out of the great silences, when words were fit but few."(78)

"Did Don Quixote come out of a great silence? Cervantes wrote while Calderon and Lope and the other masters of the Spanish drama were making their 'noises' about him. Perhaps the thoughts of all these great men would have been mightier if they had never been put into words, though we do not think so."(77)

(77) Howells: Harper's 80:644 '90. The statement about Calderon and Lope shows him to have been comparatively ignorant of Spain's 17th century.

(78) Phelps, E. J.: The Age of Words.

For further references to Cervantes or Don Quixote see Howells' edition of Don Quixote. The introduction compiled by his daughter, Miss Mildred Howells, is a collection of excerpts from his various writings.

See also:

Lowell: Satire and Biglow Papers.  
Harper's 83:153 '91

The Selling of Fiction  
Harper's 113:149 '06

Humor and Humorists  
Harper's 123:311 '11

"Cervantes and his immortal novel again enter a long discussion of the survival of literary masterpieces which appeared in an Editor's Easy Chair.(79)

"The first novelist of the sort known to literature in the modern sense is still, after three hundred years, the only novelist so generally as to be almost popularly read, and if he could be freshly known to our time he would unquestionably be as welcome to it as to his own. Some such favor Professor Rudolph Schevill of the University of California has been doing us in his life of Cervantes and we very gratefully acknowledge it, on behalf of readers even more ignorant than ourselves, without staying just now to offer it a due distant appreciation. We are presently glad of it, chiefly as a proof of the growing vitality, not to say immortality of the most undying novel yet written in any language. . . . It is a novel which shows no more signs of falling fame than those Histories, Tragedies and Comedies of William Shakespeare written so well within the same epoch that their English author is supposed to have died on the same day with the great Spaniard. . . . In fact, if we

'Let observation with extensive view

Survey mankind from China to Peru'

we shall find no feat of literature comparable to Don Quixote in the vigor of its survival."

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(79) Howells' edition: Don Quixote. Introduction p. X

In discussing the tendency of fiction toward realism in an Editor's Easy Chair (80) Howells shows a keenly critical penetration into the literary philosophy of Cervantes when he writes:

"Cervantes, the worthy contemporary and almost peer of Shakespeare, is the elect of our hearts from all Spanish writers because, in the first great novel ever written, he showed his love of the chivalry he parodied, intensifying its essential idealism while playing havoc with its mock heroic fashions."

In 1911, we find him again writing of humor and humorists, which always brings him back to Cervantes(81). Earlier he had informed us that he thought he had a native love of laughing, which was fostered in him by his father's way of looking at life, and had certainly been flattered by his intimacy with Cervantes.(82) Now we find him saying that the humor of Cervantes is "abominably unfeeling and brutal, and that it is doubtful whether Don Quixote has not died the death because the fun of the book was mostly so brutal that mankind could no longer bear it, rather than because the books of chivalry which it burlesqued were no longer known to readers, and the burlesque was unintelligible."

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(80) Harper's 116:961-4 '08

(81) Easy Chair  
Harper's 123:311 '11

(82) My Literary Passions p. 61

This statement, ambiguous and inaccurate in either interpretation, is astonishing in a critic of his calibre. Don Quixote is perhaps read more than it ever was and the alleged brutality of its humor has not hurt its popularity.

Even as early as 1888 we find a similar expression of this attitude toward Cervantes' humor.(83)

"The sense of humor is something that the process of civilization has refined almost as much as the passion of love itself, which all connoisseurs now allow to be a very different thing from the passion of love known to even the free peoples of antiquity. The commonest newspaper funny man would now hardly offer to his readers the brutal pummellings, rib-breakings, jaw-smashings, vomitings, and blanket tossings, and worse, which the author of the supreme masterpiece of humor seems to have thought it amusing to portray. Doubtless he knew that as a bit of humor Sancho's coming out with the story of the punctilious clown, when Don Quixote was refusing the place of honor at the Duke and Duchess' table, was worth more than all these grotesque and barbarous inventions; but doubtless he liked them, too. The memoirs and the novels testify how very lately such things were relished, and some college boys still think it droll to haze their fellows. Yet there has been a great advance, and the average humor of our time addresses itself habitually to the kindlier

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(83) Humor and Quixote.  
Harper's 76:481 '88

sense to which Don Quixote appeals only as a conception, and which his history touches only now and then."(84)

In this discussion (85) on humor Howells also compares Cervantes with Shakespeare, in his comedies, where "he at times seems merely Elizabethan in his coarseness, his courtliness, his imperfect sympathy," and continues:

"In these he was no greater than his contemporary, to whom Emerson's censure would far more strictly apply; and if Emerson had said of Cervantes that, after all, he was only the master of revels, no one could have questioned his accuracy."

This last is in contrast to previous judgments (86) and seems to be one of those sweeping statements carelessly made of which even great critics are sometimes guilty, and shows a lack of comprehension of the philosophical aspects of Cervantes' works. Don Quixote represents the idealism of the Spanish race which goes dashing its head against a stone wall.

Yet a little later when speaking of Mark Twain, he says:

"There are only three or four whom he may be likened with, and, not to begin with the ancients, we may speak in the same breath of Cervantes, of Moliere, of Swift, of Dickens, among the moderns."(87)

(84) C.f. Azorín: "La evolución de la sensibilidad" in Clásicos y Modernos. Madrid 1913 pp. 49 ff.

(85) Harper's 76:480 '88

(86) C.f. p. 48. Also Introduction, pp. 9

(87) Harper's 126:311 '13

Although in 1914, he tells us that (88) "Cervantes' is, we believe, coming to be disabled of our reverence, even our sympathy, in some details of his checkered career"--which after all is no real depreciation since no great writer has consistently maintained the standard of his masterpiece--still, he adds that, "in his greatest work, his incomparable work, there is no doubt but he is memorable because he desired his reader to laugh with him.

In Familiar Spanish Travels (89), we feel the ever present influence of Don Quixote which, writes Miss Howells, "travelled with us all the way as guide, except for such moments as we exchanged him for his author." (90) Upon first seeing the Spanish wine-skin, Howells writes: (91)

"It was a joy to realize what they were, to feel how Spanish, how literary, how picturesque, how romantic. . . . There they were such as Don Quixote, waking from his dream, at the inn, saw them malignant giants and fell enchanters, and slashed them with his sword till he had spilled the room half full of their blood. For me this first sight of them was magic. It brought back my boyhood as nothing else had yet, and I never afterward saw them without a return to those days of my delight in all Spanish things."

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(88) Harper's 128:634-7 '14

(89) Introduction, p. 16

(90) Howells' edition of Don Quixote, 1923: Introduction XII

(91) Familiar Spanish Travels p. 43.



At San Sebastian Howells devoted only half his mind to the beauties of the place and gave the rest to searching vainly for a modern counterpart of the Biscayan ladies' fiery squire.(92) Although the high aquiline nose abounds there, Howells seemed disappointed in not finding any signs of the high temper which is said to go with it and which was known to him chiefly from his reading in Don Quixote of the terrific combat between the squire of the Biscayan ladies whose carriage the Knight of La Mancha stopped after his engagement with the windmills, upon which incident Howells then elaborates.

Howells stopped in Valladolid mostly to revere the house of Cervantes to which his fellow-countrymen pay the scant reverence that Howells deplored.

"I think the reader will agree with me that the highest honor of the city is that it was long the home of the gallant gentleman who after five years of captivity in Algiers and the loss of his hand in the Battle of Lepanto, wrote there, in his poverty and neglect, the first part of a romance which remains and must always remain one of the first of the fictions of the world. . . And I wish I could pay here that devoir to his memory and fame which squalid circumstance forbade me to render under the roof that once sheltered him. One can never say enough in his praise. . . ." (93)

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(92) Familiar Spanish Travels p. 23  
Also Howells' edition of Don Quixote. Introduction XII

(93) Continued at length in Familiar Spanish Travels p. 71  
Also Howells' Don Quixote. Introduction XIII.

The long journey from Madrid to Córdoba was made slowly and inconveniently by day, that he might miss nothing of the plains of La Mancha--the country where Don Quixote met with so many of his adventures. Of course it did not look like the country he had read out of his history of Quixote, as naturally enough he had supplanted the scenes of La Mancha with those of his boyhood Ohio. "Only in one place had we seen the tumbled boulders of Old Castile, and there had been really no greater objection to La Mancha than that it was flat, stale, and unprofitable, and wholly unimaginable as the scene of even Don Quixote's first adventures."(94)

Throughout the book one continually finds such instances of the weaving of Don Quixote and Cervantes into the descriptions and impressions of his trip.

The foregoing illustrations serve to show how true Howells remained throughout his literary career, to his first love of Cervantes and Don Quixote. Though we find several instances of inconsistency in his viewpoint, they are not important. Although he never fulfilled his boyhood ambition of writing the life of Cervantes, it seems fitting that he should close his literary career with an abridgment of Don Quixote. This was made during the last months of his life, at eighty-three. He was able to work on it only a little at a time but went through the book twice to bring it to the required length to make it readable to "the present public with its impatience of today."

Nothing essential to the story has been omitted and its ironic, whimsical spirit has been satisfyingly preserved. As he wanted to do the cutting himself, he did that first and died before he could write his intended introduction. Thus the book was not published until 1923, when his daughter, Miss Mildred Howells, made an introduction compiled from some of her father's mentionings of Don Quixote and its author, found in his various writings.

CHAPTER II.  
PALACIO VALDÉS.

It is with pleasure that we find that the Spanish author who has perhaps had the most influence upon Howells, is a contemporary author and one who is spoken of as "essentially a man of the people; radically democratic, and in religious matters transcending the limits of creed. A man who stands high in the esteem of many English and American readers; who has been true to the novel in the highest sense, that which transcends the roll of mere entertainment to the function of the interpreter of life, and who has shown us the heights and the depths, the sunshine and the shadows of very much of human existence; who says of himself, 'I am much given to the exterior of life; it pleases me to live in the greatest number of situations possible and there is hardly a page in my novels that I have not lived, or seen enacted before my eyes.'"(95)

We have the pleasure, in fact, of comparing "one of the princes of the Spanish novel", (96) with the greatest American realist and one who is the exponent of American democracy. A man of and beloved by the

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(95) Baxter, Sylvester: A Great Modern Spaniard  
Atlantic Mo 85:846-559 1900

(96) Cajador: Historia de la lengua y literatura castellana. Vol. IX p. 59

people, whose aim was "to portray life with entire fidelity in all its commonplaceness and into reverence for what it conceals, and who became in his total work, as he wished to be in each of his novels, a faithful mirror of his time and place, all in a beauty of word and cadence not to be matched now by any living among us."(97)

The only example of Valdés' direct influence upon any of Howells' novels is seen by comparing El cuarto poder with A Hazard of New Fortunes.(98) Although we find no similarity of plot, there is much in common in characters, ethics, and construction.

Both are realistic regional novels. In the one, Howells "judges a generation at the same time that he portrays it in the best of all novels of New York"(99). Of the other, Howells writes, "it is mainly a picture of contemporary life in the city of Sarrió, of Northern Spain, and has the frankness of which we must advise the intending reader, characteristic of Latin writers in treating of Latin life; that is to say, Sarrió is not described as if it were Salem, Massachusetts."(100)

Both are novels of character rather than of incident in which each author permits himself to ridicule his contemporary society, yet not in an offensive way.

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(97) Erskine: Bookman 51:385-9 '20

(98) Howells read El cuarto poder in 1888 and wrote A Hazard of New Fortunes in 1889. Critics call this novel the turning point of Howells. See Manly and Rickert: Contemporary American Literature.

(99) Trent, W. P. and others: op. cit. pp. 262-271

(100) Harper's 77:302 '88

Howells writes of El cuarto poder: (101)

"The reader of these papers need not be at a loss to conjecture our opinion of this author's work, and from the versions of his Marquis of Peñalta and his Maximina any English reader can test for himself. We will only say that, without their unity, El cuarto poder is in other respects a greater work than either; its range is vaster, its tolerance as charming, its sympathy with all good things as pervasive, its humor as delicious.

"Don Rosendo Bellinchón and the cigar girl whom he marries; their son Pablo, from boyhood to youth immoral, reckless, cowardly; and their daughters Cecilia and Ventura, are, with Gonzalo de las Cuevas, the husband of Ventura, the principal persons, around whom are grouped the vividly painted personnel and circumstances of Sarrío. The novel is mainly the tragic story of Gonzalo, who abandons Cecilia and marries Ventura, and experiences through her ambition and treachery the truth of his Uncle's saying, that God himself cannot help the man who breaks his word. But he is not a false person, only simply, helplessly true, and there grows up between him and Cecilia the sweetest and purest friendship ever imagined in fiction; it is most beautifully and courageously done; it consoles him in the worst affliction, but it cannot save him. Spanish aristocracy as it survives, intellectual-

ized and agnosticized, into modern times is studied with irony that would be bitter, -if Valdés could be bitter, in the Duque de Tornos, who seduces the ready Ventura; and a whole population of middle-class and plebeian figures live in the author's humorous sympathy.

"Bellinchon himself is a character worthy of Cervantes, with his extravagancies and contradictions, and his wife, with her growth through sorrow into a refinement not otherwise possible to her simple goodness, is a lovely creation."

Of A Hazard of New Fortunes it has been said that "Howells had turned from the clash of those lighter manners which belong to comedy and had set himself to discuss the deeper manners of the race which belong to morals and religion. It outdoes all Howells' novels in the conduct of different groups of characters, in the superb naturalness with which now one and now another rises to the surface of the narrative and then retreats without a trace of management. New Englanders, New Yorkers, Southerners, Westerners, all appear in their true native colors, as do the most diverse ranks of society, and many professions in their proper dress and gesture."(102)

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(102) Trent, W. P. and others: op. cit. p. 268.

Being experienced journalists it is not surprising that journalism should be the medium chosen by each for the expression of his social and philosophical ideas and that we should find each portraying newspaper syndicates with similar morals and purposes. Yet it is a noticeable fact that the novel whose chief interest is in a newspaper syndicate about which is grouped the vividly painted personnel of New York, is the novel which is in some respects comparable to that one of Valdés' in which the latter also emphasizes a newspaper syndicate with similar ideals and morals. The Every Other Week is a newspaper syndicate with "decent morals" and volunteer contributions, all to share alike in the profits and to devote their efforts to public uplift; whereas El Faro established by Melinchón, purposes: "to combat ignorance, work for reforms, to break from past and neighboring doctrines, to broaden public ideas and to reform and wake up the city."(103)

Both revel in newspaper controversies with their political newspaper rivals but differ in that whereas Howells limits his to articles pertaining to public interest and welfare, Valdés introduces many "personals" which are the causes of several duels; another instance of each being true to contemporary life in his own land.

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(103) El cuarto poder Vol. II, p. 257



Both are alike in giving lengthy and detailed "polite conversation" of "tertulia" groups, affording opportunities for displaying the humor, satire and ready wit for which they are noted.

Similarities in characters are illustrated by the following:

Christine Dryfoos, with her animal beauty, a veritable "wildcat", socially ambitious and socially ignorant, could have been suggested by Valdés' Ventura, beautiful, attractive to all men, one who followed her primitive emotions but who, though socially ambitious, was less wild and quickly grasped enough social "arts" to make her the "reigning queen" of the village and the envy of many.

Angus Beaton, artist, ne'er-do-well, immoral, might compare with Pablo, immoral, reckless, cowardly from boyhood to youth.

Basil March, a typical American of cultivation, without wealth, healthily interested in life, with literary ambitions and who becomes the editor of Every Other Week, is comparable with D. Rosendo Melinchón, a rather well-to-do Spanish gentleman of the middle class, whose literary ambitions led him to establish El Farol.

Alma Leighton is a would-be artist who once loved Beaton who has encouraged her to come to New York and then tries to drop her, only to be rejected later when he learns that he does love her. She is determined, proud, and so clever at concealing her feelings and handling her mother and Beaton that she is accused of being cold and unable to love, just as Cecilia, who secretly loves Gonzalo, even after he jilts her to marry her sister, so skilfully conceals her feelings and lives a life of self-sacrifice with the result that she is accused of being incapable of love. (104)

One readily notices similarities in the ideas of marriage and that the subject is introduced in the one case by conversation about Alma Leighton, in the other by conversation with Cecilia, the two parallel characters.

In A Hazard of New Fortunes, Alma Leighton's rejection of Beaton is being discussed by Fulkerson and March: (105)

"It's a pity she hadn't," (had a liking for him) says Fulkerson. "I tell you, March' it ain't so easy for a girl to get married, here in the East, that she can afford to despise any chance."

"Isn't that a rather low view of it?"

"It's a common sense view. Beaton has the making of a first-rate fellow in him. He's the raw material of a great artist and a good citizen."

Compare this with a passage from Valdés' El cuarto poder when Cecilia's brother-in-law Gonzalo is urging the suit of his friend which Cecilia refuses to consider:

"Por ventura le parecía poco para ella? Paco no era rico; pero podía aspirar a su mano. En Sarrió no encontraría un muchacho mejor que él; . . . O es que esperaba un príncipe de la sangre? . . . Pues que no descuidará mucho, porque la juventud de las mujeres pasa pronto, y se han llevado en estos asuntos bastantes chascos." (106)

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(105) A Hazard of New Fortunes p. 308

(106) El cuarto poder Vol. II p. 95

Later when March talks over the affair with his wife, she surprises him by agreeing with Fulkerson.

"Yes, it's a pity she couldn't have made up her mind to take him. It's better for a woman to be married."(107)

And Gonzalo tells Cecilia:

"Se puede decir que el único destino de la mujer sobre la tierra, es el matrimonio, porque es la encargada de sostener sobre ella la vida."(108)

Howells is not, however, in perfect sympathy with this attitude regarding marriage which is also later introduced as an article for a periodical by Sinforose, a contributor, we find:

". . . Aseguraba en terminos calurosos, que la civilización no existe sino en el matrimonio: el amor conyugal es su única base. Todo es santo, todo es hermoso, todo es feliz en el lazo íntimo que une a dos jóvenes esposos. El hombre feliz por su compañera, siente crecer sus facultades, y es capaz de realizar empresas que de otro modo no podría llevar a cabo. La influencia de la mujer empuya al hombre a la virtud y a la gloria; es el más dulce y al mismo tiempo el mas enérgico de los poderes sociales."(109)

Howells writes:

"I believe this popular demand for the matrimony of others comes from our novel reading. We get to thinking that there is no other happiness or good fortune in life

(107) A Hazard of New Fortunes p. 308

(108) El cuarto poder Vol. II p. 94

(109) Id. Vol. I p. 259

except marriage; and it's offered in fiction as the highest premium for virtue, courage, beauty, learning and saving human life. We all know it isn't. We know that in reality marriage is dog cheap, and anybody can have it for the asking . . . if he keeps asking enough people."(110)

. . . . .

Journalism is of first importance with Howells, the story dealing with the realistic episodes and life of these various newspaper groups, and newspaper, social, business and money ethics are expounded; whereas with Valdés--to quote Howells--"Journalism is a subordinate interest of Valdés' novel, which is mainly a picture of contemporary life in the city of Sarrió, somewhere in northern Spain."(111)

Although both Howells and Valdés are treating of the middle class and both books are a protest against social injustice, the former deals with the trivialities, the commonplaceness and the crises of the average American life--dealing more with social and business ethics than with love. Here as in all of Howells' novels, the guilty intrigue, the betrayal, the reckless flirtation, is scarcely if ever shown. There was an exquisiteness in Howells' nature, a reserve, and a sensitiveness of temper-

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(110) A Hazard of New Fortunes, p. 310

(111) Harper's 77:802 '88

ament of which he was aware; which in the end rendered his allegiances, personal and other, highly selective and prompted him to avoid the rough details of American life.(112)

On the other hand El cuarto poder is full of this and the main theme revolves about illicit love, but this is happily offset by the beautiful, self-sacrificing character of Cecilia. It is this theme of vicious love beneath the surface of society which is responsible for the situation which causes Howells to write: "It is impossible to touch the merit of the book at all points; it has in one romantic excess of self-sacrifice a single important fault"(113), and which led the two authors to refer to each other in several critical articles regarding the value of literary criticisms, of which they have made practically the same evaluation.

"In our whole long and varied experience of book-noticing," writes Howells, "did we ever, save once, have an author own up that the blemish we blamed was really a blemish, and not a beauty in disguise? This single and signal instance was that of a great Spanish novelist, who not merely wrote to say that our structure was just, but in the preface of his next book printed this acknowledgment and promised never to err in that sort again.

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(112) Erskine, J.: Appreciation of Howells  
Bookman 51:385-9 June '20

(113) Harper's 77:802 '88

"We should not ourselves have had so much courage in his place, we confess it. As a critic we should have expected no less of ourself; as an author we should have known it was too much. The case of this large-minded Spaniard is indeed so rare that reflection upon it has latterly brought us question of the justice of our censure. It is a fearful doubt, and we hasten to leave it."(114)

The article to which Howells refers is the following:

"No hace muchos meses que el eminente novelista y crítico del Harper's New Monthly Magazine, Mr. Dean Howells, me daba cuenta en carta también de sus impresiones acerca de "El cuarto poder. Y entre elogios que no debo repetir aquí, me decía: 'Lo que no me gusta, se lo confieso con franqueza, es el capítulo en que Cecilia se sustituye a su hermana para apagar los celos de Gonzalo. Me parece una nota romantica y falsa que disuena de la verdad que existe in el resto de la obra.' Advertiré que este capítulo es el que me ha valido elogios mas vivos y lo que mas se había celebrado en el libro. Pues con todo eso, las palabras del ilustre novelista Americano fueron para mí un jarro de agua fría sobre la cabeza. Al instante entendí que le sobraba la razon, y me propuse no reincidir en semejantes efectos. Véase, pues, como la crítica, cuando es racional y esta hecha de buena fe, me aprovecha."(115)

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(114) Harper's 122:956-9 '11

(115) Valdés: La Hermana San Sulpicio '89  
Prologo LXXV

The two following excerpts show the close similarity in their views on the value and effectiveness of literary criticisms.

"Por profesar estas ideas sobre críticos y el vulgo y por expresarias en público o en conversaciones particulares, se ha dicho recientemente en la prensa que yo hacía alarde de despreciar la crítica. Nada más exacto. . . . Lo que he hecho siempre y seguiré haciendo es prevenirme para la crítica, y a su favorable ó adversa, no influya perniciosamente sobre mí. Deseo ante todo y sobre todo conservar mi independencia artística, la calma y serenidad del espíritu, ser fiel, en suma, a mi temperamento y a mis condiciones. Así que la crítica, ni alabándome ni censurándome me empujará por otro camino que el que yo considero seguro. Lo que puede hacer y ha hecho varias veces es recordarme que voy extraviado, cuando me separe de él."(116)

"The history of all literature shows that even with the youngest and weakest author criticism is quite powerless against his will to do his own work in his own way; . . . every author has been condemned for his virtues, but in no wise changed by it. In the beginning he reads the critics; but presently perceiving that he alone

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(116) Valdés: La hermana San Sulpicio '89  
Prologo LXXIV-LXXV

makes or mars himself, and that they have no instruction for him, he mostly leaves off reading them, though he is always glad of their kindness or grieved by their harshness when he chances upon it. This, I believe, is the general experience, modified of course, by exceptions."(117)

Turning from this specific instance of direct influence of Valdes upon Howells, to a comparative study of novels (118) of the two authors, one may be justified in saying that the similarities which have consistently appeared are those characteristics of the realistic novelist and more especially those characteristics of two authors who have not only practiced the same interpretation of the term realism but whose philosophical and social ideas were much the same.

In the scenes and characters of each, we find a strict adherence to that ideal of truth and beauty in all nature which made them portray contemporary life as each knew it. Their work is based on an exactness of observation that shows them to have thoroughly studied the milieu which each describes. The vertulias aristocratic or plebeian, the envies and vanities, the petty intrigues, the fervors of religion feigned or real, the flirtations and grand passions, all pulsate with life and truth, no less than the setting of nature with which their characters are so intimately woven that it seems as much a part of them as their words and acts.

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(117) My Literary Passions, pp. 211-13

(118) Appendix. Books compared



Each is essentially a man of the people whose interests each has at heart and each has a moral purpose over and above the faithfulness of portraiture. Thus it is the middle class with whom their sympathies are enlisted and with whom they are at their best. And in accordance with their creed, each let the plot be determined on the assumption that if he is studying life at first hand, he will invariably observe that his plot is a logical consequence of the nature of the characters involved.

Each has a similar philosophy of life, believing in the sanity of virtue and the wholesomeness of work--a serene philosophy with a view point of high humanity, of wise generosity--and since each has not allowed himself to get into a rut or harden into conservatism but has been a ready advocate of the social readjustment then so active, it is only logical that each should treat of morals and religion, business and social ethics, literary reform movements, and socialistic groups.

Both were journalists of much experience and have produced a series of literary criticisms and portraits of orators, poets and novelists. Thus it is natural that each should give evidence of wide reading, though there seems to be no useless display of erudition in either.

We can scarcely say that Valdés had any influence upon Howells in this respect but rather that the literary

and journalistic atmosphere felt is owing to Howells' journalistic life and that it is coincidence rather than influence that we find them both treating of journalistic methods, shop talk and jokes and journal-room descriptions. But here the likeness ends. For with Valdés, although one feels the importance of the underlying philosophical or socialistic principles, more usually the main interest is in the plot, in the love element and often there are several love themes to be followed. It sometimes is the wholesome love of a family, or the religious fervor or the spiritual growth of a character in which we are interested, but more often it is the growing passion, the flirtations, the mistaken love, the betrayal and the amorous intrigues which seem to be present and uppermost.

Even though Valdés asserts in his prologue that there are more phases of love than adultery and that "dentro del amor hay infinitos maticos en los cuales no entra el adulterio, y fuera del amor sexual existen también sentimientos y pasiones que pueden dar lugar a novelas interesantes," (119) still one is forcibly impressed by the importance which human passion plays in the majority of his novels.

This is in noticeable contrast to Howells in whose treatment the portrayal of passion plays a very small part and where the love scenes are few and short in comparison with the many and depictive ones of Valdés.

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(119) Prologo, p. XLIII. La hermana San Sulpicio.

The plots are, with a few exceptions, quite simple, with little action, and the greatest interest is in the socializing of characters and in the psychoanalysis of their development. Always we seem to feel the importance of individual responsibility to society and of its morals, religion and its business ethics, which outweighs the love element.

Although both seem to be optimists at heart and believe in the possibility of human nobleness and so prefer the brighter colors of their palettes, we find Valdés more frequently portraying the lower strata, the rabble, while Howells restricts himself mainly to the respectable middle class; but even though his aspects of life are not always happy ones, he portrays sadness rather than sordidness.

Valdés is not orthodox, but such is his sympathetic comprehension of attitudes of faith that we feel his religion to be deep and pure in spite of its dispensing with creed. But inasmuch as Spain is essentially Catholic and America Protestant, so do these novels differ--the one shows a church atmosphere produced with many and detailed descriptions of churches, masses, sisters and priests--the other has Howells' wholesome religious spirit, shown by his ministerial characters and the strict consciences of his personages, and their many mental struggles, in which they commonly follow the dic-

tates of a severe conscience, with results that often seem to cause undue unhappiness.

The main influence of Valdés on Howells' novels seems not to be on plot and character; rather, Valdes set Howells the example which the latter followed, of being true to people and scenes of his own experience. Further, Howells' novels are practical manifestations of Valdés' literary creed.(120) However, Howells does not interrupt the course of events to introduce propaganda, but the naturally introduced comments of his characters are expressions of the author's novelistic ideas as found in his critical work and as influenced by the Spaniard.

I have already noted (121) that "light falls upon the growth of Howells' final philosophy from the monthly articles which he wrote for the Editor's Study, 1886-92. . . essays which remarkably encouraged the growth of realism in America and most eloquently commended to native readers, among other, such Latin realists as Valera, Valdés, Galdós and Verga." It is with this commendation of Valdes that I shall now treat.

In taking up his duties in this critical department, Howells writes:

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(120) e.g. see: Cervantes chapter, pp. 25-26, or Their Wedding Journey, pp. 67, 86, 110, 293.

(121) See: Introduction pp. 15-16  
Also: Trent, W. P., and others: op. cit. p. 267

"I had to begin reading for business again before I began reading for pleasure and before I again felt the rise of the old enthusiasm for an author.(122) One of the first great pleasures which I had upon these terms was the Marta y Maria of Armando Palacio Valdés, a novelist who delights me beyond words by his friendly and abundant humor, his feeling for character and his subtle insight. I like everyone of his books I have read, and I believe that I have read nearly every one he has written. As I mention Riverito, Maximina, Un idilio de un enfermo,(123) La hermana de San Sulpizio, (124) El cuarto poder, Espuma, the mere names conjure up the scenes and events that have moved me to tears and laughter, and filled me with a vivid sense of the life portrayed in them. I think Marta y Maria one of the most truthful and profound fictions I have read, and Maximina one of the most pathetic, and La hermana de San Sulpizio one of the most amusing. Fortunately, these books of Valdés' have nearly all been translated, and the reader may test the matter in English, though it necessarily halts somewhat behind the Spanish."(125)

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(122) During the years of 1881-85 spent at Cambridge and Belmont, Mass., Howells did very little reading; and later, during a period of travelling in Europe, he seemed to have no time to read.

(123) El idilio de un enfermo

(124) La hermana San Sulpicio

(125) My Literary Passions, p. 179

So as the logical order of the remainder of this chapter, we shall touch upon the different works of Valdes in the order that Howells has read and commented upon them, which brings us first to Marta y Maria. This novel is introduced in a critical review of some novels from various literatures, in which a discussion on fidelity in fiction takes place and the author has commented that "from a writer like the author of Margaret Kent we have the right to expect entire fidelity".(126)

"Till we have entire fidelity from our clever writers we shall have clever writers and nothing more, and we must turn elsewhere for examples of what fiction may be at its best.

"One would not perhaps look first to find them in Spain, but I have just been reading a Spanish novel which is very nearly one. Of course it is a realistic novel; it is even by an author who has written essays upon realism and who feels obliged, poor fellow, in choosing a theme which deals with the inside rather than the outside of life, to protest that the truth exists within us as well as without and is not confined to the market houses, the dram-shops, the street corners, or the vulgar facts of existence. Don Armando Palacio Valdés believes that his Marta y Maria is a realistic novel, although it is not founded upon current and common events, and that the beautiful and the noble also lie within the realm of

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(126) Editor's Study Harper's 72:811 '86

reality. We should ourselves go a little farther, and say that they are to be found nowhere else; but we have not at present to do with our opinions, or even the prologue to Señor Valdés' novel, though we should be glad to reproduce that in full, it is so good."(127)

I might pause to note that what Howells has here emphasized in 1886, regarding his idea of the "beautiful and noble lying in the realm of reality and nowhere else", is identical with part of his literary creed which he expresses so emphatically in 1889 by quoting freely from Valdés' prologue to La-hermana San Sulpicio. We can account for this in two ways.

The prologue to Marta y Maria (1883) deals mostly with the novel and his reasons for writing it, and says little about realism in general.

However, the writer has been unable to determine whether Howells ever read any of Valdés' essays on realism to which he refers in this article (128). These essays must have been in sum and substance essentially the same as the prologue to La hermana San Sulpicio written in 1889. If Howells had read any of them, we can easily understand why a statement addressed in 1887 to future novelists would be in essence the same as Valdés' prologue which has been summarized by Cejador.(129)

(127) Editor's Study  
Harper's 72:811 '86

(128) p. 63

(129) Cejador: op. cit. Vol. 9, p. 58

"If I were authorized to address any word directly to our novelists I should say, do not trouble yourselves about standards or ideals; but try to be faithful and natural: remember that there is no greatness, no beauty, which does not come from truth to your own knowledge of things; and keep on working, even if your work is not long remembered."(130)

"No solamente es hermosa la naturaleza, sino que fuera de ella no hay hermosura, y quiere que el artista no busque mas que la verdad, no la novedad, ni la moda, ni la manera, ni el efecto, ni la vanidad literaria, que es lo que realmente buscaban Pardo Bazán en España y Zola en Francia."(131)

If Howells did not read the essays mentioned we may account for such a statement by the following:

We know that Howells' instinctive liking for reality which had been naturally growing and maturing and which finally was to be revealed (1889) as a passionate love for the truth about human life, had already found expression in A Modern Instance, 1882, in which he is said to have gained complete command of his method and in which he assumed his proper rank as the chief native American realist (132); and also, in The Rise of Silas Lapham, 1884, which brought him to the height of his reputation as well as of his art.

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(130) Harper's 75:641 '87

(131) Cejador: op. cit p. 58

(132) Trent, W. P. and others: op. cit. p. 265 .



So that, to be exact, one must say that Howells' realism was begun and partly formed before reading much of Spanish literature, especially Valdés.(133)

Much earlier in fact, as is evidenced by the Cervantes chapter (134) and by a letter from Miss Mildred Howells in response to my inquiry in which she says:

"I think that my father's realism began long before he read Tolstoy, Valdés, or Galdós--with his passion for Cervantes' Don Quixote which lasted from his boyhood to his death."

But it is important to note that A Hazard of New Fortunes (1889), in which he has stretched his broadest canvas and which some rank with The Rise of Silas Lapham (135), was written after Howells' intensive reading of Valdes, and that it was written in the same year that he read the prologue to La hermana San Sulpicio. Moreover, it was during the period of 1880-90 which critics call the best part of his literary career (136), that he did the most of his reading of Spanish literature and that he so relentlessly waged his propaganda for realism; "a period,"

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(133) See chapter on Cervantes showing early Spanish influence for realism.

(134) Their Wedding Journey, 1871, is the first practical application of this creed; pp. 67, 86, 110, 293. For this citation see Cervantes chapter pp. 25-6

(135) Quinn, A. H.: *Century* 100:674-81 Sept '20

(136) Phelps, W. L.: *Yale Review* N. S. 10:99-109 0'20

to quote Howells himself, "of fierce intolerance and of tempestuous propaganda which left the apostle without a friend or follower in the aesthetic world."(137)

So we will turn again to Howells' appreciation of Marta y Maria, a masterpiece of that language which has always been so dear to him.

"The literature is delightful: full of charming humor, tender pathos, the liveliest sympathy with nature, the keenest knowledge of human nature, and a style whose charm makes itself felt through the shadows of a strange speech. It is the story of two sisters, daughters of the chief family in a Spanish sea-port city: Maria, who passes from the romance of literature to the romance of religion, and abandons home, father, and lover to become the spouse of heaven, and Marta, who remains to console all these for her loss. We do not remember a character more finely studied than that of Maria, who is followed not satirically or ironically, through all the involutions of a conscious, artificial personality, but with masterly divination, and is shown as essentially cold-hearted and selfish in her religious abnegation, and as sensuous in her spiritual ecstasies as she was in her abandon to the romances on which she first fed her egoistic fancy.

"But Marta--Marta is delicious! We see her first as an awkward girl of thirteen at her mother's tertulia, helplessly laughing at some couples who give a few super-erogatory hops in the dance after the music suddenly stops;

and the note of friendly simplicity, of joyous, frank, sweet naturalness, struck in the beginning, is felt in her character throughout. Nothing could be lovelier than the portrayal of this girl's affection for her father and mother, and of the tenderness that insensibly grows between her and her sister's lover, left step by step in the lurch by the intending bride of heaven. One of the uses of realism is to make us know people; to make us understand that the Spaniards, for example, are not the remote cloak-and-sword gentry of opera which romance has painted them, abounding in guitars, poniards, billets, autos-da-fe, and confessionals, but are as like folks as we are.

"It seems that there is much of that freedom among young people with them which makes youth a heavenly holiday in these favored states. Maria's lover has the run of the house, in this Spanish town, quite as he would have in Chicago or Portland, and he follows Marta about in the frequent intervals of Maria's neglect; he makes her give him lunch in the kitchen when he is hungry, this very human young Marquis de Penalta; he helps her to make a pie, the young lady having a passion for all domestic employments, and to put away the clean clothes. Her father, Don Mariano Elorza, has a passion for the smell of freshly ironed linen, much as any well-domesticated American citizen might have, and loves to go and put his nose in the closet where it hangs. His wife has

been a tedious, complaining invalid all her married life, but he is heart-broken when she dies; and it is at this moment that Maria--who has compromised him in the Carlist movement because that is the party of the Church, and has tried in the same cause to make her lover turn traitor to the government which he has sworn as a citizen to defend--comes ecstatic from the death-scene to ask his permission to complete her vocation in the convent. He gives it with a sort of disdain for her pitiless and senseless egotism. The story closes with the happy love of Marta and Ricardo, clasped to the old man's breast and mingling their tears with his; and the author cries, 'O eternal God, who dwellest in the hearts of the good, can it be that these tears are less grateful to Thee than the mystical colloquies of the Convent of St. Bernard?'

"A sketch of the story gives no idea of its situations, or what is more difficult and important, the atmosphere of reality in which it moves. The whole social life of the town is quietly suggested and an abundance of figures pass before us, all graphically drawn, none touched with weakness or exaggeration.

"It is a book with a sole blemish--a few pages in which the author thinks it necessary to paint the growth of little Marta's passion in too vivid colors. There is no great harm; but it is a lapse of taste and of art which libels a lovely character, and seems a sacrifice to the

ugly French fetich which has possessed itself of the good name of Realism to befoul it"(138)

"We are glad to see announced a translation of Marta y Maria," writes Howells that same year, (139) "the excellent story of Don Armando Palacio Valdés, which we praised some months ago; and we wish we could praise in equal terms two other stories of Señor Valdés which have since come to our hands. One of these is certainly charming as a picture of Spanish life, and would be utterly so but for the leprous taint of illicit intrigue which seems to infect all Latin work. It is called Riverita, after the hero, whose career is portrayed from his childhood to his marriage with delightful sympathy and humor, and with a fidelity to circumstance which does not allow itself to be doubted. The Spanish boy, it seems, is very like the American boy, and there are familiar episodes of this book in which he takes a lively part. The scene of the story is in Madrid, and there are immensely amusing sketches in it of Madrid journalism and journalists, of amateur bull-fighting, and of domestic and social life. It is all very modern, but enough of the inalienable Spanish flavor--the tang of the wine skin--remains to make the reader feel that he is with old friends.

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(138) Harper's 72:811 '86

(139) Harper's 73:964 '86

"The other book is José, a study of people in a little fishing village on the Spanish coast, and the story of two humble lovers there. All the figures are struck out with refreshing vigor, to which one forgives an occasional unsparing truth of line and color. But the author helps himself out with a romantic and superfluous bit of self-sacrifice, and spoils the pleasure of the judicious in his work by the final behavior of an otherwise admirably studied hidalgo, the decayed gentleman of the place. Still the story is worth reading if one has the Spanish for it."

It is in the longest critical review of the number that Howells treats of Valdés' Maximina. (140) He has just said that Mr. Symonds had more broadly formulated the lasting test of a novel as "a question of the presence or the absence of simplicity, naturalism, and honesty in any aesthetic performance."

"With this test," continues Howells, "not at all magic or difficult, which anyone who is himself simple, natural, and honest can apply, we believe that one is able to judge intelligently of the worth of literature representing life wholly different from our own, and to feel the joy that truthful work always gives. By means of it we can measure the excellence of work like that of Armando Palacio Valdés, whose last book, Maximina, we

- have been reading, and appreciate the graphic fidelity of his pictures of life so remote as that of modern Madrid. We find it in essentials, which are always like universals, very like our own life, and this sweet and humorous and heart-breaking story of the young Spanish wife, Maximina, might with a few touches be naturalized among us so that it could pass for one of native origin."

A long synopsis follows from which I have quoted several paragraphs.

A little family scene in which Miguel Rivera, Madrid journalist and devoted husband is teasing his wife and the two days old baby smiles for Aunt Serafina is deftly portrayed.

"The tender irony with which this little scene is depicted, the perfect lightness, the unfailing accuracy with which the different persons are touched, the simple, natural, and honest art, are traits of the mastery which the book is full of. All the different people of the newspaper, and the people whom Miguel meets every where, especially a group of politicians, are sketched with the same unfailing skill, and Rivera is himself studied with an intimate sympathy that lets us into the soul of a man whose heart is generous and good, and whose will is better than his life has been, though his life has been better than that of his world in most things."

Miguel fails, poverty overtakes him, and his wife dies of fever. He lives on, poor, and finally swallows his pride and becomes a secretary to a friend.

"It is impossible to give the different passages that lead to this, but the whole chapter that treats of Maximina's sickness is as inexpressibly touching as it is simple and real.

"The flesh, weak, rebelled for an instant at this proposition. But in the end he subdued himself and accepted. Through hours of tears and meditation his inner life had freed itself from the dominion of pride. After terrible shocks his soul had broken the chains that had bound it to terrestrial passions. He had learned never to forget it again, the sublime truth that rises eternally above human wisdom, and will ever be the sum of all truths, the denial of self. His only thought from that time forward was to advance further and further on the path of freedom, till the hour of supreme emancipation should sound for him.'

"There are two subordinate stories interwoven with that of Maximina and Miguel in this beautiful book: the heart-breaking story of Miguel's sister, who is pursued and entrapped and ruined by her cousin; and the story of his cousin Enrico's marriage with a girl of the people, a chula whom he falls in love with at her father's shop, where she sells milk.



"This is the comic strain in the lovely idyl, but this too is dignified and ennobled by Maximina's gentle and womanly attitude toward the bride. There is another comic character besides Enrico, and that is the poor young fellow who is in love with Julia Rivera, and who shoots himself when he hears of her ruin, and then does not want to die, turning tragedy at last, as comedy sometimes does in this finally rather serious world.

"These stories are both well enough done to make the fortune of an inferior writer, but it is in his treatment of the chief interest of his book that Valdes shows himself a master. We cannot say that Maximina is as great a book as his Marta y Maria (which the reader of the translation knows as the Marquis of Penalta), but it is of the same admirable texture, the same unflinching right-mindedness characterizes it, the same clear and intelligent conscience. Some notion of the devout liberality of its religious feeling may be inferred from the passages we have given, but the reader must go to the book itself for a full impression of this. He must also go to it for a knowledge of Maximina's unsentimentalized loveliness, and for a sense of the change operated by this and by the lessons of his life in Miguel's light, humorous, sarcastic spirit, teaching it patience and unselfishness and noble seriousness.

"We hope that the book may be translated. There is not a word in it that offends against purity or good morals; there is a Latin frankness here and there concerning cer-

tain social facts which our own race has (we believe properly, on the whole) agreed to blink in fiction; but this could be easily silenced by a judicious pencil, and then the story would remain for all a flawless praise of marriage and wifehood, and one of the most exquisitely touching and consoling books ever written, simple, natural, and honest, as only the fiction of our time knows how to be."

In discussing the effect upon a writer of the literary tradition of his race, whether the unconsciousness and simplicity of Tolstoy is owing to the theory that he has the good fortune to write in a language and land without a literary past, and is therefore wholly untrammelled by tradition, Howells says that "perhaps the book which most nearly approaches the simplicity of Tolstoy is I Malavoglia, by the Italian Verga, who has a literary past running back almost indefinitely. Near to this we think we should place Maximina, by Valdés, the Spaniard, who derives also from a remote literary antiquity. The only alloy in its unconsciousness is the humor which pervades it, and which perhaps disables the unconsciousness of the best American work, consciousness being the very essence of humor."(141)

In 1889, we find perhaps the best justification of the statement made by Professor P. J. Lennox, referred to in my foreword, that, "In the United States, many realistic writers sprang up in the wake of the propaganda which William Dean Howells under the influence of Tolstoy, Valdés and Galdós, carried on for many months in Harper's magazine."(142)

For it was then that Howells seems to have found an answer to that question formulated in 1877, "What is realism itself"(143) and which definition he said he would wait for someone else to supply.

However, before touching further upon the prologue, it might be well to glance at Howells' earlier novelistic and realistic ideas. Though we find in the literary notices which he wrote for the Atlantic Monthly from 1871-1881, some early indications of his later creed, the articles are mainly literary reviews without many expressions of passion for realism and with no evidence of the earnest propaganda waged while writing for Harper's. He treats mostly of Continental writers of which the English, French and Russian seem to predominate; and nowhere do we find any mention of Spanish literature.

It is when treating of George Eliot, Mark Twain, Dostoevsky and Turgenief that we see the early shaping of

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(142) See also Americana 23:258

(143) Atlantic Monthly 41:396 '77

Howells' creed most clearly, from such statements as the following:(144)

"George Eliot's maxim was 'know thyself and things in general' and what she has done has been to describe, with such wonderful minuteness, and ironical force, the thoughts and feelings which, under given circumstances, a certain kind of person might have, that we are forced to admit the reality of the report. She has that faculty of reproducing familiar scenes which comes of observation and general power of statement."(145)

"What right have literary scavengers to arrogate to themselves the exclusive name of realists?" writes Howells, thinking of Zola, the French naturalists and their imitators. "I deny that the dark and foul side of life is any more real than the bright and pleasing. Reality ought at least to demand an equal division of labor between the good and the bad, between misery and happiness, vice and virtue; it might be granted that no preference be shown the latter; but when the former is given sole possession and the latter wholly excluded, the writer forfeits his claim to impartial description of real life as much as if he picked out the golden grains and left the others."(146)

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(144) For creed see also:

Atlantic Mo 32:239-40,	370 '73	(Turgenieff)
37:621-2	'76	(Mark Twain)
48:423-28	'81	(Dostolevsky)

(145) Atlantic Mo 31:493 '73 (Dostolevsky)

(146) Atlantic Mo 40:369 '77

"That 'fiction creates and should not explain', is a one-sided truth. If fiction creates it must be by the skillful blending in new combinations of certain elements or characters of human nature which it finds 'created'."(147)

We know that as early as 1877 Howells was formulating questions about realism.(148) "It would be difficult," he writes, "to get from a convention of fiction writers any definition of realism which would prove satisfactory to more than one or two of the realists themselves. There is not only imparity but disparity in their methods," three of which might be summarized as follows:

1. The description of people and incidents exactly as the author had seen them.
2. A tale of pure invention founded upon one particular fact which is similar to an incident he has really known. This makes the tale seem probable.
3. That in which the localities are real and the names of people exceedingly probable in their commonness and the characters ordinary and without individuality so as not to seem unreal. This is the timid and negative phase.(149)

And so, "What is reality itself?" asks Howells, in trying to discover the relation between the different kinds of realism. "It is unphilosophical nowadays, to do more than ask a question; so I wait for someone else to supply that definition."

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(147) Atlantic Mo 39:746 '77  
Also: " " 39:620 '77

(148) Atlantic Mo 41:396 '78

(149) Ibid.

We now have the answer, and it seems that he has waited for Valdés to supply that definition (1889) in his prologue to La hermana San Sulpicio, which Howells then used, as a basis that same year, in giving us his own literary creed.

The partial incorporation of Valdés' prologue was introduced during a discussion of Miss Austen, (150) as to "why she was great and her novels beautiful" and "what makes a better fashion change for worse; how can the ugly be preferred to the beautiful; in other words, how can art decay? . . . How could people who had once known the simple verity, the refined perfection of Miss Austen, enjoy anything less refined and perfect? . . . Why was not such a taste cultivated and preserved among those poor islanders? One does not ask such things in order to be at the pains of answering them one's self; but with the hope that some one else will take the trouble to do so, and I propose to be rather a silent partner in the enterprise, which I shall leave mainly to Señor Armando Palacio Valdés. This delightful author will, however, only be able to answer my question indirectly from the essay on fiction with which he prefaces one of his novels, the charming story of The Sister of San Sulpizio, and I shall have some little labor in fitting his saws to my instances.

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(150) Howells: Harper's 79:963-7 '89

"It is an essay which I wish everyone intending to read, or even to write, a novel, might acquaint himself with; for it contains some of the best and clearest things which have been said of the art of fiction in a time when nearly all who practise it have turned to talk about it.

"Senor Valdes is a realist, but a realist according to his own conception; and he has some words of just censure for the French naturalists, whom he finds unnecessarily, and suspects of being sometimes mercenarily, nasty. He sees the wide difference that passes between this naturalism and the realism of the English and Spanish; and he goes somewhat further than I should have in condemning it. 'The French naturalism represents only a moment, and an insignificant part of life. . . . It is characterized by sadness and narrowness. The prototype of this literature is the Madame Bovary of Flaubert. I am an admirer of this novelist and especially of this novel; but often in thinking of it I have said, How dreary would literature be if it were no more than this! There is something antipathetic and gloomy and limited in it, as there is in modern French life; but this seems to me exactly the best possible reason for its being.'(151)

"I believe with Señor Valdés that 'no literature can live long without joy'(152), not because of its mistaken aesthetics, however, but because no civilization can live

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(151) Palacio Valdés: La hermana San Sulpicio  
Prologo XXXVIII

(152) Prologo: XXXVIII

long without joy. The expression of French life will change when French life changes; and French naturalism is better at its worst than French unnaturalism at its best.

"'No one,' as Señor Valdés truly says, 'can rise from the perusal of a naturalistic book . . . without a vivid desire to escape from the wretched world depicted in it, and a purpose, more or less vague, of helping to better the lot and morally elevate the abject beings who figure in it. Naturalistic art, then, is not immoral in itself, for then it would not merit the name of art; for though it is not the business of art to preach morality, still I think that, resting on a divine and spiritual principle, like the idea of the beautiful, it is perforce moral. I hold much more immoral other books which, under a glamour of something spiritual and beautiful and sublime, portray the vices in which we are allied to the beasts. Such for example, are the works of Octave Feuillet, Arseve Houssaye, Georges Ohnet, and other contemporary novelists much in vogue among the higher classes of society.'(153)

"But what is this idea of the beautiful which art rests upon, and so becomes moral? 'The man of our time,' says Señor Valdés, 'wishes to know everything and enjoy everything; he turns the objective of a powerful equatorial towards the heavenly spaces where gravitates the infinitude of the stars, just as he applies the microscope to the infinitude of the smallest insects; for their laws



are identical. His experience, united with intuition, has convinced him that in nature there is neither great nor small; all is equal. All is equally grand, all is equally just, all is equally beautiful, because all is equally divine.'"(154)

"'But beauty,' Señor Valdés explains, 'exists in the human spirit, and is the beautiful effect which it receives from the true meaning of things; it does not matter what the things are, and it is the function of the artist who feels this effect to impart it to others.'(155) I may add that there is no joy in art except this perception of the meaning of things and its communication; when you have felt it, and portrayed it in a poem, a symphony, a novel, a statue, a picture, an edifice, you have fulfilled the purpose for which you were born an artist.

"The reflection of exterior nature in the individual spirit, Señor Valdés believes to be the fundamental of art. 'To say, then, that an artist must not copy but create is nonsense, because he can in no wise copy, and in no wise create. He who sets deliberately about modifying nature, shows that he has not felt her beauty and therefore cannot make others feel it. The puerile desire which some artists without genius manifest to go about selecting in nature, not what seems to them beautiful, but what they think will be beautiful to others, and

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(154) Prologo XV

(155) Id. XXV

rejecting what may displease them, ordinarily produces cold and insipid works. For instead of exploring the illimitable fields of reality, they cling to the forms invented by other artists who have succeeded, and they make statues of statues, poems of poems, novels of novels. . . .' (156)

" . . . It is entirely false that the great romantic, symbolic, or classic poets modified nature; such as they have expressed her, they felt her; and in this view they are as much realists as ourselves. In like manner if in the realistic tide that now bears us on there are some spirits who feel nature in another way, in the romantic way, or the classic way, they would not falsify her in expressing her so. Only those falsify her who, without feeling classic wise or romantic wise, set about being classic or romantic, wearisomely reproducing the models of former ages; and equally those who, without sharing the sentiment of realism, which now prevails, force themselves to be realists merely to follow the fashion.' (157)

"The pseudo-realists, in fact, are the worse offenders, to my thinking, for they sin against the living; whereas those who continue to celebrate the heroic adventures of "Puss-in-Boots" and the hair-breadth escapes of "Tom Thumb", under various aliases, only cast disrespect upon the immortals who have passed beyond these noises.

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(156) Prologo XIX-XX

(157) Ibid.

"The principal cause,' our Spaniard says, 'of the decadence of contemporary literature is found, to my thinking, in the vice which has been very graphically called effectism, or the itch of awaking at all cost in the reader vivid and violent emotions, which shall do credit to the invention and originality of the writer. This vice has its roots in human nature itself, and more particularly in that of the artist; he has always something feminine in him, which tempts him to coquet with the reader, and display qualities that he thinks will astonish him, as women laugh for no reason, to show their teeth, when they have them white and small and even, or lift their dresses to show their feet when there is no mud in the street . . . What many writers nowadays wish, is to produce an effect, grand and immediate, to play the part of geniuses.

" . . . For this they have learned that it is only necessary to write exaggerated works in any sort, since the vulgar do not ask that they shall be quietly made to think and feel, but that they shall be startled; and among the vulgar, of course, I include the great part of those who write literary criticism, and who constitute the worst vulgar, since they teach what they do not know. . . .  
 (158)  
 There are many persons who suppose that the highest proof an artist can give of his fantasy is the invention of a complicated plot, spiced with perils, surprises, and suspenses; and that anything else is the sign of a poor and

tepid imagination. And not only people who seem cultivated, but are not so, suppose this, but there are sensible persons, and even sagacious and intellectual critics who sometimes allow themselves to be hoodwinked by the dramatic mystery and the surprising and fantastic scenes of a novel. They own it is all false; but they admire the imagination, what they call the power of the author. Very well; all I have to say is that the power to dazzle with strange incidents, to entertain with complicated plots and impossible characters, now belongs to some hundreds of writers in Europe; while there are not much above a dozen who know how to interest with the ordinary events of life, and by the portrayal of characters truly human. If the former is a talent, it must be owned that it is much commoner than the latter. . . . (159)

"If we are to rate novelists according to their fecundity, or the the riches of their invention, we must put Alexander Dumas above Cervantes. Cervantes wrote a novel with the simplest plot, without belying much or little the natural and logical course of events. This novel which was called Don Quixote, is perhaps the greatest work of human wit. Very well, the same Cervantes, mischievously influenced afterwards by the ideas of the vulgar, who were then what they are now and always will be, attempted to please them by a work giving a lively proof of his inventive talent, and wrote the Persiles y Sigismunda, where the strange incidents, the vivid com-

plications, the surprises, the pathetic scenes, succeed one another so rapidly and constantly that it really fatigues (sic) you.(160) . . . But in spite of this flood of invention, imagine' says Señor Valdés, 'the place that Cervantes would now occupy in the heaven of art, if he had never written Don Quixote, but only Persiles y Sigismunda!'(161)

"From the point of view of modern English criticism, which likes to be melted and horrified and astonished, and blood-curdled, and goose-fleshed, no less than to be 'chipped up' in fiction, Señor Valdés were indeed incorrigible. Not only does he despise the novel of complicated plot and everywhere prefer Don Quixote to Persiles y Sigismunda, but he has a lively contempt for another class of novels much in favor with the gentilities of all countries. He calls their writers 'novelists of the world' and he says that more than any others they have the rage of effectism.

(160) Valdés: Prologo XLVIII reads: ". . . que es realmente para causar asombro (surprise)"

(161) Prologo XLVII-XLVIII cf. Valdés's Spanish which is a little different:  
 "Pues a pesar de tal derroche de ingenio, imagínese el lugar que ocuparía Cervantes en el cielo del arte si no hubiese escrito el Quijote y las Novelas ejemplares. El Persiles y Segismunda era al Quijote y a las Novelas ejemplares lo que son hoy los folletines a las buenas novelas; si bien no hay folletín moderno que admita paragón con aquella obra, porque Cervantes, aunque quisiera, no podía despojarse enteramente de su genio."

"They do not seek to produce effect by novelty and invention in plot . . . they seek it in character. For this end they begin by deliberately falsifying human feelings, giving them a paradoxical appearance completely inadmissible. . . . Love that disguises itself as hate, incomparable energy under the cloak of weakness, virginal innocence under the aspect of malice and impudence, wit masquerading as folly, etc., etc. By this means they hope to make an effect of which they are incapable through the direct, frank, and conscientious study of character.'(162) He mentions Octave Feuillet as the greatest offender in this sort among the French, and Bulwer among the English; but Dickens is full of it (Boffin in Our Mutual Friend will suffice for all example), and most drama is witness of the result of this effectism when allowed full play.

"But what, then, if he is not pleased with Dumas, or with the effectists who delight genteel people at all the theatres, and in most of the romances, what, I ask, will satisfy this extremely difficult Spanish gentleman? He would pretend, very little. Give him simple, life-like character; that is all he wants. 'For me, the only condition of character is that it be human, and that is enough. If I wished to know what was human, I should study humanity.'(163)

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(162) Prologo LII-LIII

(163) Id. XVIX

"But, Señor Valdés, Señor Valdés! Do you not know that this small condition of yours implies in its fulfillment hardly less than the gift of the world? You merely ask that the character portrayed in fiction be human; and you suggest that the novelist should study humanity if he would know whether his personages are human. This appears to me the cruelist irony, the most sarcastic affectation of humility. If you had asked that character in fiction be superhuman, or subterhuman, or preterhuman, or intrahuman, and had bidden the novelist go, not to humanity, but the humanities, for the proof of his excellence, it would have been all very easy.

"The books are full of those 'creations', of every pattern, of all ages, of both sexes; and it is so much handier to get at books than at men, and when you have portrayed 'passion' instead of feeling, and used 'power' instead of common-sense, and shown yourself a 'genius' instead of an artist, the applause is so prompt and the glory so cheap, that really anything else seems wickedly wasteful of one's time. One may not make one's reader enjoy or suffer nobly, but one may give him the kind of pleasure that arises from conjuring, or from a puppet show, or a modern stage-play, and leave him, if he is an old fool, in the sort of stupor that comes from hitting the pipe; or if he is a young fool, half-crazed with the spectacle of qualities and impulses like his own in an apotheosis of achievement and fruition far be-

yond any earthly experience.

"But apparently Señor Valdés would not think this any great artistic result. 'Things that appear ugliest in reality to the spectator who is not an artist, are transformed into beauty and poetry when the spirit of the artist possesses itself of them. We all take part every day in a thousand domestic scenes, every day we see a thousand pictures in life, that do not make any impression upon us, or if they make any it is one of repugnance; but let the novelist come, and without betraying the truth, but painting them as they appear to his vision, he produces a most interesting work, whose perusal enchants us. That which in life left us indifferent, or repelled us, in art delights us. Why? Simply because the artist has made us see the idea that resides in it. Let not the novelists, then, endeavor to add anything to reality, to turn it and twist it, to restrict it. Since nature has endowed them with this precious gift of discovering ideas in things, their work will be beautiful if they paint these as they appear. But if the reality does not impress them, in vain will they strive to make their work impress others.'"(164)

The preceding shows the amount of material that Howells has admittedly quoted verbatim from Valdes. Further influence of this same prologue is found scattered throughout his various critical and literary articles, where he has either quoted a few words and

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(164) Prologo XLII

Quoted in Harper's 79:963-7 '89



phrases, adding "as Señor Valdés says", or where he has given us practically the same idea in different words, or where he has had these ideas voiced by characters of various novels.

Thus, as to "Why should not English novelists have gone on writing simply, honestly, artistically, ever after?" (165), Howells again turns to Valdés for aid in his explanation:

"It was inevitable that in their time the English romanticists should treat, as Senor Valdes says, 'of the barbarous customs of the Middle Ages, softening and distorting them as Walter Scott and his kind did;' that they should 'devote themselves to falsifying nature, refining and subtilizing sentiment, and modifying psychology after their own fancy,' (166) like Bulwer and Dickens, as well as Rousseau and Madame de Stael, not to mention Balzac, the worst of all that sort at his worst." (167)

As an example of the same ideas expressed a little differently, I offer the following illustrations:

"Many young writers are misled by something they call realism, by which they understand the naked presentment of the commonplace without feeling and without that creative art which transforms whatever it touches. . . . The writer must be a student of life, not only through observation, but through feeling; he must have a development of interest, and also a developed power of expression." (168)

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(165) My Literary Passions p. 221

(166) Prologo XXII

(167) Harper's 79:963-967 '89

(168) Harper's 104:676 '02

"Muchos de los que cultivan la novela, entienden que su fin directo es la observación, cuando ésta solo es un medio para descubrir la idea que anima a la naturaleza exterior. La observación de los pormenores, hasta de los más insignificantes, es buena cuando conduce a esto. . . . En una palabra, la materia sobre que recae la observación no debe ser el pormenor de la vida, sino la idea que contiene este pormenor, algo que el artista haya percibido o sentido en él."(169)

The following comment made by Howells in 1878, is interesting to note in comparison with one made when his literary creed is formed:

"All true art is life-like, but all life is by no means artistic; and it is the true artist who, selecting the parts which are, fuses them into perfect works, just as the Greeks modeled their masterpieces, not from one model only, but from the most perfect parts of many."(170)

Note this different idea expressed in 1891 when Howells voices the same thought, that Valdes does in his Prologo of 1889:

"Every true realist knows that in life he finds nothing insignificant; all tells for destiny and character; nothing that God has made is contemptible. He cannot look upon human life and declare this thing or that thing unworthy of notice, any more than the scientist can declare a fact of the material world beneath the dignity of his inquiry. He feels in every nerve the equality of things and the unity of men; his soul is exalted, not by vain shows and shadows and ideals, but by realities, in which alone the truth lives."(171)

"El pormenor (en la vida) no existe en absoluto; siempre es un término relativo. Lo que es pormenor para unos, es hecho principal para otros. . . . O ninguna cosa creada tiene, pues, importancia, ó la tienen todas . . . porque en todas se nos manifiesta la sustancia divina, velada o descubierta. En todo lo particular se nos puede mostrar lo general; en todo lo finito, lo infinito. El arte es el encargado de revelarlo, es el que representa la verdad absoluta en imágenes sensibles. Cuanto

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(169) Prologo XXXIX-XL

(171) My Literary Passions '04

(170) Atlantic Mo 41:132 '78

(Criticism and Fiction  
pp. 200-2. First published 1891 separately.

mas particular, cuanto más determinado sea el objeto, mejor se nos mostrará, porque acusará una nueva forma de la existencia infinita."(172)

At an early date (1872-1881), Howells seemed to put some faith in the literary critic and reviewer. To be sure he requests, as later, that the reviewer "should tell the truth about what is written and that he should never indulge in wholesale denunciation on the one hand or in fulsome flattery on the other",-- saying that he himself practised what he preached. But he went so far as to say that he thought that if the critics did their duty in criticizing the modern fiction that they could lessen the bulk of unworthy fiction then being thrust upon the market and that instead of being agents for the sale of books they should be agents of the people.(173)

This is probably what Howells did believe, before experience taught him that after all literary criticism is seldom unbiased and has very little influence upon the public--which opinion he has later asserted, with the help of Valdés.

"Bad criticism is mischievous enough, however; and I think that much if not most current criticism as practised among the English and the Americans is bad, is falsely principled, and is conditioned evil. It is falsely principled because it is unprincipled, or without principles; and it is conditioned in evil because it is almost wholly anonymous. . . . A bad critic is as bad a

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(172) Prologo XXIV

(173) Atlantic Mo 43:535 '79

thing as can be, but, after all, his mischief does not carry very far. Otherwise it would be mainly the conventional books and not the original books which would survive; . . . Yet upon the whole it is the native, the novel, the positive that has survived in literature. Whereas, if bad criticism were the most mischievous thing in the world, in the full implication of the word, it must have been the tame, the trite, the negative that survived."(174)

". . . Aunque no desprecie la crítica de actualidad, le concedo importancia secundaria. Estoy convencido de que en la mayor parte de los casos no solo no favorece, sino que ejerce una influencia nociva sobre el desenvolvimiento literario de un país. . . . Hay que tener presente que el artista, por la exquisita sensibilidad que le distingue, soporta con dificultad la injusticia, le hiere vivamente; . . . Se necesita ser verdadero atleta de cuerpo y de alma para luchar un día y otro, sin desmayos ni vacilaciones, no solo con la indiferencia del público, sino con los hombres de ilustración y de ingenio que en la prensa se ponen al servicio de esta indiferencia, pero cuando se posee este temperamento al fin se vence, . . . En nuestra nación la novela ha tenido que pasar por esta prueba, donde se han aquilatado los bríos de sus cultivadores."(175)

"Criticism does not inquire whether a work is true to life, but tacitly or explicitly compares it with models, and tests it by them. . . . Moreover, every writer of experience knows that certain critical journals will condemn his work without regard to its quality, even if it has never been his fortune to learn, as one author did from a repentent reviewer, that in a journal pretending to literary taste his books were given out for review with the caution, 'Remember that the Clarion is opposed to Mr. Blank's books.'" (176)

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(174) My Literary Passions pp. 215-220

Also: Harper's 81:476-81 '90

(175) Prologo LXXVII

(176) My Literary Passions pp. 216-217

"Rarisimo es el crítico en quien las circunstancias exteriores del escritor que va a juzgar no influyan en un sentido o en otro si el escritor, con razón ó sin ella, ha adquirido un nombre famoso ó está colocado en la cúspide de la sociedad, el crítico, por desconfianza de sí mismo, por modestia, no se atreve a decirle francamente que encuentra mala su obra. . . . En cambio, si el escritor es novel o no ha logrado todavía los favores del público, aunque su obra le produzca una impresión viva y grata, desconfía de él, vuelve como antes sobre su impresión, y al formular juicio resulta un elogio palido, protector y frío."(177)

"The critic must perceive, if he will question himself more carefully, that his office is mainly to ascertain facts and traits of literature, not to invent or denounce them; to discover principles, not to establish them; to report, not to create."(178)

"El crítico no debe contrariar sistemáticamente la opinión del público; pero tampoco seguirla resueltamente.

"Donde encuentre la belleza debe pregonarla con entusiasmo, que ése y no otro es su deber."(179)

We may see how Howells' ideas and opinions of literary style may have been influenced by those of Valdés, from the close similarity of the passages now to be quoted. It is interesting to know that some of the statements of Howells were made as late as 1904 and even 1920, the year of his death,--which fact might give some proof of the lasting influence of the Spaniard.

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(177) Prologo LXXV and LXXVI

(178) My Literary Passions p. 211

(179) Prologo LXXVI

La personalidad del artista no puede sobreponerse al Arte; su fin único es darnos sinceramente la impresión que la realidad opera sobre él. Lo que se le puede exigir al artista es que nos dé 'la impresión' directa de la naturaleza, que no la fuerza, que no emplee medios artificiosos para representarla. Si hace esto sin pensar para nada en sí mismo y tiene, en efecto, un modo original de concebir el universo, a la fuerza su estilo tendrá que ser original."(180)

"Todo artista tiene una manera de concebir y representarse la realidad; el estilo no puede ser otra cosa que la manifestación sensible de esta manera. . .

"Do not try for style--do not think about it. If you do your work well, patiently, faithfully, truly, style will infallibly be added unto you. That is the one thing you must not try for."(181)

"You will be yourself when you are lost in your work, and then you will come into the only style that is proper to you; the beauty and the

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(180) Prologo LXV

(181) Easy Chair  
Harper's 109:968 '04

grace that any sort of workman has in the exercise of his craft.

"Solo es, pues, legítima la originalidad de un estilo cuando responde a la originalidad del pensamiento."(182)

"You will then have, without seeking it, your own swing of phrase, your own turn of expression, your own diction, and these will be your style by which every reader will know you."(183)

"Pero muchos artistas secundarios, que carecen de ésta, la buscan en la expresión, resultando siempre un estilo trabado, artificioso, que, si por un instante puede deslumbrar, no tarda en hacerse cansado y repugnante."(184)

"But if you have a manner which you have borrowed or imitated, people will see that it is second hand, and no better than something shop-worn or cast off."(185)

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(182) Prologo LXIV

(183) Easy Chair  
Harper's 109:968 '04

(184) Prologo LXIV-LXV

(185) Harper's 109:968 '04

Note the similarity in statements made about style:

"I have attempted to keep away from style as style because I do not purpose to be inartistic if I can help it. I want to be simple and easily understood."(186)

"Deseo ante todo y sobre todo conservar mi independencia artística, la calma y serenidad del espíritu, ser fiel, en suma, a mi temperamento y a mis condiciones."(187)

After reproducing a letter of Lowell's in which the latter recommends to Harriett Beecher Stowe to abandon the "ideal" and cleave to the "real", saying that "the 'ideal' and beauty, and pathos, and success, all lie in being simply natural", (188) Howells comments:

"This is anticipating by a long stretch of time the principles laid down by Señor Valdés in the prologue of his last story. But it is advice that may be advantageously offered still, even to American novelists, some of whom are more or less frightened from their propriety by those 'infants crying in the night' for the moon; not of course the real moon, . . . but the ideal moon of the poets, the silvery orb of the lovesick swain. Señor Valdés set the figure (189) of those who could write novels of effectism at some hundreds, to ten or twelve living authors who could write novels of character; but Mr. Lowell makes it ten million to one; and we do not think that he is more than two or three million out of the way, if that."(188)

(186) Lit Digest 65:53-4 June 12 '20

(187) Prologo LXXIV '89

(188) Editor's Study: Harper's 81:318 '90

(189) Prologo XLV



In 1891 we still have Howells insisting that Valdés was a present passion of his (190), and after having stated that "fiction has already made Reality its Romance" and that "I cannot judge it, I do not even care for it, except as it has done this", he has modified this statement by adding:

"This is what I say in my severer moods, but at other times I know that, of course, no one is going to hold all diction to strict account. There is a great deal of it which may very well be left to amuse. Of the finer kind of romance, as distinguished from the novel, I would even encourage the writing."(191)

It was also in 1891 that Howells read Valdés' La Espuma, the international significance of which is best expressed in Howells' own words.

"It is interesting, that at the moment Maupassant offers us his picture of high life in Paris, and falls to persuade us that it is a portrait of life anywhere, to find the Spanish novelist Valdés painting the aristocracy of Madrid with such vigorous strokes as vivify the scenes of his Espuma. The book, which we hope to take up again, is translated in English under the name of Scum, and this version of the word, which is a bit violent, is not inapt. It recognizes, once for all, that it is the top of aristocratic and plutocratic

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(190) My Literary Passions pp. 179-80 '91

(191) Id. pp. 243-251

'society' in all countries which is really the scum, and not those poor plebeian dregs which mostly boil about the bottom of the caldron and never get to the surface at all. What Valdés' feeling about 'best people of his country' is, the reader of his former novels pretty well knows; but here it is stated in terms coextensive with his book; and the book is important because it is a part of that expression of contemporary thought about contemporary things now informing fiction in all countries but England."(192)

In another article (193), treating of humor, Howells sees fit to introduce again Valdés' Scum and after giving us a short but graphic synopsis of this novel, he points out a resemblance with Tolstoy and Thackeray in the treatment of a certain theme--namely, the attitude of the servant toward his rich master.

"This humor is what forms the atmosphere of Valdés' novels, and keeps his satire kindly even when his contempt is strongest, as in that last novel of his, which the translator calls Scum, and which deals with society as Valdés found it in Madrid. Certain points of resemblance are to be found in 'good' society the world over, nowadays, and one of these is its decorous religiosity.

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(192) Editor's Study  
Harper's 82:483 '91

(193) Editor's Study  
Harper's 82:805 '91

It appears that wherever people so far experience the favor of Heaven as to have nothing to do but to dress handsomely and to fare sumptuously, they are as punctilious in their devotions as they are in any of their social duties. Nothing could be more edifying than the Spanish novelist's study of the 'smart set' of Madrid as he pictures them at a select service in the oratory of a devout lady of their number. They seem certainly to be more vicious than any smart set among ourselves, or at least differently vicious, but they vary little in their theory of life. If they worship God they do not forget their duty to Mammon, and money is to the fore among them as it is among us. One of the leaders is Clementina, the heroine, if the book can be said to have a heroine; who is the daughter of the Duke of Roquena, a robber baron of the stock exchange, an adventurer in Cuba, ennobled for his unscrupulous rapacity in accumulating money, after he returns to Spain. He is a great financier, as such people are with us, sometimes; he knows how to get up 'corners' and to 'squeeze' those he traps into them, quite as if he were an oil or wheat operator. He is the owner of some great quicksilver mines, and one of the most striking passages of the book is the account of the visit he pays these mines with a party of the 'best' people of Madrid in his train of private cars. They are all hanging upon him in the hope

that he will somehow make them rich, but some of the women are shocked at the life, or the death in life, of the miners, who are sufferers from mercurial poisoning, and who go shaking about like decrepit paralytics. The duke tells the ladies that the notion of mercurial poisoning is nonsense, and if the men would leave off drinking they would be well enough; just as one of our own millionaires has told us that the great cause of poverty is 'intemperance'. The duke's assurance comforts the ladies, and they have a banquet in one of the upper levels of the mine, while all around and under them the haggard miners are digging their own graves. Their gayety is a little chilled by the ironies of the young physician of the company, who takes a less optimistic view of the case than the good duke, though his life is spent among the miners and devoted to them. This physician is a socialist, and it is a curious sign of the times that the socialists should be making their way, in fiction at least, as the friends rather than the enemies of the race."

In comparing the treatment of this theme in Valdés' novel and in Tolstoy's The Fruits of Culture, Howells writes:

"The romantic notion of the servant is altogether prettier and much more comfortable to the master and more particularly to the mistress; but it is not put forward by Valdés any more than by Tolstoy. The picture

that the Spaniard draws of the contempt that the menials of rich people feel for them is much the same as that which the Russian offers; and there is something terrible in the mockery and contumely with which the 'old family servants' of the Duke of Roquena use him in the imbecility which is his last phase. To be sure Thackeray had long ago shown the relation of master and man in its true light in that catastrophe where Morgan turns upon Major Pendennis at last with a ferocious explosion of the accumulated hatred of years."(194)

Howells left the Editor's Study in March 1892. In welcoming his successor, Mr. Charles Dudley Warner, he takes occasion to refer again to his "canonized realists", including those from the "furthermost parts of Spain, who have long been the cult of the Study" and fears that the "poor Gods will now be sentenced to exile."(195)

It is not until December 1900, when he revived the Easy Chair department of Harper's, which department he edited until his death, that we again find Howells in the roll of literary critic and referring to Spanish literature. Here we still find his steady adherence to truth and beauty in fiction.(196)

Even though we find Howells' creed unchanged and exemplified by his novels, his literary criticisms are

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(194) Editor's Study  
Harper's 82:805 '91

(195) Harper's 84:642 '92

(196) Easy Chair  
Harper's 104:166 '01

no longer the stormy propaganda for realism, illustrated from and emphasized by Spanish literature, which they were in the Editor's Study. The essays are mostly in conversational form between the "Cynic", the "Sage", the "Critic", or "Our Friend", and the "Chair", and are written in a lighter, more humorous and ironical style. This does not mean that they lose in impressiveness, on the contrary, their true literary value is deeply felt beneath this surface of humor which makes them so pleasingly digestible to the reader; but they do lack that didactic spirit of former years in which one felt that his ideas of realism were continuously thrust to the foreground.

It is not until 1911, that we again find mention of Valdés and his Spanish contemporaries.

"The Cynic--'Wasn't there a time, ten, or twenty years ago, when you were rather addicted to putting the rest of us to shame by boasting the excellence of some Spanish novels which we hadn't read, even in translation? . . . And what has become of all these immortals of yours?'

"They are still living, if you mean Pérez Galdós, and the Countess Pardo Bazán, and Armando Palacio Valdés; but, except Señor Valdés, they do not seem to be writing.

"'And what has Señor Valdés been writing to keep his immortality before the people?' the Cynic pursued.

"The Joy of Captain Ribot, which, as you are so

ignorant of Spanish, you could have read several years ago in French, English, and Dutch; and more recently The Lost Village, a curious study of Spanish peasant life still in its native Castilian, and, more recently still, Tristan or Pessimism, which you may read in your own tongue, and which you will find most richly real and original, if a little too heart-breaking; truly a wonderful book."(197)

Once more we find Howells fitting "Valdés' saws to his instances" and using his work to emphasize the principle he wishes to convey.

"Within this very year (1911) Valdés has published The Papers of Dr. Angélico, a volume of little essays, studies, sketches, and tales, very native, very characteristic, and very poignant, as well as wise, tender, and moving.

"There is a charming bit in this last volume of Valdés', scarcely more than a bit, about two young friends who go to see the great poet Rojas (perhaps not his real name), with no warrant but their worship of his work; he receives them with the hospitable soul of a great poet, and presently he is repeating some of his verses. While he is doing this, his old wife rushes in twice, first to tell him that the cook is going away, and then to say that the parlor-maid has

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(197) Easy Chair  
Harper's 123:958-61 '11

broken a Sevres cup which she has been forbidden ever to touch. Rojas patiently interrupts himself; soothes her tears and cries, and sends her away consoled, and then turns to his young adorers and says, smilingly: 'What a vulgar woman! It can't be that Rojas is married to her!' 'Don Luis!' Aldama protests. 'Don't deny it! That is what you were saying to yourselves this very moment, and what you would say to each other going down stairs. It doesn't surprise me. But it happens that where you observe vulgarity, I see enchanting innocence; where you find rudeness, I find delightful spontaneity; where you see prose, I see poetry. Do you know why? For a very simple reason; for the only one that exists in the world to explain all good things: I love her. And as I love her, I understand her. . . .

"To comprehend anything in this world, my friends, it is necessary to love it. Without love there is no comprehension, no intelligence. You have mothers, who perhaps seem vulgar beings to your friends, but you know very well they are not so. . . .

"The divine essence, immortal good and beauty, are found in every human being, and he who draws nearest to God, and shares His sovereign intelligence, is he who joins himself to his fellow-creatures in the greatest love. No one can fathom a science without loving it, no one can excel in art without a passion for it. To



be religious you must love religion. . . . So I say he who loves another knows what the other is, penetrates his essence. Or what is the same thing, love does not disable judgment, but enables it.'

"You know very well," says Howells, "that it is touchingly true, refreshingly novel, sublimely humane. And this is from a thinker of that Spanish race which we have always tried to believe atrocious, and which a few years ago we were trying so hard to destroy and humiliate in a war of inexorable aggression."(198)  
Then the application of the principle of love enabling judgment, to civic affairs is discussed by Howells.(199)

"Are we to have courts of mercy instead of justice?" asks the Cynic.

"We have no courts of justice now; we have only courts of statute. As it is, far more injustice is done than if all offenses were frankly forgiven."

Howells continues:

". . . if our precious Spaniard, as you call him, can teach modesty of judgment in such things; if he can inculcate the philosophy of the poet Rojas, he will do much more for the family than if he thundered against race suicide. The family is not a brood or litter; it is a sacred condition in which we may know one another almost in the kind if not the measure that we are known to our God--if we still choose to have one."

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(198) Easy Chair  
Harper's 123:958-61 '11

(199) Easy Chair  
Harper's 123:958-61 '11

Then in reversing the situation of poet and wife, making him interrupt her, Howells has him break in with:

"My dear, that infernal scoundrel of a Sancho has been winding Rosinante again, though I've told him a thousand times never to wind Rosinante, but to take his horsemanship out in winding Dapple. I'll break every bone in his body! I'll crack his thick skull for him! I'll . . . I'll . . . I'll . . . ' He can't think what and goes out shaking his whip at an imaginary Sancho, and the great poetess says to the girls:

"What a tiresome old fool! And I worship the ground he treads on because I did forty years ago. You've no idea of his hidden wisdom, etc.'"

This situation Howells calls impossible because "no man is worthy of such generosity. What we mean is that love in a woman exalts itself through their perpetual self-sacrifice in marriage, and in men it debases itself through their constant self-assertion." But to return to the book:

"We lost ourselves altogether in it as we strayed from one delightful paper to another, and tasted the quality of his delicate humor, and experienced once more the charm of his serene philosophy. He has a viewpoint of his own, which is always that of a high humanity, a wise generosity. One will be a sublime allegory, another the masterly study of personality, in another a casual event takes lasting significance under his hand.

"It is a pity that such a book, in our dearth of essays, should not find its way to English readers out of the Spanish, when it is so beautiful. It is beautiful not only because it is full of lovely art, but because it is so true, and because it is so kind. The touch in it is everywhere light; the excellent artist insists no more on his convictions than on his impressions. When we come from philosophic speculation, from the fancy that plays with thought and fact, in the same graceful spirit, to matters of religion, our novelist knows, as few moralists have known, how to penetrate the heart of it, where Catholicism and Protestantism alike cease, and Christianity alone is."(200)

Again in 1912, in an article written in behalf of franchisement, (at the time California gave the vote to women,) we find Howells going to Valdés for support of his argument, with The Papers of Dr. Angélico, in which, in the character of Carmen Salazar, in one of her tertulias, Valdés expounds his idea that "woman has a genius for politics".(201) "Dr. Jiménez (the Dr. Angélico of the Papers) is the supposed reporter of Señora Salazar's talk which begins with her speaking of a volume of Schopenhauer from which she quotes, 'We women are the sex with long hair and short ideas'. She, a great poetess herself, agrees with Schopenhauer's idea of woman's intellectual inferiority and says, 'Art has

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(200) Harper's 123:958-61 '11

(201) Easy Chair  
Harper's 124:471-4 '12

not been, is not, and never will be the patrimony of women. . . . It is imagined that sensibility being the quality most developed in woman, she is called to the cultivation of art. That is a profound error denied by the history of the human race. Where is there a feminine Shakespeare, Dante, Cervantes, or Goethe? Michelangelo, Rembrandt or Titian? In all things that women are ordinarily praised for, men excel them. Even in the making of women's clothes men beat us. You know that the great modistes of Paris are not modistas, but modistos.

"'Woman is best suited for politics. Politics is the art of relating men justly to one another. Well, I hold that woman understands this art by intuition better than man! Woman is more valiant than man--she by nature, he from vanity and when it comes to saving the fireside, she will die with a smile on her lips.' The guests can answer nothing to these historical facts.

"'God has endowed women with a higher sense of justice than men; a jury composed entirely of women would always penetrate more profoundly than one of men into the depths of conscience, and distinguish more clearly there the responsible and the irresponsible.'

"She makes her hearers confess by their silence, that men do not elect the best or the decenter men to make their laws--but claims women would.

"Man is principally an intellectual being, woman a moral being. Therefore, politics which relate to conduct should be intrusted to her rather than him, because she is man's moral superior. He excels in art, literature, philosophy.'

"She cites the Queen Regent of Spain, who during the minority of the present king, administered the country's laws with a wisdom, justice, and mercy almost unknown before, and she asks, 'If you allow that an alien woman, not chosen, . . . is fit to govern her country, has judgment enough to decide for peace and war . . . why do you deny to women elected from among the best of the country, fitness to share in the elaboration of the laws and to decide between the just and the unjust' . . . For you (men) the ineffable glory of conquest, for us the toil and the peril without the glory.

"We ask only the part that God has assigned us in this world--the care of the home and the scepter of justice. It is for you men to discuss the high problems of metaphysics, to sound the depths of theology, to write inspired poems, to model immortal statues and paint immortal pictures, to conquer the forces of nature and make them the submissive slaves of our well-being. It is for us women, poor things! to look after property, to prosecute the evil doer, to reward the good.'

"Well?" we challenged him.

"The Cynic, 'There is a great deal of truth in all that, a great deal of just thinking, of unquestionable reasoning.'

"If women can do this thinking and reasoning, why then oppose their enfranchisement?

"'Because,' (said the Cynic) 'they have not done it, it is a man who has been talking, not a woman; your novelist and not his creation; . . . even in the discovery that woman's distinctive genius is political, it is man who has proved her superiority.'"(202)

. . . . .

We have seen how, from the time of his first knowledge of Spanish literature, Howells has valued it highly. Even as early as 1887, he was ranking Valdes among the best novelists of the world, which valuation he consistently held throughout his life.(203)

We also note that it is in a discussion of the short story or the novella that Howells again ranks Valdes and Spanish literature among the best and informs us that:

"Each borrower gave a national cast to the thing borrowed, and that is what has happened to us, in the full measure that our nationality has differenced itself

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(202) Easy Chair  
Harper's 124:471-4 '12

(203) See Appendix B.

from the English. . . . This rather favors my position that we are in some such period of our literary development as those other peoples when the short story flourished among them. Or, if I restrict our claim, I may safely claim that they abundantly had the novella when they had not the novel at all, and we now abundantly have the novella, while we have the novel only subordinately and of at least no such quantitative importance as the English, French, Spanish, Norwegians, Russians, and some others of our esteemed contemporaries, not to name the Italians."(204)

He also says:

"It appears to be the fact that those writers who have first distinguished themselves in the novella have seldom written novels of prime order. . . . On the other hand, one can be much more confident that the best novelle have been written by the greatest novelists, conspicuously Maupassant, Verga, Bjornson, Mr. Thomas Hardy, Mr. James, Mr. Cable, Tourgenief, Tolstoy, Valdés, not to name others. These have, in fact, all done work so good in this form that one is tempted to call it their best. It is really not their best, but it is work so good that it ought to have equal acceptance with their novels. . . ." (205)

Later we find:

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(204) Literature and Life 1902 p. 114

(205) Id. p. 123

"An Occidental cannot judge the literary quality of the Eastern tales; but I will own my suspicion that the perfection of the Italian work is philological rather than artistic, while the web woven by Mr. James or Miss Jewett, by Kielland or Bjornson, by Maupassant, by Palacio Valdés, by Giovanni Verga, by Tourgenief, in one of those little frames seems to me of an exquisite color and texture and of an entire literary preciousness, not only as regards the diction, but as regards those more intangible graces of form, those virtues of truth and reality, and those lasting significances which distinguish the masterpiece."(206)

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(206) Literature and Life pp. 175-6 '02



### CHAPTER III.

#### OTHER MODERN SPANISH WRITERS.

It was in the Editor's Study during the same time that he was so intensively reading Valdés, that Howells also became acquainted with Valera, Galdós, and Pardo Bazán. It was as early as 1886 that he first read Valera's Pepita Jiménez, published first in 1874 and "which is important in the history of the Spanish novel in that it was the immediate forerunner of the numerous works of Pereda, Galdós, Pardo Bazán, Valdés, Blasco Ibáñez, and others, writers who are the glory of the contemporary literature, and as such it marks the renaissance of a genre, which formerly contesting with the drama the primacy of Spanish letters, had, since the days of Cervantes and Quevedo, languished and declined to its practical extinction in the first decades of the nineteenth century."(207)

It was very popular at home and has been translated into Portuguese, English, French, German, Italian, and Bohemian and together with Galdós' Doña Perfecta is probably still (in 1909) the Spanish book most read by foreigners. Although Valera has distinguished himself

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(207) Lincoln, G. L.: Edition of Valera's Pepita Jiménez Introduction V. 1909.

in poetry, criticism, and the drama and although some claim that his final reputation rests almost exclusively on his critical works rather than his novels, "nevertheless, for the public at large he is above all the novelist, particularly of Pepita Jiménez. It is difficult, however, to affiliate him with any of the recognized literary schools obtaining in his time. Philosophical and psychological in tendency, his novels can scarcely be grouped with those of the realistic school then dominant beyond the Pyrenees. . . . He seems rather to have wished to continue in accordance with old time norms, and his triumph may consist in that, with methods less perfect than those of the modern novelists, he nevertheless constructed works as much imbued as theirs with life, beauty, and artistic grace."(208)

As to his creed and as to whether Valera strictly practised it, we will leave the discussion to Howells.(209)

"Another Spanish novelist of our day, whose books have given me great pleasure, is so far from being of the same mind of Señor Valdés about fiction that he boldly declares himself, in the preface to his Pepita Jiménez 'an advocate of art for art's sake'.

"One is aware of the need of applying more purely literary criterions to Señor Don Juan Valera's brilliant work if one would judge it fairly. Yet we doubt very

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(208) Lincoln, G. L.: Valera's Pepita Jiménez  
Introduction X

(209) See: Editor's Study  
Harper's 73:963-4 '86

much whether anyone will be able to regard it simply as a work of art. We heartily agree with him that 'it is in very bad taste, always impertinent and often pedantic, to attempt to prove theses by writing stories', and yet we fancy that no reader whom Señor Valera would care to please can read his Pepita Jiménez without finding himself in possession of a great deal of serious thinking on a very serious subject, which is none the less serious because it is couched in terms of such delicate irony. If it is true that 'the object of a novel should be to charm through faithful representation of human actions and human passions, and to create by this fidelity to nature a beautiful work', and if 'the creation of the beautiful' is solely 'the object of art', (210) it never was and never can be solely its effect as long as men are men and women are women. If ever the race is resolved into abstract qualities, perhaps this may happen; but till then the finest effect of the 'beautiful' will be ethical and not aesthetic merely. Morality penetrates all things, it is the soul of all things. . . . What is it that delights us in this very Pepita Jiménez, this exquisite masterpiece of Señor Valera's? Not merely that a certain Luis de Vargas, dedicated to the priesthood, finds a certain Pepita Jiménez lovelier than the priesthood, and abandons all

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(210) Valera: Pepita Jiménez Prologue p. 4  
Madrid 1905

his sacerdotal hopes and ambitions, all his poetic dreams of renunciation and devotion, to marry her.

"That is very pretty and very true, and it pleases; but what chiefly appeals to the heart is the assertion, however delicately and adroitly implied, that their right to each other through their love was far above his vocation. In spite of himself, without trying, and therefore without impertinence and without pedantry, Señor Valera has proved a thesis in his story. . . . which argument is enforced with delicate irony, fine humor, and amusing and unflinching subtlety.

"In recognizing these, however, in praising the story for the graphic skill with which Southern characters and passions are portrayed in the gay light of an Andalusian sky, for the charm with which a fresh and unhackneyed life is presented, and the unaffected fidelity with which novel conditions are sketched, we must not fail to add that the book is one for those who have come to the knowledge of good and evil and to confess our regret that it is so. It would be very unfair to it, however, not to say that though it is of the elder tradition of fiction in this, it is not conscienceless, or forgetful of what so many good old British classics, for instance, which we are so much advised to go back to, trampled under their satyr-hoofs; even 'art for art's sake' cannot be that in these days, and the 'beautiful work'

created by 'fidelity to nature' must pay its devoir to what is above nature.

"In the preface to the American edition, which is also a new translation of the novel Señor Valera addresses himself to our public with a friendly directness which cannot fail of sympathetic response, and with a humor of attitude and wit of phrase which will pleasantly recall the prefatory moods of Cervantes. After the fashion of his master, he gives us the genesis of his romance, and he lets us see that if it is not his favorite, it is at least very near to his heart. Yet we feel that this novel, as full of joyous charm, so brilliant in color, so vivid in characterization, is far from representing its author fully, and we hope his publishers will not be slow to follow it up with his Doña Luz which is some sort of a pendant of Pepita Jiménez, with a heroine who is the counterpart of that impassioned little personality.(211)

"The fascination of Doña Luz and her history is that of a most tender and tragic beauty; it is again the story of a priest's love, but Doña Luz and her lover meet long after his vocation has been decided, and there is nothing for him but to die with his secret. We know hardly any figure in fiction more lovely and affecting than Doña Luz, a beautiful girl growing old in a small

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(211) Editor's Study  
Harper's 73:963-4 '86

country place, and marrying in her second youth a wretch infamously unworthy of her love, and suffering patiently and helplessly on. All her traits are studied with a minute and respectful compassion which leaves the reader a fast friend of the author, and, as it were, her intimate acquaintance. It is a character which makes that of Pepita seem slight and narrow, by comparison with a certain noble depth of feeling in it, and all the tones of the picture are graver. Like the story of Pepita, it represents a small group of persons, but each of these is strongly realized, and is made the exponent of local conditions in which the reader seems to live. It is all very fine and masterly work, scarcely to be matched in the contemporary fiction of our language, if that is putting the case too faintly.

"Señor Valera, who, as the reader may know, has been the minister of Spain in this country for several years past, . . . is one of those many-sided publicists of Southern Europe beside whom our own politicians do not seem so gigantic as we like to think them when the other party is not running them for office. He has passed his life, we believe, in the public service. Yet he has not only found time to write the two novels we have mentioned, but four or five others, as well as a treatise on the Poetry and Art of the Arabs in Spain and Sicily, a volume of critical studies, a volume of Literary Judgments and Dissertations, another of poems, another of dramas.

"We cannot attempt to ascertain his standing as an author in Spain; that is a thing for the Spaniard to do; but no reader of his books, even at second hand and in translation, can fail to perceive in them a very great talent. Whatever his theories of literary art may be about the creation of the beautiful and all that, he works primarily, as all the great talents work now, in the interest of what is true, and with a poetic fidelity to facts and conditions. In this way the fiction of our time, such of it as is worth reading, is constituting itself, as never before, the interpreter of history; so that hereafter public events can be accurately read in its light, and whoever would know what this or that people were, at the time they made such and such laws and wars and treaties, may learn their intimate life from the report of their novels."(212)

It is with Galdós (1845-- ) who is by far the most prolific of the modern Spanish writers who take high rank, with whom we next find Howells interested. All (213) have contributed powerfully towards giving Spain the high rank which she holds today in modern fiction.

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(212) Editor's Study  
Harper's 73:963-4 '86

(213) For Galdós and the modern Spanish writers Valera, Pereda, Valdés and Pardo Bazán, see:  
Fitzmaurice-Kelly: History of Spanish Literature 250-1 '08  
Higgin, L.: Spanish Novelists of To-day  
Fortn. Rev. 96:287-98 '11

Of these writers, the works of Galdós, many of which discuss a variety of social problems, are the most serious. (214)

Although, from the Spanish national standpoint, the Episodios nacionales are very important, the books which have given Galdós his reputation outside of Spain are: Doña Perfecta, 1873; Gloria, two volumes, 1876; Mariandela, 1878; La familia de León Roch, three volumes, 1878; La fontana de oro, 1867-68; El Audaz, 1872; La Sombra, 1870.

"While the second series of Episodios nacionales deals with the outer strife through which the nation has passed since the beginning of the century," these novels, belonging to the series of Novelas contemporaneas, "deal with the inner or mental and moral struggles through which it is passing at present. (215) . . . Galdos owes his popularity largely to the vigor of his talent, to his clearness, frankness, and practical common sense." (216)

This is the Spaniard of whom we find Howells writing in 1891. (217)

"I do not know whether the Spaniards themselves rank Valdés with Galdós or not, and I have no wish to decide upon their relative merits. They are both present passions of mine, and I may say of the Doña Perfecta of Galdós that no book, if I except those of the great Russians, has given me a keener and deeper impression;

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(214) Geddes, J.: Edition of Galdós' Mariandela '05  
Introduction III.

(215) Id. Introduction VIII

(216) Id. Introduction XV (217) My Literary Passions 180



it is infinitely pathetic, and is full of humor, which, if more caustic than that of Veldés, is not less delicious. But I like all of the books of Galdós I have read, and though he seems to have worked more cordily out of his romanticism than Valdes, since he has worked finally into such realism as that of León Roch, his greatness leaves nothing to be desired."

It is not clear just what Howells means by Galdós' "romanticism". It is conceivable that he may refer to the manner of the Episodios nacionales, which is, however, that of the historical rather than the romantic novel. I have not been able to ascertain that Howells had read anything of Galdós' other than Doña Perfecta and León Roch which makes the statement above quoted seem like one of those glittering generalities sometimes indulged in even by great critics.

I have been unable to determine the date of Howells' reading of Doña Perfecta but believe it to be sometime between 1836, which marks the beginning of his critical reading of Spanish, and 1891, the date of the above quotation. However, in 1868 we find a critical review of León Roch in Harper's. He had been discussing different ancient religious philosophies and their theories of persecution, and finally the bigotry of the Catholic Church, which last he claims to be "an inevitable part of the retribution which the Catholic Church of to-day

suffers . . . for teaching that a heretic was by reason of his heresy destitute of those claims upon honor, love, and trust to which a righteous life entitled a believer, and that a good life in a heretic ought only to make him the more abhorrent, the more suspected and shunned."(218) He continues with:

"Of course it is impossible for unperverted human nature to receive and act upon those teachings; and the study of a case of perversion, which the Spanish novelist Pérez Galdós makes in his recently translated romance of León Roch, is not the study of a character now common, we suppose, even in Spain. The fact that such talents as Galdós and Valdés are analysing it so unsparingly, yet so justly, as they are doing, contains the promise of its disappearance, or at least its modification, in the course of time, and we may enjoy the pictures they draw with the reasonable hope that the original is never to be generally mischievous again. But we cannot hug ourselves upon the freedom of the Protestant faith from such forms of bigotry; it is the touch of poor foolish human nature in their heroines which makes them universally recognizable as portraits from life.

"In León Roch, as in Marta y Maria, the name of the devotee is Maria, but in this case she is not a

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(218) Editor's Study  
Harper's 76:965 '88

exalted sentimentalist seeking the fulfillment of her selfish pietistic dreams in a convent, but a loving wife whom her religious intolerance transforms into a monster of cruelty and folly.(219)

"The situation is simply that of a young scientific man, whom his great wealth has left to the unmolested study of science, till he marries the daughter of the insolvent and morally bankrupt house of Telleria. The Marquis and Marchioness of Telleria are a worthless couple, who have reproduced their qualities in a family of children amusingly self-satisfied, wasteful and vicious, with a devotion to the offices of the Church unequalled but for their abandon to the corruptions of the world. The exceptions to their vices as well as their absurdities are Maria and her twin brother Luis Gonzaga, a young monk with whom she has passed her childhood in an atmosphere of the austrest bigotry, and whom she regards as a saint. Her husband, in the guilelessness of his gentle nature and the hopefulness of his tender heart, imagines that he is going to form Maria's character and make her over in his own ideal; but Maria's character is formed already, and she is made once for all. She looks upon her husband, who is a scientific agnostic, as an atheist; she always speaks of his atti-

tude toward the Church as atheistical; and so far from lending herself to his plans for a union of aims and sympathies, she sets herself to save his soul in the manner advised by her spiritual director. Failing this, she relaxes him, as it were, to the secular arm; she upbraids him continually with his 'atheism'; she spends half her time at church, and turns his house into a chapel of ease for her overflowing devotions; she schools herself to regard whatever is evidently good and kind and sweet and true in him as of evil; she steels her heart to his love as against a snare of the devil. In the end he abandons her, after a vain attempt to compromise with her by giving up his scientific studies if she will give up her week-day devotions. She consents; but when her sainted brother comes home to die in her house, and shows by his perpetual aversion of the man who tenderly nurses and befriends him that he regards him as a lost and perilous wretch, she cannot keep faith with him. She does what she can to break her husband's heart, but, in her way, she loves him still; she loves him enough to be madly jealous, and when she hears that he has gone into the country, near the woman who had loved him in their childhood, she follows him to denounce and reclaim him. He tells her that he no longer loves her, and her frenzy ends in a brain-fever of which she dies.

"The excellent thing in the treatment of Maria's character is that her sincerity, deadly and pitiless as it is, is honored throughout, and the man whom she makes so entirely miserable never entirely loses his respect for it. She is the incarnation of the terrible spirit of bigotry, of Catholic bigotry, surviving in all its intensity into an age whose light shows the fashionable religiosity of her family comic. . . . They are really a delightful group, with their several vices, their common willingness to live upon León, their patronizing deprecation of his 'atheism', their frank denunciations of each other, and their collective resolutions to reform their extravagant and worldly life, which none of them ever begins to keep. Their friends of the aristocratic world are sketched with like mastery, and it is hard not to give one's heart to men drawn with such wonderful truth as the newly rich Marquis of Fúcar and his thorough scoundrel of a son-in-law, Federico Cimarra. . . .

"Pepita Fúcar is one of those mixed characters who are beginning to get out of life into fiction; but no other sort seems to get into Galdós' books, and perhaps this is the reason why some of his most reprobate people have a hold upon our sympathies. Pepa, untrained, capricious, violent, and impassioned, has the brains and the heart to know León's rare goodness, and to be guided by it, when she would gladly have gone to ruin

from her love of him. She is a modern woman, vivid, intuitive, brilliant, the truthfulness of whose portrait may be felt under these skies of ours--in which the sun is as high at midwinter as in Spain--no less than under her own, and she belongs to that order of women, rare in fiction, who, like Aurore Nancanou in Mr. Cable's Grandissimes, leave the reader with a sense of personal acquaintance. In fact, Galdós' people all do this in some degree, and the action in which they are concerned remains in the mind like something one has known in life.

". . . The story is one that satisfies the best feeling morally; the only lapses are artistic, and these are in the long letter with which the story opens, and the long speeches of the interview with which it practically closes. . . . perhaps the Spanish preach at each other as the persons of that interview do, but we doubt it. In these two places, however, the author seems to have deposited all that was mistaken and tedious in his method, and the conduct of the story between in as brilliant as perfect mastery of his material can make it.

"In fact, it is much better than the conduct of most American and English stories as Spanish art is better than English art, than American art; though,

after saying this, it seems too strong, and we should like to modify it by advising our novelists, if they would learn how to imitate nature, to go learn of the contemporary Spaniards--after they have learned all they can of the Russians."(220)

We next find Howells expressing his appreciation of Emilia Pardo Bazán (1852-1921) who may be considered not only one of the most notable writers of Europe but the most notable since the death of George Sand. She was the first woman member of the "Academia Española de la Lengua" and her works were the most cited, discussed and applauded of Spanish contemporary literature. She is celebrated as novelist, historian, and critic, and took part in the noisy literary arguments of the day. She is distinguished first for the independence of her judgment and secondly for the origin which her inspiration has in Galicia. Most of her books have been translated into English and she herself has made translations of Goncourt, Tolstoy and other foreigners and was the first to introduce Russian literature into Spain.

She definitely directed the Spanish novel, which in the hands of Pereda, Galdós, Alas and Palacio Valdés, had already taken a new course but had not yet turned toward naturalism.(221) "A distinct follower of the

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(220) Harper's 76:965 '88

(221) González, Blanco: Historia de la novela en España  
Madrid, 1909 p. 167

French school of realism"(222), she introduced naturalism into Spain and defended it with her Question palpitante 1882. She considered naturalism to be the sincere expression of truth but did not affiliate with Zola in his exaggerated system of limiting the procedure of the novel to observation and experimentation; a theory based upon Claude Bernard's L' Introduction à l' Etude de la médecine expérimentale; nor does she follow him in considering only the physiological influences and disregarding the higher spirituality and intricate psychology of man, which results in the depiction of "la bestia humana" following his blind instincts.(223)

She prefers realism to naturalism in that it is broader, including "that which has true and effective existence" instead of just "that which pertains to nature".(224) Instead of trying to subject art to the scientific laws of nature where the effect corresponds to the cause, she perceived that no such equation exists in the higher spirituality, and recognizes the affinity of free will and divine grace in fiction.(225) Instead of believing naturalism to be the imitation of that which offends the senses she recognized that however much one intends to copy reality, there is always a point at which one stops, there are things one does not

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(222) Higgin, L.: Spanish Novelists of To-day  
Fortn. Rev. 96:287-298 '11

(223) Pardo Bazán: La Question palpitante  
Madrid 1891, pp. 43-66

(224) Id. p. 56

(225) Id. pp. 58, 63



describe, veils one does not lift; and that the art lies in knowing how to stop within the boundaries of artistic propriety.(226)

Among her popular novels are: La piedra angular, Un viaje de novios, El cisne de Vilamorta, Los pazos de Ulloa, La madre naturaleza, Insolación, Morriña.

It is Morriña which Howells read in 1891 and which is one of the most notable manifestations of the Galician spirit, of which Pardo Bazán is the most illustrious representative in Spanish literature. Of this book Howells says:

"I have read one of the books of Pardo Bazán, Morriña, which must rank her with the great realists of her country and age; she, too, has the humor of her race, which brings us nearer to the Spanish than any other non-Anglo-Saxon people."(227)

He writes in Harper's:(228)

"Another woman's work, but a Spanish woman's this time, has lately been giving us much the kind of pleasure we feel in Miss Jewett's art. The woman is Emilia Pardo Bazán, and the work is the story she calls Morriña, meaning homesickness, we believe, in the Galician dialect. It is about a mother and her son, and the servant girl who comes to live with them in Madrid, because they are all from the same province, and she is

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(226) Pardo Bazán: Cuestion palpitante p. 239

(227) My Literary Passions p. 180

(228) Editor's Study  
Harper's 82:805 '91

homesick in that strange world, and longs for the sound of her own speech, and hungers for her own kind of people. She is of a simple, affectionate nature, impassioned beyond our cold comprehension, and in the shelter of that friendly home, where from the first she is treated more like a daughter of the house than like a servant, it is not long before she falls in love with the son. The expected happens, and it all ends with the poor girl's death by her own hand. The range of life is wider than our fiction commonly permits itself; but it is not wider than that of George Eliot's fiction, and the tragedy is pathetic beyond reporting.

The three principal figures have their setting of other characters, friends, neighbors, spectators, who give the scene the interest of large life, but these three transact the drama, which is very simple and of a sort of fatal eventlessness in its march to the inevitable close. In the meantime their several characters are expressed in colors of conduct and in shades of behavior, always distinct, but nowhere insisted upon; you know them as if you had lived with them. A wrong is done and suffered, but somehow no one seems more to blame than another, and the imagined fact has the same value as a piece of what goes on in the world about us. The girl's nature has a most appealing charm, with the

shadow of her origin thrown forward upon her--she is the daughter of a priest; but perhaps the "connoisseur would say that the young man, just growing out of his mother's control and with the indefinite lines of boyishness not yet hardened in maturity, with his kindness and his selfishness of inexperienced youth, was better done, as he certainly was harder to do.

"Some one ought to put the book into English, and some one probably will. Señora Bazán, who refuses to use her title of countess, with an indifference which we Anglo-Saxons cannot understand, is best known by her pamphlet on realism, La cuestion palpitante, written when the controversy was hottest, and taking the boldest ground in favor of the sincere art which now prevails everywhere but in England, where they still like to read novels of adventure as crude as the Greek romances. The chapter of this robust and vigorous, not to say athletic essay which relates to English fiction is curiously intelligent, and is interesting in its perception that all the English masters but Scott were realists, so far as they knew how, as well as in its recognition of George Eliot as the first novelist of her time.

"The whole essay is redolent of the Spanish humor, which is so like our own, and yet has its peculiar perfume."(229)

In 1892 we again find Howells writing of Pardo Bazán and introducing the subject by remarking that many Spanish pictures have a genuineness and sincerity in interpreting Spanish life, with the same desire to show the life and manners of today, that we welcome in Spanish fiction in the so-called novels of manners. He then discusses two of Pardo Bazán's novels which he had just read, Mary J. Serrano's translation of The Swan of Vilamorta and Mary Springer's translation of The Christian Woman.

"The latter contains a portrait of Doña Emilia in her mature bloom of forty years. The novels are the work of a woman who has had a full experience of life, one emancipated so freely into the modern spirit that she can give with little reserve the knowledge of life bought by her experience. It may be said generally of novelists that men know more than they tell, and that women tell more than they know. But one would not say that of Doña Emilia. Her analysis of woman's nature is too searching, her details as to the habits of men and some women are too intimate for that to be said. Her intention is to reveal entirely the innermost natures of the men and women she selects to illustrate the present phase of Spanish life. She is very effective in this unreserve, and is the mistress of a charm that gives the reader great pleasure. She seems everywhere at home--in the rustic life of Galicia, in Madrid, and

in all the seething questions of morals, politics, education, intellectual and social emancipation which agitate her world.

"Both these stories are in the nature of episodes (one view of modern art being that it should tantalize by leaving a picture unfinished), and in the case of The Christian Woman leaves the reader in doubt as to the effect produced upon her heart by her unencouraged lover. The explanation of the ironical title is very simple. Carmen Aldoa, in order to escape the scandal at home of the love of her father for a bold servant and his possible marriage to her, accepts for her husband an elderly man repulsive to her, a man described as possessing Jewish mental traits and features. Carmen does this wrong to her sex in the spirit of the most exalted self-sacrifice, as a Christian woman. The prior, Father Moreno (an excellent character), says she is one. In this immolation she follows the advice of the Church. The by-standers in the novel, and presumably the author, scout this idea of a Christian woman as an antiquated mediaeval relic. The woman wanted in these days would have piety of a different sort, if, in fact, any piety be necessary. She would rather scrub floors for a living than submit to such personal degradation. Is the author right in assuming that the Church and modern Christianity would require this hateful surrender in a woman? The nephew of the

bridegroom, Salustio, a student of engineering in Madrid, who goes to the wedding, and who seems to be intended for a fair representative of Spanish youth, sees that the uncle is repulsive to Carmen, and falls in love with her himself. In order to be certain that she does not love his uncle, he hides in a tree one morning in order to overhear a conversation between the friar and Carmen. To do him justice, it must be confessed that he is conscious of the meanness of this act. But he does another thing on the wedding night, he and a cracked brain clerical apprentice, which the author cannot be excused for describing anymore than he is excused for doing. There are limits even in an emancipated world which cannot be passed, and which a woman of such brilliant talent and noble aspiration can afford to respect. She has and takes, and that with skill, fully enough freedom in other parts of the book. Salustio becomes an inmate of the house of his uncle and aunt in Madrid. His wide-awake comrade, a youth without illusions, endeavors to draw him from his infatuation by a sort of dissipation which is not left to the imagination of the reader. At the end, the author leaves him sick in bed, under the fancy, inadequately sustained for all that appears, that Carmen loves him."(230)

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(230) Editor's Study  
Harper's 84:967-9 '92

It is quite evident that Howells differs with Pardo Bazan as to just what constitutes the "point at which one stops" and as to just what are the "boundaries of artistic propriety within which one halts", and he continues with:

"The attitude assumed by the Spanish novelist just spoken of and by many modern writers is that the proper subjects for fiction and the treatment of them are to be determined by the artistic and not by the moral sense. . . . Every generation has its rights to protect itself against anything it dislikes or that offends it. . . . it is as good a judge for it as the more enlightened novelists."(231)

"The Swan of Vilamorta is Segunda, a rural poet, selfish, and of more ambition than performance. The book is a delightful study of country life and character, and might be called a realistic idyl. Indeed we are inclined to accept this and the other novel as real transcriptions. The author seems bent upon an expose. The romance is in the play of the human heart, which turns out to be the same old thing. Segunda, the snip of a youth, has a mistress, Lescadra, ugly and twice his own age, who passionately worships him, and expresses her affection by giving him at her house good things to eat, by listening to his verses, and by sacrificing all her little store of fortune to advance his career. The

poet falls in love with the pretty young wife of a politician, an exminister, who comes to Vilamorta to drink the waters, a broken down wreck. Nieves, the wife, (who has herself a romantic attachment to the poet), does not enough discourage her lover, lets herself drift along without unfaithful intentions until the catastrophe comes, which is ironically due to a meeting in the drawing-room, granted by Nieves with the intention of dismissing the presumptuous puppy. The little girl thinks that her mother is bad; the husband thinks so, and enfeebled by disease, dies in the shock of what he supposes wrongly to be the evidence of his wife's unfaithfulness. The idyl is over; the widow and child return to Madrid, and the poet emigrates to America. Poor Lescadra, most pitiful victim of man's selfishness and the pathetic weakness of her own good qualities, takes poison, and so ends. And so not even in Spain, according to our keen-sighted novelist, can you play with fire."(232)

It is not until 1915, after the reading of Blasco Ibáñez' Sangre y arena and La catedral, that we find Howells again enthusiastic about the Spanish literature and proclaiming it the leader of all present day literatures.(233)

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(232) Editor's Study  
Harper's 84:968 '92

(233) Easy Chair  
Harper's 131:957-60 '15



Vicente Blasco Ibañez (1867--( is a Spanish novelist and politician, deeply interested in the social revolution; in the intense reaction against the Church, a priest-ridden royalty, and the general somnolence of the people, ignorant and indifferent. He is an earnest advocate of solidarity among the working class and takes every occasion and every means to put forward his doctrines--in his novels, through his paper El pueblo, and as Republican deputy from Valencia in the Cortes. He is among the most popular of Spanish novelists, his books are read wherever Spanish is spoken and in many translations. It is alleged that his diction is not always of the purest but there is no question as to the truth of the details in his pictures of Valencia and its common folk. He is perhaps the most popularly read Spanish writer in the United States and is known especially by: The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse, The Dead Command, Blood and Sand, Enemies of Women, The Temptress, Woman Triumphant, The Fruit of the Vine. (234)

In a discussion as to how far our mediocrity in American fiction was "native or derivative from the national nature, and how far it might be the expression of contiguity or the result of the manifold alien influ-

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(234) Fitzmaurice-Kelly: Spanish Literature and Primer '22  
Id.: History of Spanish Literature '08. p. 250-1

Higgin: Spanish Novelists of Today  
Fortn. Rev. 96:287-98 '11

Farnell, Ida: Spanish Prose and Poetry '20  
Nation 87:622-3 '08

ences of our adoptive civilizations", he thinks our fiction would be more solid, "more admirable, more laudible if our life were not the social ferment it has become. We need solidification for the purpose of first-class fiction. Take the instance of another solidified nationality, take the Spanish and you have first-class modern fiction easily surpassing the fiction of any other people of our time, now the Russians have ceased to lead."(235)

Howells thinks that the reason for our not coming up to the Spanish is because we are too new, "too much in the melting-pot process", and that England and Russia are too busy in battles. But "our sister-neutral, Spain, is doing some wonderfully good work in the fiction of Blasco Ibañez. We had not heard of him, a year or two ago, and a month or two ago we had not read anything of him. But he seems to be an author very well known in Spain and in all the countries of Europe except England, and there is now even an English version of what is the most famous if not the greatest of his novels, Sangre y arena (236) a study mighty, dramatic, of the Spanish nature or national character as expressed in bull-fighting. The French, Italians, Germans, Russians, Portuguese, and the very Danes know some of his other ten or a dozen novels in translation. Besides he has written travels and short stories.

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(235) Easy Chair  
Harper's 131:957-60 '15

(236) His best are Canas y baro, and La barraca. La catedral ranks among the better while Sangre y arena is among his inferior works.

"I have read only two (novels), but these two are so immeasurably different in several dimensions that we feel as if we might have covered the ground of the author's whole performance in knowing them.

"Sangre y arena is primarily the study of a Sevillian boy, good for nothing otherwise, whose passionate ambition is to be a torero, and as a torero to be nothing less than an espada, the sword that in the climax of every bull-fight gives the death thrust to the bull. Secundarily it is the story of all that he touches in his rise from vagabondage to glory, and then his tragical lapse through decay of his forces into final defeat and death. It is his portrait and the portrait of the Spanish people, who cannot accuse the novelist of an alien's injustice in his study of their ruling passion for the fiesta de toros. No foreigner of the many who have described the bull-fight has portrayed its horror and loathsomeness as this native novelist has done. But the least of his affair is to portray the bull-fight; that's merely an incident of the psychological drama of the torero's experience and the persons of it: his old mother, whose despair of his boyish badness turns to pride in the brilliancy of his rapidly successive triumphs in the arena; his simple, good, beautiful wife, who adores his prowess and condones his sins; the 'differently beautiful' bad aristocrat, Doña Sol, who does not stop short of

possessing him body and soul, and then casts him off as a wicked man of the world might cast off his mistress; the great Sevillian Marquis, his first patron, and all the aficionados who flock about the torero throughout Spain (as if in our civilization he were a supreme prize-fighter) from ranks far above him as well as from the level of his own class; the bull-fighters who fight beside him in the arena, ranging from types of mere stupid courage in the performance of their day's work to one delightful type of confused moral and social thinking; above them all, the torero himself, who is a torero of genius, no more mindful of the formulas and conventions of his art than other great artists, but acting from the inspirations of the moment, and from the instinct of doing unerringly the right thing, and taking his death in the arena rather than confess that years and wounds have disabled him for his last fight. (It) is as wide as all Spain in the portrayal of the national pastime of bull-fighting in every circumstance and incident, but is not so deep as La catedral which is the analysis and synthesis of the soul of Spain as it has lived from the Middle Ages into ours in its iglesia primada, the famous cathedral of Toledo. (Sangre y arena) is a conception of epical dimensions, but with dramatic details of vivid poignancy and a fear-

lessness in touching the loathsome physical facts which passes the courage of any other novelist we know.(237)

"We could have spared some excesses of his unsparingness, (realism) but we felt that it was all very Spanish, as Spanish as the beheadings of the martyrs that the Spanish artists picture or sculpture in the churches.

"We confess that we satisfied our admiration of this very great novelist at less cost to our sensibilities in La catedral than in Sangre y arena. We are not sure that La catedral is not the more prodigious feat of the two; it is at least the more original and daring. The action--but there is no action till almost the latest moment--passes entirely in the cathedral and its gardens and bell-towers. Its persons are the personnel of the cathedral from the cardinal down to the perrero, the functionary whose duty is to keep the building clear of dogs; and from the highest to the lowest their characters are done with art which lapses into emotion only a little toward the close of the story.

"The story is that of the consumptive anarchist who comes from his two-years' prison in Barcelona to take refuge with his brother who has inherited the family employ in the cathedral at Toledo, and who tenderly

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(237) This last seems a noticeable comment after his appreciation of Zola and proclaiming him one of his lesser literary passions. (See My Literary Passions p. 181)

welcomes the broken agitator home to his native gardens and cloisters. He remembers the dying man as the brilliant student at the seminary where the boy surpassed all the others in his preparation for the priest-hood; he has not known of his Carlist campaigns, his wanderings in England and all over the Continent in the renunciation of his vocation, and his arrest and imprisonment as a violent anarchist. He is really a philosophical anarchist of the most peaceful and philanthropical type, and after an interval of repose, in the enjoyment of a sinecure in the cathedral, he cannot help talking his philosophy to his fellow-functionaries--the bell-ringer, the dog-beadle, the gardener, the shoemaker suffered in the sacred precincts, and his own devoted friend and admirer, the chapel master. His doctrine makes the baser of his listeners realize their misery so intensely that at last, against his protests and entreaties, they attempt to right themselves by robbing the richly jeweled shrine of a favorite Madonna. They escape but the anarchist is seized as their accomplice, and dies soon after his arrest.

"'Not a very cheerful story,' said the Sage.

"Well, no,--we have just told you that our nerves are not what they were. We have to draw a line in the pleasures of realism.(238) What satisfied us better than

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(238) This statement helps to explain some of Howells' more severe criticisms, in these later years, of some of Ibáñez' and Pardo Bazán's very "naturalistic" pictures and descriptions--though of course his rather puritanical nature always made him more or less abhor and shun the sordid aspects of life.

the horrible logic of the anarchist's fate--he is made a lovable character--is the wonderful inquiry into the nature of historical and actual Spain. No one ought to go to Spain--and everybody ought to go--without having first read these chapters of his discourse, which adapts itself to the understanding of his simple listeners without losing depth of subtlety. The origins of the people, the rise of the monarchy on the ruins of the earlier democratic forms, and its consolidation by means of the Inquisition, are visioned for these keen, childish minds as we ourselves have never seen them before, and the mysteries of Spanish greatness and weakness are made open secrets. We should say this part was the heart of the book.(239) But the master who wrote it is able to make its pulsations felt in every part. It abounds in characters high and low, which have their being in words and acts springing from their natures and not from any plan set for them; they create the story and are not created for it. The whole scheme which does not seem ruled by its author, is expressive of an understanding compassion unknown to fiction until it became human through truth to life. We should say that no living novelist, now that the incomparable Tolstoy is dead, can be compared to this author, whose triumph in his art is the more

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(239) It would seem that Howells may have taken Ibañez too seriously in taking it for granted that the historical sketch is true.

sensible through its lapses at moments. But it is at moments only that his overweening pity for misery weakens into sentimentality. The humanity of the whole affair touches every sort and condition with the intelligence that is the only justice. From the cobbler to the cardinal, every character is given a fair chance with the reader, who, so far as he has the mind and heart for so much reality, lives with them in the mighty cathedral. Nothing is forced to fit those dimensions, and the illusion (doesn't seem the word) is so perfect and so constant that you do not miss the world which you are dimly aware of going on outside, but which penetrates it only in the several types of sight-seeing tourists very sparingly intruded.

"It recalls the days when you lauded the Russian novelists to the disadvantage of all others," said the Sage.

"Not the Spanish!" we protested."

It is hardly probable that these mark the end of Howells' reading of Spanish literature--after such high evaluations and expressions of appreciation one can imagine him frequently interested in some Spanish author, in the original or in translation,--but as far as I am able to ascertain, they are the last to be publicly commented upon. Moreover, we cannot say that Valera, Galdós, Pardo Bazán or Blasco Ibáñez have directly influenced Howells, their chief service was in strengthening Howells' love and appreciation for the Spanish literature already



highly valued.

We have seen how Valera, the forerunner of realism in Spain, with his theory "of art for art's sake" was in direct opposition to Howells, although in spite of this his works had a life-likeness, a beauty and an artistic grace which made them most enjoyable to the latter.

Although we find similarities between Galdós and Howells, it cannot be called influence. Their works are always absolutely clean (240), but in Howells this is due to his inherent dislike for the vulgar, to his almost puritanical nature. It is also true that Galdós' novels indicate a philosophical tendency, a strong liking for the practical, and treat of social problems; but Howells tells us that it was Tolstoy who most greatly influenced him in this direction. (241) Although both excel in describing manners and customs in both town and country and in off-hand conversations between characters of all kinds, it is an inherent characteristic of each. But with Galdós, "the beauties of nature receive scant treatment and there is little attempt made to give more than the setting necessary to the incidents" (242), which is in contrast to Howells whose descriptions and characters are so much a part of one another. Galdós is as little subjective as an author can well be--the opposite of Howells whose subjectiveness is ever present.

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(240) Higgin, L.: Spanish Novelists of Today  
Fortn. Rev. 96:287-98'11

(241) First read Tolstoy in 1887, and Galdos in 1888.

(242) Geddes, J.: Galdós' Marianela '03. Intro. XIV

The reading of Pardo Bazán was not until 1891, too late for any direct influence, for we have already had Howells' mature creed expressed in 1889. Moreover, although she did not introduce the crude French naturalism, the documental novel, the novela determinista, "of social ugliness and repulsive brutishness only"(243), she did emphasize the picturing of the lower classes, and introduced a certain freedom in the treatment of scabrous subjects which goes beyond Howells' idea of artistic beauty. Then too, Pardo Bazán is essentially Catholic (244); for her the Catholic dogma of the original sin reconciles free-will and divine grace. She does not serve a cause, but defends a conviction. She writes not to please, but to express the results of her observation and study.

Aside from the fact that Howells' acquaintance with Blasco Ibáñez was too late for direct influence, the latter belongs perhaps to the cruder school of naturalism and, like others of his school, he bores one at times with the excessive and minute descriptions of outward objects, and repels one with much that is coarse and nauseous, and is without that sense of humor that keeps things in proportion. Howells may be somewhat detailed at times but he certainly cannot be accused of depicting the coarse and nauseating; as for his humor, we need make no comment. Blasco treats of the dregs of the lowest herds

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(243) Cejador: op. cit. p. 273

(244) Pardo Bazán: La cuestión palpitante 1891. p. 58

of the people, whether in the vineyards, the fisherfolk, or the pueblo bajo in the low quarter of Madrid, and the misery is always unrelieved in whatever form it is shown. Howells touches little upon this phase and gives us the respectable middle class. However, Blasco has hours of high imagination, when he is deeply sensible of the beauty that exists in ordinary human life in close juxtaposition to its ugliness, and he has the poets power of rendering this.(245)

Both are deeply interested in social welfare, but their treatment of this is quite different. We have seen how Howells advances his theories in a quiet way, and we feel his deep interest and the force of his remarks; but Blasco believes in the efficacy of creating dissatisfaction as a possible means to advance.(246) He knows the strength of the established system and his revolutionary heroes die defeated by the organised forces of social and ecclesiastical conservatism.(247)

As we have seen, Howells' reading of Spanish literature was devoted mostly to the novel, and his knowledge of the drama was somewhat limited, as is evidenced by the following:

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(245) Fitzmaurice-Kelly: Spanish Literature--A Primer  
Farnell, Ida: Spanish Prose and Poetry  
Fortn. Rev. 96:287-98  
See also Bibliography on Blasco Ibáñez.

(246) Higgin, L.: Spanish Novelists of To-day  
Fortn. Rev. 96:287-98 '11

(247) Fitzmaurice-Kelly: History of Spanish Literature  
London '08, p. 250-1

"I can only remember my pride and joy of finding my way alone through it (Moratin's History of Spanish Drama ) and emerging from time to time into the light that glimmered before me. I cannot at all remember whether it was before or after exploring this history that I ventured upon the trackless waste of a volume of the dramatists themselves, where I faithfully began with the earliest and came down to those of the great age when Cervantes and Calderón and Lope de Vega were writing their plays. It was either my misfortune that I read Lope and not Calderón, or that I do not recall reading Calderón at all, and know him only by a charming little play of Madrid life given ten or fifteen years ago by the pupils of the Dramatic Academy in New York. My lasting ignorance of this master was not for want of knowing how great he was, especially from Lowell, who never failed to dwell on it when the talk was of Spanish literature. The fact is I did not get much pleasure out of Lope, but I did enjoy the great tragedy of Cervantes, and such of his comedies as I found in that massive volume. . . . I did not realize, however, till I saw that play of Calderón's, in New York, how much the Spanish drama has made Madrid its scene; and until one knows modern Spanish fiction one cannot know how essentially the incongruous city is the capital of the Spanish imagination. Of course the action of Gil Blas largely passes there, but Gil Blas is only adoptively a Spanish novel, and the

native picaresque story is oftener at home in the provinces; but since Spanish fiction has come to full consciousness in the work of the modern masters it has resorted more and more to Madrid. If I speak only of Galdós and Valdés by name, it is because I know them best as the greatest of their time; but I fancy the allure of the Capital has been felt by every other modern more or less; and if I were a Spanish author I should like to put a story there."(248)

We have seen throughout this study the high evaluation Howells places upon Spanish literature and the few following remarks are interesting from this viewpoint. In 1888 we find Howells saying:

"We are inclined to make much of the good fiction that comes to us from Spain, because we get no more from the only country (249) that sends us better."(250)

Also of interest is his unusual statement about the affinity between the Anglo-Saxon and the Spanish mind-- a comparison perhaps seldom thought of.

"There has always been a strange affinity between the Anglo-Saxon mind and the Spanish mind; the two races brought the romantic drama to its highest perfection, and both rejected the classicist, and the same comic strain seems to run through both people, so widely differenced by origin, by language, by religion, and by polity.

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(248) Familiar Spanish Travels p. 118-9. See Ap. A for other Spanish readings. Howells is right in saying that the Spanish drama has generally made Madrid its scene.

(249) Russia.

(250) Editor's Study Harper's 77:802 '88

As we suggested in the last Study, the humor of Valdés is of the same nature as that of some refined American humorist--say Mr. Warner, or Mr. Aldrich, or Mr. Cable-- and we think the reader of Shakespeare and Cervantes will often be struck by the kindred qualities of their humor. It is then perhaps not through the imitation of Cervantes, so much as through the aesthetical affinity of the Iberian and Anglo-Saxon races, that Irving reflects some of his traits."(251)

In a discussion upon the advisability of striving for a national literature, Howells thinks that there may have been a time in the history of literature when nationality was supremely desirable, but that nowadays the great and good things in literature are not the national features, but the universal features. "For instance, the most national fiction at present is the English and it is the poorest, except the German which is not at all; while the Russian and the Spanish, the Norwegian and the Italian, the French and the American, which are all so much better are distinguished by what they have in common rather than what they have in severalty."(252)

It is in the same year, (1891) that we find Howells referring the aspiring author to the Spanish picaresque novel as a basis for story writing.

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(251) Editor's Study  
Harper's 1888. Vol. 76:<sup>4</sup>782

(252) Editor's Study  
Harper's 83:964 '91

"I do not know that I should counsel others to do so, or that the general reader would find his account in it, but I am sure that the intending author in American fiction would do well to study the Spanish picaresque novels; for in their simplicity of design he will find one of the best forms for an American story. The intrigue of close texture will never suit our conditions, which are so open and loose and variable; each man's life among us is a romance of the Spanish model, if it is the life of a man who has risen, as we nearly all have, with many ups and downs.

"The story of Lazarillo is gross in its facts, and is mostly 'unmeet for ladies', like most of the fiction in all languages before our times; but there is an honest simplicity in the narration, a pervading humor, and a rich feeling for character that gives it value."(253)

After having seen the great extent of Howells' knowledge and love for Spanish literature it seems strange to find him knowing so little of the Cid. It seems incredible that he who has read so much, has made so many criticisms of Spanish works, who is especially such a lover of Don Quixote should care practically nothing for Spain's greatest hero and should say:

"In fact, I have no great opinion of the Cid as an historical character or a poetic fiction. His epic, or his long ballad, formed no part of my young study in

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(253) My Literary Passions, p. 107  
For further evaluations of Spanish literature see: Appendix B.

Spanish, and when four or five years ago a friend gave me a copy of it, beautifully printed in black letter, with the prayer that I should read it sometime within the twelve month. I found the time far too short. As a matter of fact I have never read the poem to this day, though I have often tried, and I doubt if its author ever intended it to be read. He intended it rather to be recited in stirring episodes, with spaces for refreshing slumber in the connecting narratives. As for the Cid in real life under his proper name of Rodrigo de Vivas (sic) though he made his king publicly swear that he had had no part in the murder of his royal brother, and though he was the stoutest and bravest knight in Castile, I cannot find it altogether admirable in him that when his king banished him he should resolve to fight thereafter for any master who paid him best. That appears to me the part of a road-agent rather than a reformer, and it seems to me no amend for his service under Moorish princes that he should make war against them on his personal behalf or afterward under his own ungrateful king. He is friends now with the Arabian King of Saragossa, and now he defeats the Aragonese under the Castilian sovereign, and again he sends an insulting message by the Moslems to the Christian Count of Barcelona, whom he takes prisoner with his followers, but releases without ransom after a contemptuous audience. Is it well, I ask, that he helps one Moor against another, always for what there is in it,



and when he takes Valencia from the infidels, keeps none of his promises to them, but having tortured the Governor to make him give up his treasure, buries him to his waist and then burns him alive? After that, to be sure, he enjoys his declining years by making forays in the neighboring country, and dies 'satisfied with having done his duty toward his God'."(254)

It is true that the Cid allied himself with one master and then another on his personal behalf; but it was only in accordance with the times when all national heroes depended upon force and strategy. As for keeping none of his promises to the Moors after their aid in capturing Valencia and as for half-burying and burning the Valencian governor, Howells has taken a one-sided view.

I have been able to find but one reference telling of such an act on the part of the Cid. This was in Clark H. Butler's The Cid Campeador published in New York and London, 1897. This book was based upon cronicas and histories of early date, some in Arabic which fact might lead one to believe that they were possibly prejudiced against the Cid. Although we know that the actual Cid was not as idealized--in general, history tells us that in 1088, the Cid did make an agreement with Mostain of Zaragoza to capture Valencia--Mostain to have the city, the Cid the booty--and that at the opportune moment Rodrigo showed great repugnance at helping Mostain, alleging that Alcahir, governor of Valencia was vassal and tributary of Alfonso VI. But they did not storm the city,

Mostain returned home disgusted and the Cid entered Valencia on friendly relations with Alcahir, promising to defend him against his enemies in exchange for a certain sum.

In 1092, Alcahir of Valencia was assassinated, however with no blame to the Cid, who had left there in the meantime and had had another misunderstanding with the king. Upon hearing of the death of Alcahir, the Cid planned to reconquer Valencia, which he did in 1094. He made himself vassal of Alfonso and governed the vicinity with comparative justice permitting the Moors to conserve their magistrates, cult, laws, tribunals, usages and customs. He died in 1099, a natural death.(255)

Again we repeat that it seems strange that the lover of Don Quixote de la Mancha, known as El Hidalgo Ingenioso should care so little for Don Rodrigo de Bivar, commonly called El Cid Campeador. "For Spain is proud of having produced two such heroes and challenges the whole world to produce another such gallant, noble warrior, so redoubtable in arms, so Christian in spirit, so generous in heart, as the Cid; whom she loves to call El mio Cid, he who was born in a good hour; who girded on his sword on a lucky day; who conquered six and thirty kings and was never conquered; vencedor jamás vencido. The comparison of Spain's two most famous caballeros is not without reason. For the Cid of the Spanish people is as much a hero of romance as Don Quixote, and Don Quixote

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(255) Montaner y Simón: Diccionario Enciclopédico Hispano-Americano. See Cid  
 Altimira, R.: Historia de España Vol.I 367-70

is as much of a Spanish hero as the Cid, and in the eyes of all true Spaniards, he is part and parcel of the Spanish nation as really as if he had been enrolled in the Spanish census. In both of them the real and the romantic meet in a wonderful way."(256)

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(256) Gibson, J. W.: The Cid Ballads, Cambridge, '97  
Preface.

## CONCLUSION.

I have shown how one of the first books which took early hold upon the boyish imagination of Howells, causing him to play "Moors and Spaniards" along with "Indian", was Cervantes' Don Quixote. I have traced the influence of this book throughout his life and found it to be an ever present source of inspiration and pleasure. It was here that he seemed to be first and nearly always impressed by the quality and importance of wholesome humor in literature, which has been such a pleasure and delight to him. It was Cervantes who endeared the Spanish race to him and was thus perhaps indirectly responsible for his desire to probe further into Spanish literature.

Although I find but one instance of direct influence of Don Quixote upon the novels of Howells (257), I have partly shown with what frequency the book or its author has appeared in his critical works.(257) Its chief influence, aside from that of instilling in Howells a love and appreciation for Spain and its literature, is perhaps the fact that it was here that Howells received his first and lasting lessons in what he considered should compose

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(257) See Chapter I, pp. 24-30 and Appendix B for all references to Cervantes or Don Quixote.

the qualities that should belong to the Great American Novel (258), qualities that are manifested especially in A Hazard of New Fortunes, said by critics (259) to be the Great American Novel.

I have followed the literary growth of Howells as it naturally developed along with the acquisition of his knowledge of the works of Valdés. I have shown that his final passion for the true and the beautiful was not something acquired after the reading of this Spanish author, but rather the development of an inherent feeling--which growth was no doubt enhanced by his reading of Valdés, from whom he quoted to convey his own creed and to whom he so frequently and naturally turned for the support of some argument or principle set forth in his numerous critical articles.(260)

Thus we see that the greatest influence of Valdés is not found to be exerted directly upon plot and character in the novels of Howells, but appears rather in the emphasizing of the same principles of the realistic school as shown by the application of his literary creed in the critical works of Howells, and as manifested practically in the novels; also, that Valdés' influence is evident in strengthening his love and appreciation of Spanish literature, and inspiring him to attempt to incul-

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(258) See Cervantes Chapter p. 24.  
Also My Literary Passions, p. 21

(259) Quinn, A. H.: Cent 100:674-81 Sept '20

(260) See Appendix B.

cate this same love and appreciation into the hearts of his American readers, in aiding him to become the spokesman among us for European realism, at least for an American form of it.

I have also shown how the reading of Valera, Galdós, Pardo Bazán and Blasco Ibáñez had no direct influence upon the novels of Howells. However, they greatly served to widen his knowledge, extend his sympathies, and heighten his appreciation of Spanish literature.

I have shown that, with one exception, the books compared show very little direct influence upon the novels of Howells, and that their similarities are more those characteristic of the same school than of individual works; and that their main influence is upon his literary creed as a whole rather than upon any single novel; on the other hand, one is impressed by the importance and place given by Howells to Spanish literature, and the frequency with which Spanish literature or life either forms the main theme or is touched upon in his innumerable writing. So much so that Howells is repeatedly quoted as an authority in articles found in Encyclopedias, introductions to Spanish text books, magazines and critical works.

Illustrative of the proportion of space given to Spanish in the Editor's Study and Easy Chair essays of Harper's, I offer the following:

Editor's Study  
December 1885--March 1892.

Total number of essays written . . . . . 76

Wholly or partly on definite Spanish authors  
or works. . . . . 36

On Spain or its literature in general . . . . . 7

Total number on Spanish 43, which is more than  
one-half of the essays written.

Editor's Easy Chair  
December 1900--April 1920

Total number of essays written. . . . . 245

Wholly or partly on definite Spanish authors  
or works . . . . . 32

On Spain and its literature in general . . . . . 16

The total number of essays written on Spanish is 48,  
making the number treating of Spanish about 1/5  
of the total essays written. But in proportion  
there were fewer real literary essays here than  
in the Editor's Study.                   =

Throughout his writings is evidenced an appreciation  
for Spanish literature of which he writes:

"No French writer has moved me so much as the Span-  
ish, for the French are wanting in the humor which en-  
dears these, and is the quintessence of their charm."(261)

Also especially noticeable is the number of times  
in which he mentions Valdés in the same breath with Tol-  
stoy, the two greatest influences in his literary devel-  
opment. Moreover, at a time when the general conception

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(261) My Literary Passions p. 181. Written at about  
the age of fifty.

seems to be that Spain has no literature or great writers, it is quite a satisfaction to find that Howells repeatedly mentions Valdés and Galdós along with Tolstoy, Tourgeniéf, Hawthorn, Manzoni, Henry James, Thomas Hardy, Maupassant, Bjornson, Giovanni and others; and that he emphasizes the fact that Cervantes and Shakespeare are ranked the same.

Rowland Grey has said that "Howells' best epitaph is his own words admonishing us to be 'truthful and natural', a doctrine which he emphasized with the aid of Valdés.(262)

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(262) Grey, Rowland: W. D. Howells the Last  
Fortn. Rev 115:154-63 Ja '21



APPENDIX A

SPANISH BOOKS READ BY HOWELLS AND DATE OF READING.

Fiction

	Date Read	First Published
Blasco Ibáñez, Vicente		
<u>La catámedral</u> . . . . .	.1915. . . . .	.1903
<u>Sangre y arena</u> . . . . .	.1915. . . . .	.1906
Cervantes Saavedra, Miguel de		
<u>Don Quixote</u> . . . . .	.1849 on . . . . .	.1742
Jarvis' translation		
<u>Don Quixote</u> . . . . .	.1888 . . . . .	.1888
Ormsby's version		
<u>Persiles y Sigismunda.</u> . . . . .	.1885 . . . . .	.1617
Palacio Valdés, Armando		
<u>El cuarto poder.</u> . . . . .	.1888. . . . .	.1888
<u>José</u> . . . . .	.1886. . . . .	.1885
<u>The Joy of Captain Ribot</u> .1911. . . . .		.1899
(La alegría del Capitán Ribot)		
<u>La hermana San Sulpicio.</u> .1889. . . . .		.1889
<u>El idilio de un enfermo.</u> .1889. . . . .		.1884
<u>The Lost Village.</u> . . . . .	.1911. . . . .	.1903
(La aldea perdida)		
<u>Marta y María</u> . . . . .	.1886. . . . .	.1883
<u>Maximina</u> . . . . .	.1888. . . . .	.1887
<u>Riverita</u> . . . . .	.1886. . . . .	.1886
<u>Scum</u> . . . . .	.1891. . . . .	.1890
(La espuma)		

	Date read	First published
<u>Tristan or Pessimism. . . . .</u> <u>(Tristan o el pesimismo)</u>	1888 . . . . .	1888
Pardo Bazán, Emilia		
<u>A Christian Woman . . . . .</u> Mary Springer's translation of <u>Una cristiana</u>	1892 . . . . .	1890
<u>Morrina . . . . .</u>	1891 . . . . .	1889
<u>The Swan of Vilamorta . . . . .</u> Mary J. Serrano's translation of <u>El cisne de Vilamorta</u>	1892 . . . . .	1885
Pérez Galdós, Benito		
<u>Doña Perfecta . . . . .</u>	between 1886-91. . . . .	1876
<u>La familia de León Roch . . . . .</u>	1888 . . . . .	1878
Valera, Juan de		
<u>Doña Luz. . . . .</u>	1886 . . . . .	1879
<u>Pepita Jiménez. . . . .</u>	1886 . . . . .	1874
<u>Non-fiction.</u>		
Palacio Valdés, Armando		
<u>Prologo: Marta y María . . . . .</u>	1886 . . . . .	1883
<u>Prologo: . . . . .</u> <u>La hermana san sulpicio</u> Essay on realism	1889 . . . . .	1889
<u>Papers of Dr. Angélico. . . . .</u> Essays, studies, sketches	1911 . . . . .	1911
Pardo Bazán, Emilia		
<u>La cuestion palpitante. . . . .</u> Essay on realism	1891 . . . . .	1883
Valera, Juan de		
<u>Prologo: Pepita Jiménez. . . . .</u>	1886 . . . . .	1874

Miscellaneous Works in Spanish

These are listed in the chronological order of his readings

Hurtado de Mendoza (?) Date read

Lazarillo de Tormes . . . . . 1851

Royal Spanish Academy

Gramática castellana . . . . . between 1851-4

A volume of Spanish Dramatic Authors . between 1852-4  
Includes Calderón, Lope, Cervantes

Fernández de Moratín, L.

Origins of the Spanish Theatre . . . about 1854  
(Discurso Histórico sobre los  
origines del teatro español)

Lope de Vega

A few comedies of . . . . . 1855

Ballads

Guzman el bueno and others . . . . . 1855

Tamayo y Baus

Un drama nuevo . . . . . 1858

Gutiérrez, Federico Lozano

Historia de Ronda . . . . . 1911

Works connected more or less closely with Spain

Irving, W.

Date read

The Conquest of Granada . . . . . 1850 (?)

History of the Civil Wars of Granada . between 1851-4

Tales of the Alhambra . . . . . 1852-4

	Date read
Conde, J. A.	
<u>The Dominion of the Arabs in Spain</u> . . . . .	between 1852-4
Schlegel, August W.	
<u>Lectures on Dramatic Literature</u> . . . . .	1855
Calvert, Albert F.	
<u>Southern Spain</u> . . . . .	1913
Gautier, Theophile	
<u>Voyage en Espagne</u> . . . . .	.1911-13
Hume, Martin A. S.	
<u>Modern Spain</u> . . . . .	.1911-13
Longfellow, H. W.	
<u>The Spanish Student</u> . . . . .	1851 (?)

APPENDIX B.

W. D. HOWELLS' REFERENCES TO SPANISH LITERATURE

Ballads

Guzman el bueno and others . . . My Literary Passions  
1904, p. 104

Id. Familiar Spanish Travels, p. 325  
1913

Blasco Ibáñez

La catedral . . . . . Easy Chair  
Harper's 131:957-60 '15

Id. Howells' Introduction to  
Mrs. W.A. Gillispie's translation.  
1919

Sangre y arena . . . . . Easy Chair  
Harper's 131:957-60 '15

Calderón . . . . . Editor's Study  
Harper's 80:644 '90

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Cervantes . . . . . My Literary Passions  
pp. 17-22, 26, 35, 61, 82, 105, 111

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pp. 71-74, 132

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 pp. 3, 11, 22, 23, 43, 73, 133,  
       167-9, 171-3, 309, 320.
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 1909, pp. 9, 24
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 76:481 '88  
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Index.

- Abridgement of Don Quixote, 19, 36, 40, 43-4  
Accomplishments in connection with Spanish, 15-19  
Affinity between the Angle-Saxon and the Spanish mind, 150-151  
Alas, Leopoldo, 128  
Aldrich, Thomas Bailey, 151  
American Literature  
    Advisability of a national literature, 151  
    Advise to American novelists, 65  
    Blinks at Latin frankness, 74-75  
    Behind the Spanish, 127-8, 138-9  
    Development of, 2  
    Effect of a literary tradition, 75  
    Mediocrity of American fiction, 138-9  
    Melting pot process, in, 139  
    Nature treatment; see the Spanish, 127  
    Novellae, 111-113  
As Spanish authority, 159  
Atlantic Monthly, 6, 14, 15, 17, 76  
    Contributor's Club, 14  
    Growth of Howells' creed, 15  
    Number essays written, 17  
    Style of essays, 15  
El Audaz-Galdós, 121  
Austen, Jane, 79
- Ballads--of Lope de Vega, 14  
Barrett, Lawrence, 17  
Bernard, Claude  
    L'Introduction a l'Etude de la medecine experimentale, 129  
Biographical sketch of Howells, 7-19  
Bjornson, 1, 3, 112, 113, 161  
Blasco Ibañez, 114, 137-145  
    As a novelist, 138-9  
    La catedral--Gillispie translation, 19  
    La catedral  
        Criticism and synopsis, 142-145  
        Ranking 141-2
- Comparison with Howells, 144-5, 147-8  
    Church, vs. the, 138  
    The Dead Command, 138  
    The Enemies of Women, 138  
    The Fruit of the Vine, 138  
    The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse, 138  
    Humor of, 147

- relation to Howells, 147, 159
- Religion, treatment of, 138, 142
- Sangre y arena
  - Review and criticism of, 140-2
  - See Sangre y arena
- Social aspects of novels, 140-5, 148
- The Temptress, 133
- Woman Triumphant, 138
- Works mentioned, 138-9
- Bohemian literature, 114
- Dulverlyton, Sir Edward George, 87, 90
  
- Cable, George O., 112, 15
  - Grandissimes, 127
- Calderon, 36, 149
- Catedral, La--Blasco Ibanez
  - Gillette translation of, 19
  - Literary review and synopsis of 142-45
  - Realism of, 143
  - Religious aspects, 142-5
  - Social aspects, 142-5
- Cejador, 64
  - Historia de la lengua castellana
- Cervantes, Saavedra de, 6, 9, 16, 20-44, 48, 66, 86, 109, 114, 149, 157
  - Basis for Great American Novel, 24, 158
  - Comparison with Shakespeare, 37-8, 40, 150-1, 161.
  - Depreciation of, 41
  - Don Quixote--See Don Quixote
  - Humor of, 32-4, 38-41, 150-1, 157
  - Irving, 32, 24, 151
  - Lowell, 36
  - Mark Twain, 35-6
  - Shakespeare, 40, 150-1
  - Influence on Howells, 24-31, 35, 157-8
  - Literary Philosophy of, 38
  - Persiles y Sigismunda, 35, 35-6
  - Plays of, 149, 150
  - Ranking, 24, 37, 38, 40, 85, 86, 151, 161
  - Schevill's Life of Cervantes, 37
- Christian, Woman, The--Pardo Bazan, 133-136
  - Critical review and appreciation, 133-36
  - Religion, 134-6
  - Love, 134-5
  - Realism, 136
- Chronological order of Howells' knowledge of Spanish, 7-19
- Cid, 152-6
  - Depreciation of, 152-4
- Cid Hamet Ben-Engeli, 32
- El cisne de Vilamorta, Pardo Bazan, 130
  - See the Swan of Vilamorta

Clemens, S. L. See Mark Twain  
 Comparison with Blasco, 141-4, 145-8  
 " with Galdos 145-7, 158  
 " Pardo Bazan 145, 147  
 " Valera 115-118, 145-6  
 " Valdés 45-61, 63-7, 84-5  
 90-8, 158, 161  
 Conclusion 157-161  
 Howells as Spanish Authority 159  
 Influence on Howells of  
 Cervantes 157-8  
 Spanish 159  
 Valdes 158-9  
 Proportion of Space given to Spanish in  
 Ed. Study and Essay Chair departments, 159-60  
 Relation of Howells to  
 Blasco Ibáñez 159  
 Galdos 159  
 Pardo Bazan 159  
 Valera 159  
 Conde, J. A.  
Dominion of the Arabs in Spain  
 P 13  
Connecticut Yankee at the Court of King Arthur, A - Mark Twain  
 P 35-6  
 Cervantic style in review of  
Conquest of Granada - Irving  
 P 10, 33, 34  
 Contemporary literature  
 Cause of the decadence of - 84  
 Creed, literary  
 Howells - 3,4-5, 15-16, 24-26, 45-46  
 61, 76-98, 102, 146  
 Advice to American Novelists 65  
 Cervantic influence 24-26- 157-8  
 Contrasted with Blasco Ibáñez 141-4  
 " " Pardo Bazan 130, 147  
 " " Valera 115-118  
 Criticism, value of 56-7, 84-5, 90-4  
 Development of- 15-16, 61, 63-67, 76-98, 158  
 in Atlantic Monthly 15  
 in Editor's Study, Harpers 15-16, 61  
 Lasting test of a novel 71  
 Valdés: influence of similarities  
 1, 63-7, 79-89, 158, 161  
 literary criticism 56-7, 84-5, 90-8  
 On novels in general 61, 158, 161  
 Quoted by H- 79-89, 90-98  
 Valdés 61, 63-65, 76-98  
 Influence on )  
 Similarities with ) Howells  
 45-61, 63-7, 90-98, 158, 161  
 Main influence on novels of Howells, 61

Creed, literary (continued)  
(Valdés)

Prologo: La hermana San Sulpicio  
by Howells 79-89

Shown in

El cuarto poder 45-57

Marta y Maria 63-69

Maximina 71-72, 74-75

Prologo: La hermana San Sulpicio 79-88

Value of criticism 56-7, 84-5, 91-4

Criticism - see Literary criticism

El cuarto Poder- Valdés

Comparison with Howells-A Hazard of New Fortunes 46-57

Differences in Marriage ideas 52-3

" in treatment of love element 47-8, 53, 59-60

" " " middle class 52-53

Similarities in characters 50

" in marriage ideas 51-2

Humor 46, 47, 50

Influence on Howells 46, 57, 66, 158

Journalism 49, 53

Ranking 47, 8

Religion 58

Social aspects 47

Synopsis and criticisms of 47-8, 54

La cuestion palpitante - Pardo Bazán

129-130, 132

Dante - 109 Dante, Alighieri

Dickens, P 40, 87, 90

Dominion of the Arabs in Spain - Conde

P. 13

Doña Perfecto - Galdós 114, 121-2

Humor 122

Mary J. Serranos translation of- P. 19

Doña Luz - Valera

Appreciation and review 118-

Love element 118

Realism 118-119

Religion 118

Don Quixote - Cervantes 9, 19

20-44, 66, 86, 152, 155

Abridgement of, - by Howells, 19, 36, 40, 43-4

Basis for Great American Novel 24, 158

Cid Hamet Ben-Engeli p. 32

Humor - 52-4, 48-51, 150-1, 157

Irving 32, 34

Lowell 36

Shakespeare 50, 150-1

Twain, Mark- 35-6

Idealism of Spanish race 40

Influence, direct - 24-31, 35, 157, 8

Don Quixote, (Continued)

Jarvis edition 19, 22  
Ormsby version 24, 1-2  
Sancho Panza 32, 107  
Dostoevsky, P. 15, 76  
Dumas, Alexander - 85, 87  
Dutch Literature  
104

Editor's Easy Chair - Harpers

6, 37, 38  
Number essays, 17, 159  
Proportion of space given to Spanish 159-60  
Style 102-3

Editor's Study - Harpers

6, 35, 114  
Growth of H. period 15-16, 61  
Number of Essays 17, 159  
Proportion of space given to Spanish 159-160  
Style 102-3

Effectism in novels

85-87, 97

Elliot, George

76, 77

Emerson, R. W.

P 40

English Literature

2, 76, 79, 87, 90, 104, 112, 114, 127, 139, 151

Episodios Nacionales - Galdós

121, 122

La espuma - Valdés P. 62

Appreciation and review of - 99-102  
Decorous religiosity of 'good' society the world  
over pp 99-100  
Humor 99  
International significance of 98-99

Estebanez (Ramavo y Baus)

P 17-19

La familia de Leon Roca - Galdós

Appreciation and review 121-128  
Bigotry of Catholic Church 122-6  
Love element 124-6

Familiar Spanish Travels - P 16, 19, 41-43

Feullet, Octave - effectism  
P 87  
Fitz-Gerald, John D.  
Edition of Undrama Nuevo P 18  
Flaubert, Gustave  
Madam Bovary 80  
La fontana de oro - Galdós  
121  
Ford, Paul Leicester P 1  
French Literature - 2, 3, 70, 76, 77, 80-81, 87, 98,  
104, 112, 114, 139, 147, 151  
Friends and Foes - Howells  
Poem in Sp. Translation - P. 19

Galdós,  
See Pérez Galdós, Benito  
Geddes, Prof. I. P 19  
Introduction to Galdós' Marianela 19  
German Literature  
114, 139, 151  
Gél Blas 149  
Gillispie, Mrs. W. A.  
Translation of La Catedral by Blasco Ibañez P. 19  
Giovanni 161  
" da Fiesole, Angelico, Fra  
Gloria - Galdós 121  
Goethe 109  
Johann Wolfgang Von  
Goldsmith, Oliver  
Greece P 21  
Gosse, Edward 2  
Grammar - Official Spanish Grammar of Madrid  
P 10  
Great American Novel  
Howells writer of - 24, 158  
Don Quixote as basis - 24  
Grey, Rowland  
Howells best epitaph 161

Hardy, Thomas 112, 161  
Harpers Magazine P 5, 6, 17, 76  
Hawthorne, Nathaniel 161  
Hazard of New Fortunes, A. - Howells  
Comparison with El cuarto poder by Valdés 46-57  
Differences in marriage ideas 523  
" in treatment of love element 48, 53-4  
" " " middle class 53-4  
Similarities in characters 50  
" in marriage ideas  
Influence of Valdés - 46-57, 66, 158  
Great American Novel 158



Hazard of New Fortunes, A. - Howells (Continued)

- Humor 50
- Journalism 49, 53
- Ranking 48, 158
- Social aspects 48
- La hermana San Sulpicio - Valdés  
62, 64
  - Appreciation P 62
- Heroines of Fiction - Howells P 8
- Heywood, Thomas, - poet P 19
- Hill, John M. - With John D. Fitz-Gerald
  - Edition of Un drama Nuevo P 18
- Howells, Miss Mildred 66
  - Introduction to W. D. Howells abridgement of  
Jarvas edition of Don Quixote P 19, 36, 40, 44
- Howells, W. D.
  - Abridgement of Don Quixote 19, 36, 40, 43-4
  - Accomplishments in connection with Spanish Literature, 15-19
  - As Spanish authority 159
  - Advice to American Novelists 65
  - Atlantic Monthly - shows growth of creed  
see index - Atlantic Monthly
  - Biographical sketch 7-19
  - Chronological order of knowledge of Spanish 7-19
  - Cervantic influence 24-31, 35, 157-8
    - Don Quixote and Their Wedding Journey 24-31
    - See Cervantes and Don Quixote
  - Comparison with Blasco Ibañez 141-4, 145-8
    - " " Galdós 145-7, 159
    - " " Pardo Bazan 145, 147
    - " " Valera 115-118, 145-6
    - " " Valdés 45-61, 63-7, 84-5, 90-8, 158, 161
    - " " See Creed
    - " " Valdes
  - Creed, literary - see index
  - Criticism, literary - See Literary Criticism
  - Criticisms, literary - See Editor's Study, Easy Chair
  - Criticism of Valdés and reply 54-5
  - Dean of American letters, as 7
  - Early training for literary career 7-8
  - Familiar Spanish Travels 16, 19, 41-43
  - Great American Novel - writer of, 24, 158
  - Hazard of New Fortunes - see index
  - Heroines of Fiction - 8
  - Humor of 38-41, 75, 147, 157
  - Influence of Cervantes - see index
    - " " Tolstoy 4, 66, 76, 146, 160-1
    - " " Valdés - see Influence on Howells  
of: Valdes
    - " " Zola 2

Howells, W. D. (Continued)

- Journalistic Methods and Atmosphere in Novels 49,  
53, 58-9. See index Journalistic, etc.
- Knowledge of Spanish literature- see index
- Languages spoken 10-12
- Literary and novelistic production 16-17
- Love element in novels, treatment of 48, 53-4, 59-60  
see index
- Love for Spanish literature and things, 5, 9-10, 11-19,  
20-44, 66, 111, 144, 146, 157
- My Literary Friends and Acquaintances 8
- My Literary Passions 8, 13, 20
- Criticism and Fiction
- Marriage, treatment of, in Novels 51-3
- Middle Class " " 53-4, 50, 146  
See social aspects
- A Modern Instance 65
- Novel Comparisons - see index
- Novelistic Methods
  - in A Hazard of New Fortunes 46-57
  - " Their Wedding Journey 25-30
  - general
    - Journalistic - See Journalistic methods and  
atmosphere
    - Love Element - See Love element
    - Religion - see Religion
    - Social problems - see social aspects
- Periodicals contributed to
  - Atlantic Monthly 6, 14, 15, 16, 76  
See index
  - Harpers Magazine 5, 6, 15, 17, 76
    - Editor's Study - see index
    - Easy Chair - " "
  - The Nation 14
  - New York Times 14
- Periods of writing, two distinct 4-5, 66
- Principal American realists 1
- Quoted Valdes directly 79-89 See Creed  
" Realism
- Ranking of Spanish literature - see index
- Realism of - See Realism
- Relation to Blasco 159
  - " " Galdós 159
  - " " Pardo Bazán
  - " " Valera 159
- Religious Aspects in Novels
  - in A Hazard of New Fortunes 48
  - " Novels in general 58, 60-1
- Reviews and criticisms of Spanish works  
See index
- The Rise of Silas Lapham 65-66
- Social Aspects, treatment of 58, 60-1, 146, 148
  - in a Hazard of New Fortunes, 48, 53, -4
  - in Novels in General 60-1, 146, 148

Howells, W. D. (Continued)  
Space given to Spanish in Editor's Study and  
Easy Chair essays 159-160  
Spanish influence on novels of Howells - See index  
Spanish Works reviewed by Howells  
See Reviews and criticisms of Spanish Works  
Years of my Youth 8  
Their Wedding Journey 25-30  
Cervantic influence, follows creed on literary  
plan of Don Quixote

#### Humor

Affinity of Anglo-Saxon and Spanish  
Mind - 150-1  
American 75  
Blasco Ibañez 147  
Cervantes 32-5, 38-41, 150-1, 157  
Galdós - 122  
Howells 38-41, 50, 75, 147, 157  
A Hazard of New Fortunes 50  
Irving 32, 34  
Lazarillo de Tormes 152  
Lowell 36, 78 (footnote)  
Pardo Bazán 130, 132  
Shakespeare 40, 150, 151  
Twain, Mark 35-6  
Valdés 46-7, 50, 70, 74-5, 99, 105, 107

#### Ibañez

See Blasco Ibañez, Vicente  
Ibson, Henrik 3  
El idillo de un enfermo - Valdés 62  
Ines de Castro P 12  
Influence on Howells of  
Cervantes 24-31, 35, 157-8  
Basis for Great American Novel 24  
Don Quixote and Their Wedding Journey 24-31  
Palacio Valdés  
Creed - 1, 63-7, 79-89, 158, 161  
criticism, literary - 56-7, 84-5, 90-8  
Direct influence of El cuarto poder on  
A Hazard of New Fortunes 46-57  
On Novels in general 61, 158, 161  
Quoted Prologo: La hermana San Sulpicio  
79-89; 90-98  
Tolstoy, 4, 66, 76, 146, 160-1  
Zola 2  
Influence of Spanish on Howells  
See Spanish Influence on Howells  
Insolacion - Pardo Bazan 130

Irving, W.  
and Cervantes and Shakespeare 151  
Comparison with Spanish aesthetical affinity 151  
Conquest of Granada 10, 33, 34  
Humor 32, 34  
Italian Literature 4, 112, 113, 114, 139, 151

James, Henry P 1, 113, 161  
Jarvas, Charles  
Ed. of Don Quixote P 19, 22  
Jewett, Sarah Orne, Miss, 113, 130  
José - Valdés  
Brief Appreciation of - 71  
Social Aspects 71  
Journalistic Methods and atmosphere  
Howells 58-9, in A Hazard of New Fortunes 49, 53  
Valdés 58-9  
in El cuarto poder 49-53  
in Maximina 72  
in Riverito 70  
The Toy of Captain Ribot - Valdés  
193

Kent, Margaret P 63  
Kielland, 113  
Alexander Lange ? 1849-1906  
Knowledge of Spanish literature, Howells' accomplishments  
along line of 7-19  
Chronological order of growth of - 7-19  
General Knowledge 7-19  
Knowledge of Spanish drama 148-9

Languages spoken by Howells  
P 10, 11  
Lazarillo de Tormes P 12, 152  
Lennox, Prof. F. J. P 46  
Literary criticism - value of  
comparison of similar views of Howells & Valdés  
56-7, 84-6, 92-4  
Direct criticism of Valdés and reply 54-5  
English 85  
Easy Chair Essays - Harpers  
Space given to Spanish - 159-160  
Style 102-3  
Literary Criticism  
in Editor's Study - Harpers  
Space given to Spanish 159-160  
Style 15-16, 61, 102-3

- My Literary Friends and Acquaintances by Howells 8  
My Literary Passions - Howells P 8,13, 20  
 Literary style  
     Influence of Valdes on Howell 94-97  
 Longfellow, H. W.  
     Spanish Student P 9  
 Lope de Vega P 14, 36, 149  
     Ballads of - 14  
     Plays - 149  
 The Lost Village - Valdes 104  
 Love element, treatment of  
     Blasco Ibáñez  
         in Sangrey Arena 140-1  
     Galdós  
         in La familia de León Roch 124-6  
     Howells 59-60  
         in A Hazard of New Fortunes 48, 53-4  
     Pardo Bazán  
         in The Christian Woman 134-5  
         in Morrina 130-2  
         in The Swan of Vilamorta 136-7  
     Valera  
         in Doña Luz 118  
         in Peolta Jimenez 116  
     Valdés  
         in El cuarto poder 47-8, 53  
         in Jose 71  
         in Marta y Maria 47-8, 53  
         in Maximina 72-75  
         in Papers of Dr. Angelico 105-7  
         in Riverito 70  
 Love for Spanish Literature and Things  
     5, 9-19, 41-43, 66, 111, 144, 146, 157-161  
     Cervantes Chapter 20-44  
 Lowell, James Russell  
     Anticipates Valdés 97  
     And Calderón 149  
     Humor 36, 78 (footnote)
- Madam de Stael 90  
La madre naturaleza - P Bazán 130  
Marianela - Galdós  
     " Geddes, introduction to P 19  
     " 121  
Marquis of Penalta - Valdés  
     See Marta y Maria

- Marta y Maria - Valdés 47, 62-64, 67-70, 74, 123  
Appreciation and synopsis 62-4, 67-70  
Love - 67-70  
Religion 67-70  
Social aspects 69  
Journalism 70  
Prologo 64
- Maupassant, 98, 112, 113, 151  
Guy de
- Maximina - Valdés 47, 62  
Appreciation and review of 71-75  
Humor 74-5  
Journalism 72  
Love 71-5  
Ranking 75  
Religion 72-4  
Social aspects 71-75
- Mazoni - 161  
? Mazzini, Guiseppè  
essays
- A Modern Instance - Howells 65
- Moliere, Jean Baptiste P P 40
- Moraton, Leandro Fernández de  
Origins of the Spanish Theatre  
P 13, 150
- Morriña - P. Bazán 130-132  
critical review of and appreciation  
religion 132  
humor 130, 132  
love element 130-2
- The Nation  
P 14 - Contributed
- Norwegian Literature 4, 112, 151
- Novella 111-113
- Novel Comparisons  
El cuarto poder with A Hazard of New Fortunes 46-57  
See El cuarto poder  
" A Hazard of New Fortunes
- Don Quixote with Their Wedding Journey 24-31  
See Their Wedding Journey
- Novels in general of Howells and Valdés 57-61  
Creed 56-7  
Humor 46, 48  
Influence of Valdés on H- 61  
Journalism 58-9  
Love element 57-59, 60  
Plots - 60  
Religion 57-8, 60-1  
Social aspects 57-6

Novelas contemporaneas - Galdós 121

Official Spanish Grammar of Madrid P.11

Origins of the Spanish Theatre - Moratín P.13, 150

Ormsby

Version of Don Quixote P. 24, 31-2

Palacio Valdés, Armando 3, 5, 6, 16, 35, 66, 76, 114, 122,  
123, 128

Creed, literary, - see index

Criticism, by Howells and Valdés' reply 54-5

- Comparison of similar views of Howells  
and Valdés 56-7, 84-6, 92-4

El cuarto poder - comparison with Howells

A Hazard of New Fortunes

See - El cuarto poder

La espuma - see index

La hermana San Sulpicio 62

See Prologo to

Humor

in El cuarto poder 46-7, 50

La espuma 99

Maximina 74-5

Papers of Dr. Angelico 105,7

Riverito 70

Un idilio de un enfermo 62

Influence on Howells-

See index Influence on Howells of  
Valdés

José 71

Journalistic aspects and methods 58-9

in El cuarto poder 49,53

Maximina 72

Riverito 70

The Joy of Captain Ribot 103

The Lost Village 104

Love element, 59-60

in El cuarto poder 47-8, 53

José 71

Marta y Maria 67-70

Maximina 73-75

Papers of Dr. Angelico 105-7

Riverito 70

Lowell - anticipates Valdés 97

The Marquis of Penalta

See Marta y Maria

Marriage, ideas of

El cuarto poder 51-3

Vs Howells 52-3

Palacio Valdés, Armando (Continued)

Marta y Maria 47, 62, 64, 67-70, 74, 123

See index

Maximina 47, 62, 71-75

See index

Middle class, treatment of 58, 60-1, 106

See Social aspects

Novelistic methods

See Creed, Realism

Journalistic Methods - see index

Love element - - - " "

Religion - - - " "

Social aspects - - - " "

The Papers of Dr. Angélico 104-111 See index

Quoted by Howells

Prologa: La hermana San Sulpicio 79-89

Prologo: La hermana San Sulpicio 64, 66, 76

Influence on Howells 79-98

Directly quoted 79-89

Prologo: Marta y Maria 64

Ranking by Howells 45-6, 61, 75, 103, 111-113, 150-1, 160-1

Realism of - see index

Religious Aspects 60

in El cuarto poder 58

in La espuma 99-100

in Marta y Maria 67-70

Maximina 72, 74

Papers of Dr. Angélico 105-8

Riverito 62, 70 - See index

Social aspects 58, 60-1, 106, 146, 148

in El cuarto Poder 47

José 71

Marta y Maria 69

Maximina 71-75

The Papers of Dr. Angélico 106-111

Riverito 70

Scum 62, 98

See La espuma

Tristan or pessimism 104

Works reviewed by Howells

See Reviews, and criticisms of Spanish works

The Papers of Dr. Angélico - Valdes 104-111

Humor - 105, 107

Love 105-7

Modesty of judgment 104-108

Religion 105-8

Social aspects 106-111, 108-111

Women in Politics 108-111



- Pardo Bazán, Emilia 16, 65, 103, 114, 128-137
- Biographical 128
  - Comparison with Howells 145-147
  - The Christian Woman 133-136
    - Appreciation and review
  - Creed 128-130, 133
    - Vs. Howells
  - La cuestión palpitante 129-130, 132
  - Humor of 130, 132
  - Influence of ? 145
  - Love element 130-2, 134-5, 136, 7
  - Morriña - review of 130-132
    - See Index, Morriña
  - Realism of 128-130, 133
  - Religion 132, 134, 6, 147
  - Social aspects 147
  - The Swan of Vilamorta 136, 137
    - See Index - Swan of Vilamorta
  - Works Mentioned 130
    - El cisne de Vilamorta 130 - See The Swan of Vilamorta
    - The Christian Woman - see Index
      - Pp 133-136
    - La cuestión palpitante
      - pp 129-130, 132
    - Insolación 130
    - La Madre naturaleza 130
    - Morriña 130-132 - see Index
    - Los pazos de ulloa 130
    - La piedra angular 130
    - The Swan of Vilamorta 133
      - 136-7 - see Index
    - Un viaje de novios 130
  - Los pazos de ulloa - P. Bazán 130
  - Pepita Jiménez - Valera 114, 115-118
    - Appreciation and review 115-118
    - Humor 117-118
    - Love element 116
    - Realism 117-118
    - Religion 116-117
  - Pereda G., M. 114, 128
  - Pérez Galdós, Benito Pp. 3, 5, 6, 16, 19, 61, 66, 76, 103, 114, 120, 128
    - El audaz 121
      - Comparison with Howells 145-7, 159
      - Bigotry of the Catholic Church 122-6
      - Doña Perfecto 19, 114, 121, 122
      - Episodios Nacionales 121-2
      - La familia de León Roch 121-128 appreciation and reviews

Pérez Galdós, Benito (Continued)

La fontana de ors 121  
Gloria 121  
Humor 122  
Love element 124-126  
Marianela 19-121  
Novelas contemporaneas 121  
Ranking 61, 120, 121, 150, 160-161  
Realism of - 145-7, 159  
Religion 122-6  
Romanticism of ? 122  
Social aspects 146  
La sombra 121  
Works mentioned 120-121

Periodicals contributed to:

Howells

Atlantic Monthly 6, 14, 15, 17, 76

See Index

Harpers Magazine 5, 6, 15, 17, 76

Editor's Study - see index Ed. Study

Editor's Easy Chair - see index Ed. Easy Chair

The Nation 14

New York Times 14

Pérez y Sigismunda - Cervantes P 35, 85, 86

Phelps, E. J.

The Age of Words P 36

Picaresque Novel - Spanish bases for story writing 151-2

La piedra angular - Pardo Bazan 130

Poem of Two Friends - Howells P 14

Polish Literature 4

Portugese Literature - 4, 114, 139

Principal realists in Am. 1

Howells

James, Henry

Borjesen, Hjalmar Hjorth

Ford, Paul Leicester

Prologo: La hermana San Sulpicio - Valdés

64, 66, 76

Influence on Howells 79-98

Directly quoted 79-89

Prologue to Marta y Maria - Valdés 64

Purpose of thesis, 5, 6

Quevedo, Francisco de 114

Ranking of Spanish Literature - by Howells

4, 61, 102-3, 108, 111-114, 127-8 137, 139, 145-6,  
150, 152, 158-9, 160-1

Realism, American 1, 2, 16, 38, 67, 76

(Realistic creed -76-98)

Blinks at latin frankness 74-5

Realism

Blasco Ibañez

La catedral 143

Comparison with Howells 144-5, 147-8

Sanare v Arena 141-2

Realism (continued)

Cervantes, 20-44, 24-31, 35, 157-8  
Bases for great Am. Novel 24, 148

Realism (creed)

Galdós  
Comparison with Howells 145-7, 159  
Romanticism of ? 122

Realism-Howells 146

See Creed

Advice to Am. Novelists 65  
Cervantes influence 24-31, 35, 157-8  
Contrasted with Blasco, 141-4, 147  
    P. Bazan 136, 147  
    Valera 115-118, 146  
Comparison with Blasco 144-5, 147-8  
    Galdós, 145-7, 147-8  
    P. Bazan 145, 147  
    Valera 115-118, 145-6

Development of 63-67, 76-98, 158

A Hazard of New Fortunes 45-61

    Direct influence of Valdés

    The Great American Novel 158

influence of ( Valdés 45-61, 90-98

Similarities with ( 158, 161

1. Main influence on novels 61, 158, 161  
    See index - Influence on Howells of Valdés
2. Quoted Prologue L.H.S.S. 79-89
3. Value of criticism 56-7, 84-5, 91-3

Realism (creed)

P. Bazan 128-130, 132, 133  
    Comparison with Howells 145, 7  
    Vs. Howells 136  
Valera 115-118, creed  
    Vs. Howells

Valdés, 58

    (in El cuarto poder 45-58

    (Hazards of New Fortunes 57-61

    in Marta y Maria 63-69

    " Maximina 71-72, 74-75

    " Prologue La hermana San Sulpicio 79-89

    Influence (on Howells 45-57

    Similarities (63-67, 57-61, 90, 98

    Main influence on novels 61

    See creed

Prologue La Hermana San Sulpicio quoted from 90-98

Religion

    Bigotry of the Catholic Church 122-6

    Blasco Ibáñez

        in la catedral 142

        Reaction against the church 138

- Religion, (continued)
- Goldós  
     in La familia de León Roch 122-6
- Howells, treatment of in A Hazard of New Fortunes 48  
     in novels in general 58, 60-1
- Pardo Bazán - 147  
     in The Christian Woman 134-6  
     in Morrina 132
- Valera  
     in Doña Luz ,118  
     in Pepita Jimenez 116-117
- Valdés - 60  
     in El cuarto poder 58  
     in La espuma 99-100  
     in Marta y Maria 67-70  
     in Maximina 72,74  
     in novels in general 60  
     in Papers of Dr. Angélico 105-8
- Reviews and criticisms of Spanish works - by Howells
- Blasco Ibáñez  
         La catedral 137, 140-145  
         Sangre y Arena 140-142
- Cervantes  
         , Don Quixote 20-44
- Galdós  
         La familia de León Roch 121-8
- P. Bazán  
         The Christian Woman 133-6  
         Morrina 130-32  
         The Swan of Vilamorta 136-7
- Valera  
         Doña Luz ,118  
         Pepita Jimenez 115-118
- Valdés  
         El cuarto poder 46-57  
         La espuma 98-102  
         La hermana San Sulpicio 62  
         Jose 71  
         Marta y Maria 62-4, 67-70  
         Maximina 71-75  
         The Papers of Dr. Angélico 104-111  
         Prologo: La hermana San Sulpicio 79-98  
         Riverito -70
- The Rise of Silas Lapham - Howells 65,66
- Riverita - Valdés 62
- Appreciation of -70
- Humor 70
- Journalism 70
- Love 70
- Social aspects 70

Romance vs. the novel 98  
 Rousseau, Jean Jacques 90  
 Russian Literature 3, 4, 76, 112, 121, 128, 139, 145, 151  
 Sancho Panza 32, 107  
 Sand, George 128  
Sangre y Arena - Blasco Ibañez  
     Literary review and synopsis of 140-142  
     love element 140-1  
     ranking 141-2  
     realism of 141-2  
 Schevill, Prof. Rudolph  
     P 37 - life of Cervantes  
 Schopenhauer, Arthur 108  
 Scott, Walter P 90  
 Scum (Espuma) - Valdes P 52, 98  
 Serrano, Mary J.  
     Translation of Goldó's Doña Perfecta 19  
 Shakespeare, 109  
     In Un drama Nuevo P 18  
     Humor and cervantes 40, 150, 151  
     Ranking with Cervantes 37-8, 151, 161  
 Social Aspects  
     Blasco Ibañez - 148  
         in La catedral 142-5  
     Decorous religiosity of 'good' society 99-100  
     Goldós 146  
     Howells 58, 60-1, 146, 148  
         in A Hazard of New Fortunes 48, 53-4  
     Pardo Bazan 147  
     Valdés 58, 60-1, 106, 146, 148  
         in El cuarto poder 47  
         in Jose - 71  
         in Marta y Maria 69  
         in Maximina 71-75  
         in The Papers of Dr. Angélico 106-111  
         in Riverito 70  
La sombra - Goldós 121  
 Space given to Spanish Literature  
     in Editor's Study and  
         Editor's Easy Chair essays 159-160  
Spanish Dramatic Authors, a Vol. of 13, 149  
 Spanish influence on Howells  
     Palacio Valdés  
         Creed 61, 63-7, 79-98, 158-161  
         Criticism-same views 56-7, 84-5, 90-8  
         Direct: El cuarto poder and  
                 A Hazard of New Fortunes 46-57  
         On novels in general 61, 158, 161  
         Quoted Prologo: La hermana San Sulpicio 78-89

- Spanish Influence on Howells (continued)
- Cervantes 24-31, 35, 147-8
  - Basis for Great American Novel 24
  - Don Quixote and Their Wedding Journey 24-31
  - Spanish Literature, 4-6, 9-10, 12-14, 16, 34, 61, 63, 76
  - 102-3, 106, 108, 111-112, 114, 127-8, 137, 139
  - 145, 146, 149, 150, 152, 155, 167-161
  - Chronological order of Howells
  - Acquisition of Knowledge of 7-19
  - Ahead of American 127-8, 138-9
  - Ahead of American 127-8, 138-9
  - Effect of a literary tradition 75
  - Howells' general conception of - 160-161
  - Latin frankness 74-76
  - Love for - see Index
  - Nature treatment of - referred
  - Americans to- 127
  - Novellae 111-113
  - Picaresque Novel as basis for writing 151-2
  - Ranking of - by Howells 5, 61, 102-3, 108, 111-114
  - 127-8, 137, 139, 145-6, 150, 152, 148-9, 160-1
  - Space given to Spanish in Editor's Study and Easy Chair
  - Spanish Student-Longfellow 9
  - Spanish Works reviewed by Howells
  - See Reviews and criticisms of Spanish works
  - Stowe, Harriett Beecher 97
  - The Swan of Vilamorta - P. Bazán 133, 136-137
  - Critical review and appreciation 136-137
  - love element 136-7
  - Swift, J. 40
  - Symonds, Mr.
  - lasting test of a novel 71
  - Tamayo y Baus
  - Un drama Nuevo p 17-19
  - Thackeray W. M. 99, 102
  - Tolstoy, Lyof 3-4, 16, 66, 75, 99
  - and Blasco Ibáñez 144
  - and Valdés 101-2, 160-1
  - comparison with Valdés
  - The romantic nation of the servant 101-2
  - Influence on Howells 4, 66, 76, 146, 160-1
  - The fruits of culture 101
  - Tourgenief 3, 15, 76, 112, 113, 161
  - Tristan or Pessimism - Valdés 104
  - Twain, Mark 76
  - A Connecticut Yankee at the Court of King Arthur 35-6
  - Valdés,
  - See Palacio Valdés, Armando
  - Valera, Juan de 61, 114, 120
  - Biographical 119
  - Comparison with Howells 145-6

Valera, Juan de (continued)  
  Creed 115-118  
    vs. Howells 145  
  Humor 117-8  
  Influence of 145  
  Love element 116,118  
  Doña Luz 118  
  Pepita Jimenez 114, 115-118  
  Poetry and Art of the Arabs in Spain and Sicily 119  
  Ranking 120  
  Realism and fidelity 117-119  
  Religion 116-118  
  Works mentioned 119  
Verga, Giovanni 3, 16, 61, 112, 113  
  I Malavoglia 75  
Un viage de novios - Pardo Bazán 130

Warner, Charles Dudley 102  
  Humor 151  
Their Wedding Journey - Howells  
  Cervantic Influence of Don Quixote follows  
    creed or literary plan of Don Quixote 25-30

Years of My Youth Howells 8  
Youck's Love 17

Zola, Emile 3, 4, 6, 5, 77, 129  
  Influence on Howells 2  
  Les Romanciers Naturalists 2