16th and 17th century Spain. · Cervantes undoubtedly owed much to his predecessors, notably to the few picaresque romancers who came before him, but he considerably enlarged the scope of the type and strengthened the framework of the story by a lofty moral idea. His main purpose was not so much to ridicule the books of chivalry, which were already out of fashion by his time, but to show by an example pushed to absurdity the danger of those prejudices of pure blood and nobler race with which three-fourths of the nation were imbued, and which, by the scorn of all useful labour which they involved, were destined to bring Spain to ruin. The lesson is all the more effective, as Cervantes’s *hidalgo,* although ridiculous, was not put beyond the pale of the reader’s sympathy, and the author condemns only the exaggeration of the chivalrous spirit, and not true courage and devotion when these virtues have a serious object. What happened to *Guzman de Alfarache* happened to *Don Quixote.* In 1614 a spurious second part of the adventures of Don Quixote made its appearance; Cervantes was thus roused from inactivity, and the following year gave to the world the true second part, which instantly eclipsed Avellaneda’s imitation.

The stage in the 17th century in some measure took the place of the *romances* of the previous age; it is, as it were, the medium of all the memories, all the passions, and all the aspirations of the Spanish people. Its style, being that of the popular poetry, made it accessible to the most illiterate classes, and gave it an immense range of subject. The Bible, the lives of the martyrs, national traditions, the chronicles of Castile and Aragon, foreign histories and novels, even the daily incidents of contemporary Spanish life, the escapades and nightly brawls of students, the gallantries of the Calle Mayor and the Prado of Madrid, balcony escalades, sword-thrusts and dagger-stabs, duels and murders, fathers befooled, jealous ladies, pilfering and cowardly valets, inquisitive and sprightly waiting-maids, sly and tricky peasants, fresh country girls—all are turned to dramatic account. The enormous mass of plays with which the literature of this period is inundated may be divided into two great classes—secular and religious; the latter may be sub- divided into (1) the liturgical play, *i.e.* the *auto* either *sacra­mental* or *al nacimiento,* and (2) the *comedia divina* or the *comedia de santos,* which has no liturgical element, and differs from a secular play only in the fact that the subject is religious and frequently, as one of the names indicates, derived from the biography of a saint. In the secular drama, classification might be carried almost to any extent if the nature of the subject be taken as the criterion. It will be sufficient to distinguish the *comedia (i.e.* any tragic or comic piece in three acts) according to the social types brought on the stage, the equipment of the actors, and the artifices resorted to in the representation. We have (1) the *comedia de capa y espada,* which represents everyday incident, the actors belonging to the middle class, simple *caballeros,* and consequently wearing the garb of ordinary town life, of which the chief items were the cloak and the sword; and (2) the *comedia de teαtro* or *de ruido,* or again, *de tramoya* or *de aparencias (i.e.* the theatrical, spectacular or scenic play), which has kings and princes for its dramatis personae and makes a great display of mechanical devices and decorations. Besides the *comedia,* the classic stage has also a series of little pieces subsidiary to the play proper: the *loa,* or prologue; the *entremés,* a kind of inter- lude which afterwards developed into the *sainete;* the *bαile,* or ballet accompanied with singing; and the *zarzuela,* a sort of operetta thus named after the royal residence of La Zarzuela, where the kings of Spain had a theatre. As to the dramatic poets of the golden age, even mure numerous than the lyric poets and the romancers, it is difficult to group them. All are more or less pupils or imitators of the great chief of the new school, Lope Felix de Vega Carpio; everything has ultimately to be brought back to him whom the Spaniards call the “ monster of Nature.” Among Lope’s contemporaries only a few poets of Valencia—Gaspar Honorat de Aguilar (1561-1623), Francisco Tárrega, Guillen de Castro, the author of the *Mocedades del Cid* (from which Corneille derived his inspiration)—formed a small school, as it were, somewhat less subject to the master than that of Madrid, which could only win the applause of the public by copying as exactly as possible the manner of the great initiator. Lope left his mark on all varieties of the *comedia,* but did not attain equal excellence in all. He was especially successful in the comedy of intrigue *(enredo),* of the *capa y espada* class, and in dramas whose subjects are derived from national history. His most incontestable merit is to have given the Spanish stage a range and scope of which it had not been previously thought capable, and of having taught his contemporaries to invent dramatic situations and to carry on a plot. It is true he produced little that is perfect: his pro- digious fecundity and facility allowed him no time to mature his work; he wrote negligently, considered the stage an inferior department, good for the *vulgo,* and consequently did not judge it worthy of the same esteem as lyric or narrative poetry modelled on the Italians. Lope’s first pupils exaggerated some of his defects, but, at the same time, each, according to his own taste, widened the scope of the *comedia.* Antonio Mira de Amescua and Luis Velez de Guevara were successful, especially in tragic histories and *comedias divinas.* Gabriel Téllez, better known under the pseudonym of Tirso de Molina, one of the most flexible, ingenious and inventive of the dramatists, displayed no less talent in the comedy of contemporary manners than in historical drama. *El Burlador de Sevilla (Don Juan)* is reckoned his masterpiece; but he showed himself a much greater poet in *El Vergonzoso en palacio, Don Gil de las Calzas Verdes* and *Marta la Piadosa.* Finally Juan Ruiz de Alarcon the most serious and most obsérvant of Spanish dramatic poets, successfully achieved the comedy of character in *La Verdad sospechosa,* closely followed by Corneille in his *Menteur.* Most of the remaining play-writers did little but increase the number of *comedias,* they added nothing to the real elements of the drama. The second epoch of the classical drama is represented mainly by Pedro Calderón de la Barca, the Spanish dramatist who has obtained most celebrity abroad, where his pieces have been much studied and admired (perhaps extravagantly). It is Calderón who first made honour, or more correctly the point of honour, an essential motive in the conduct of his personages (e.g. *El Médico de su honra)* ; it is he also who made the *comedia de capa y espada* uniform even to monotony, and gave the comic “ part ” of the *gracioso* (confidential valet of the *Caballero)* a rigidity which it never previously possessed. There is depth and poetry in Calderón, but also vagueness and bad taste. His most philosophic drama, *La Vida es sueño,* is a bold and sublime idea, but indistinct and feebly worked out; his *autos sacra­mentales* give evidence of extensive theological knowledge and dexterity in dramatizing abstractions. Calderón was imitated, as Lope had been, by exaggerating his manner and perverting his∙ excellences. Two contemporaries deserve to be cited along with him—Francisco de Rojas Zorilla, author of the fine historic play *Del Rey abajo ninguno,* and Augustin Moreto, author of some pleasant comedies. Among those who worked in a less ambitious vein, mention must be made of Luis Quinones de Benavente, a skilful writer of *entreméses.*

A new manner of writing appears with the revival of learning; the purely objective style of the old chroniclers, accumulating one fact after another, without showing the logical connexion or expressing any opinion on men or things, began to be thought puerile. An attempt was made to treat the history of Spain in the manner of Livy, Sallust, and Tacitus, whose methods of narration were directly adopted. The 16th century, however, still presents certain chroniclers of the medieval type, with more erudition, precision and the promise of a critical faculty. *La Crónica general de España,* by Ambrosio de Morales; the *Compendia historial* of Estéban de Garibay; and the *Historia general de las Indias occidentales,* by Antonio de Herrera, are, so far as style is concerned, continuations of the last chronicles of Castile. Jerónimo de Zurita is emphatically a scholar; no one in the 16th century knew as he did how to turn to account documents and records for the purpose of completing and correcting the narratives of the