The Spanish Language

The Iberian Peninsula is not a linguistic unit. Not to speak of the Basque, which still forms an island of some importance in the north-west, three Romance languages share this extensive territory: (1) Portuguese-Galician, spoken in Portugal, Galicia, and a small portion of the province of Leon; (2) Castilian, covering about two-thirds of the Peninsula in the north, centre, and south; (3) Catalan, occupying a long strip of territory to the east and south-east.

These three varieties of the *Romana rustica* are marked off from one another more distinctly than is the case with, say the Romance dialects of Italy; they do not interpenetrate one another, but where the one ends the other begins. It has only been possible to establish at the points of junction of two linguistic regions the existence of certain mixed jargons in which certain forms of each language are intermingled; but these jargons, called into existence for the necessities of social relations by bilinguists, have an essentially individualistic and artificial character. The special development of the vulgar Latin tongue in Spain, and the formation of the three linguistic types just enumerated, were promoted by political circumstances. From the 9th century onwards Spain was slowly recaptured from the Mahommedans, and the Latin spoken by the Christians who had taken refuge on the slopes of the Pyrenees was gradually carried back to the centre and ultimately to the south of the Peninsula, whence it had been driven by the Arab invasion. Medieval Spain divides itself into three *conquistas—*that of Castile (much the most considerable), that of Portugal, and that of Aragon. If a given province now speaks Catalan rather than Castilian, the explanation is to be sought simply and solely in the fact that it was conquered by a king of Aragon and peopled by his Catalan subjects.

I. *Catalan.—*This domain now embraces, on the mainland, the Spanish provinces of Gerona, Barcelona, Tarragona and Lérida (the old principality of Catalonia), and of Castellon de la Plana, Valencia and Alicante (the old kingdom of Valencia), and, in the Mediterranean, that of the Balearic Islands (the old kingdom of Majorca). Catalan, by its most characteristic features, belongs to the Romance of southern France and not to that of Spain; it is legitimate, therefore, to regard it as imported into Spain by those *Hispani* whom the Arab conquest had driven back beyond the mountains into Languedoc, and who in the 9th century regained the country of their origin; this conclusion is confirmed by the fact that the dialect is also that of two French provinces on the north of the Pyrenees—Roussillon and Cerdagne. From the 9th to the 12th century Catalan spread farther and farther within the limits of Catalonia, properly so called; in 1229 it was brought to Majorca by Jaime el Con- quistador, and in 1238 the same sovereign carried it to Valencia also. Even Murcia was peopled by Catalans in 1266, but this province really is part of the Castilian conquest, and according!y the Castilian element took the upper hand and absorbed the dialect of the earlier colonists. The river Segura, which falls into the Mediterranean in the neighbourhood of Orihuela, a little to the north of Murcia, is as nearly as possible the southern boundary of the Catalan domain; westward the boundary coincides pretty exactly with the political frontier, the provinces of New Castile and Aragon not being at all encroached on. Catalan, which by the reunion of Aragon and the countship of Barcelona in 1137 became the official language of the Aragonese monarchy—although the kingdom of Aragon, consisting of the present provinces of Saragossa, Huesca and Teruel, has always been Castilian in speech—established a footing in Italy also, in all parts where the domination of the kings of Aragon extended, viz. in Sicily, Naples, Corsica and Sardinia, but it has not maintained itself here except in a single district of the last-named island (Alghero); everywhere else in Italy, where it was not spoken except by the conquerors, nor written except in the royal chancery, it has disappeared without leaving a trace.

In the 13th century the name given to the vulgar tongue of eastern Spain was *Catalanesch (Catalaniscus)* or *Catalä (Cata*

*lanus)—*the idiom of the Catalans.@@1 By Catalanesch or Catalá was understood, essentially, the spoken language and the lan- guage of prose, while that of poetry, with a large admixture of Provençal forms, was early called *Lemosi, Limosi* or language of Limousin—Catalan grammarians, and particularly the most celebrated of them, Ramon Vidal de Besalú, having adopted *Lemosi* as the generic name of the language of the troubadours. These grammarians carefully distinguish the vulgar speech, or *pla Catalá,* from the refined *trobar* idiom, which originally is a modified form of Provençal. Afterwards, and especially in these parts of the Catalan domain outside of Catalonia which did not acknowledge that they derived their language from that province, *Lemosi* received a more extensive signification, so as to mean the literary language in general, whether of verse or of prose. To this hour, particularly in Valencia and the Balearics, *Lemosi* is employed to designate on the one hand the old Catalan and on the other the very artificial and somewhat archaizing idiom which is current in the *jochs florals',* while the spoken dialect is called, according to the localities, *Valenciä* (in Valencia), *Majorqui* and *Menorqui* (in Majorca and Minorca), or *Catalä* (in Catalonia) ; the form *Catalanesch* is obsolete.

The principal features which connect Catalan with the Romance of France and separate it from that of Spain are the following: (1) To take first its treatment of the final vowels—Catalan, like French and Provençal, having only oxytones and paroxy- tones, does not admit more than one syllable after the tonic accent: thus *anima* gives *arma, cámera* gives *cambra.* All the proparoxytones of modern Catalan are of recent introduction and due to Castilian influence. Further, the only post-tonic Latin vowel preserved by the Catalan is, as in Gallo-Roman, *a : mare* gives *mar, gratu (s)* gives *grat,* but *anima* gives *arma;* and, when the word terminates in a group of consonants requir­ing a supporting vowel, that vowel is represented by an *e : arb(o)rem,* Cat. *abre* (Prov. and Fr. *arbre,* but Cast. á*rbol); pop(u)l(us),* Cat. *poble* (Prov. *poble,* Fr. *peuple,* but Cast. *pueblo);* sometimes, when it is inserted between the two consonants instead of being made to follow them, the supporting vowel is represented by an *o : escändol* (scándalum), *frévol* (frivolus), *cîrcol* (circulus). In some cases a post-tonic vowel other than *a* is preserved in Catalan, as, for example, when that vowel forms a diphthong with the tonic *(Deu,* Deus; *Ebriu,* Hebreus) ; or, again, it sometimes happens, when the tonic is followed by an *i* in hiatus, that the *i* persists *(dilûvi,* dilúvium; *serυici,* ser- vicium; *läbi,* labium; *ciri,* cereus); but in many cases these ought to be regarded as learned forms, as is shown by the exist­ence of parallel ones, such as *servey,* where the atonic *i* has been attracted by the tonic and forms a diphthong with it *(servîci, serυii, servey).* What has just been said as to the treatment of the final vowels in Catalan must be understood as applying only to pure Catalan, unaltered by the predominance of the Castilian, for the actual language is no longer faithful to the principle we have laid down; it allows the final *o* atonic in a number of substantives and adjectives, and in the verb it now conjugates *canto, terno, sento*—a thing unknown in the ancient language. (2) As regards conjugation only two points need be noted here: *(a)* it employs the form known as the inchoative, that is to say, the lengthening of the radical of the present in verbs of the third conjugation by means of the syllab!e *ex* or *ix,* a proceeding common to ItaIian, Walachian, Provençal and French, but altogether unknown in Hispanic Romance; (b) the formation of a great number of past participles in which the termination is added, as in Provençal, not to the radical of the verb, but to that of the perfect: *tingut* from *tinch, pogut* from *poch, conegut* from *conech,* while in Castilian *tenido* (formerly also *tenudo), podido, coηocido,* are participles formed from the infinitive.

As for features common to Catalan and Hispanic (Castilian and Portuguese) Romance, on the other hand, and which are unknown to French Romance, only one is of importance; the conservation, namely, of the Latin *u* with its original sound, white the same vowel has assumed in French and Provençal,

@@@1 The origin of the name *Catalanus* is unknown.