the court. Verse-making and gallantry occupied much of his time there, and by virtue of his talents and name he became one of a group comprising the greatest nobles and most celebrated poets of the age, including Bernadim Ribeiro and Christovão Falcão, who surrounded the beautiful and gifted D. Leonor de Masearenhas. He seems to have resided for the most part in the capital down to 1521, dividing his time between the palace and the university, in the latter of which he had taken the degree of doctor of law by 1516. Honoured by the friendship of Prince John (afterwards John III.), he accompanied the court as it moved from place to place during the reign of King Manoel, and witnessed the triumphs of the Fortunate Monarch; and at a time when the flag of Portugal floated victorious in every sea and her ships encircled the globe, it was not surprising that the youthful poet should aspire to be the Virgil of a new Augustus ruling a universal monarchy. His studious and reflective mind and sound sense did not allow him, however, to nourish these illusions for long, and we find him pointing out in tones of prophetic melancholy the signs of decadence and future disaster. He had come out of the university so good a lawyer that he was able to act as *ad interim* professor of his faculty, and he was offered a judicial post, but his independent spirit and punctilious conscience led him to refuse it. He had only embarked on a legal career to please his father, and on the latter’s death he abandoned law for moral and stoic philosophy and poetry, and resolved to travel. He had observed with regret the modest intellectual position of his country, for all her wealth and epic achievements, the latter of which had found no echo in poetry; and if he were to learn and be able to introduce new forms of art fed by fresh ideals, as he desired, he felt he must go abroad. The *Cancioneiro de Resende,* which represented the poetical efforts of courtiers for almost a century and contained Miranda’s early verses, showed the extent of the national poverty by its artificiality, and lack of ideas, of sincerity and of good taste. These defects are not surprising, seeing that during most of that long period the literary movement had been confined to court circles and had remained essentially imitative of Spanish models, with hardly a vestige of national or popular inspiration about it. Portugal had been too busy building up a world-empire to imbibe much of the mental culture of the Renaissance, and even the classics were for the most part only known through Spanish translations. Direct intercourse between Portugal and Italy partook of a commercial rather than a literary or artistic character, and, previously to Miranda’s journey, Italian poetry was practically unknown.

In the middle of July 1520 he set out across Spain for Italy, and spent the years 1521 to 1525 abroad, visiting Milan, Venice, Florence, Rome, Naples and Sicily “ with leisure and curiosity.’’ He enjoyed intimacy with Giovanni Ruceellai, Lattanzio Tolomei and Sanazarro; he saluted the illustrious Vittoria Colonna, a distant connexion of his family, and in her house he probably talked with Bembo and Ariosto, and perhaps met Machiavelli and Guicciardini. He assisted at the rebirth of the Italian drama and saw the performance of classical prose comedies, a form of art which he was to transplant to Portugal. Lastly he heard the echoes of the Protestant revolt, and witnessed with horror the dissolution of morals which prepared the way for the Reformation.

Returning home in 1525, he brought with him the sonnet and canzone of Petrarch, the tercet of Dante, the *ottava rima* of Ariosto, the eclogue in the manner of Sanazarro, and Italian endecasyllabic verse. He did not, however, like his disciple Antonio Ferreira *(q.v.),* abandon the national *redondilha,* but rather continued to employ it and carried it to perfection in his *Cartas.* Settling down in Coimbra or its environs, he lived there from 1526-1527 until 1532. The visit of King John III. and his court to the city enabled him to resume his old relations with the reigning house and the cultivated members of the nobility, who received him affably and listened with interest to the story of his Italian tour. Gil Vicente, the court dramatist, was then at the height of his fame, but his *autos* appeared poor things to Sá de Miranda as compared with the comedies he had seen in Italy; and urged by his friends to present an example of the new style, he wrote the *Estrangeiros.* Produced in 1527-1528, it was

the first Portuguese prose comedy, and was composed on the lines of the classical Roman drama as modified by contemporary Italian authors like Ariosto; it had a great and immediate success, notwithstanding the opposition of the partisans of the popular auto, who saw themselves attacked in the prologue. In 1528 Miranda made his first real attempt to introduce the new forms of verse by writing in Spanish a canzon entitled *Fabula do Mondego,* and in 1530-1532 he followed it up with the eclogue *Aleixo,* which among its redondilhas has some cndeca- syllables—the earliest attempt at *ottaυa rima* in Portuguese. Various sonnets dedicated to friends also belong to this period. The foundations of the Italian school were now laid, and hence­forth Miranda’s reputation as a poet grew visibly, while he was also one of the most esteemed of courtiers; but the opposition of his literary foes increased with his very success. Moreover, in the sphere of politics pessimism had taken firm hold of him. From being a land of promise, India had become for him, as for Camoens, “ the mother of villains, the stepmother of men of honour ”; and though the wealth of the East poured into Lisbon, Portugal remained poor because agriculture was neglected and corn had to be imported from abroad. Miranda protested in vigorous terms against the fever of adventure and lust of gold, but few gave ear to his moralizings or had leisure to read poetry, and in 1534 he left the court.

The year 1532 had marked his passage from the active to the contemplative life, and the eclogue *Basto,* in the form of a pastoral dialogue written in redondilhas, opened his new manner. It has a pronounced personal note, and its episodes are described in a genuinely popular tone. The shepherds Gil and Bento repre­sent, the one city sociability, the other rustic aloofness, or the contrast between life at court and in the country, and serve as a vehicle for the poet’s ideas. The same epoch saw the composition of his *Cartas* or sententious letters in quintilhas, which, with *Basto* and his satires, make up the most original, if not the most valuable, portion of his legacy, and served as models for two centuries. His allusion in *Aleixo* to the exile of Bernardim Ribeiro, and his defence of his friend, seem to have offended that powerful grandee, the count of Castanbeira, and probably hastened his retirement from court, and the royal gift of a Commenda of the Order of Christ, situate by the river Neiva on the borders of Galicia, came opportunely, because the rents Sá de Miranda drew from it and a small private fortune enabled him to live in modest comfort at the neighbouring Quinta da Tapada. Poetry with him was never a mere pastime, and, after a short period of repose, the gift of a MS. of the verses of Garcilasso and Boscan, founders of the Italian school in Castile, encouraged him to resume the work of reform commenced at Coimbra; between 1535 and 1538 he composed five eclogues in endecasyllables, four in Spanish and one in Portuguese, which show evident traces of their influence.

Before long he heard echoes of his new song, first from the pro­vince, then from the court. In 1536 he married D. Briolanja de Azevedo, a lady of rare qualities and education, belonging to an illustrious Minho family. He spent the rest of his life in retire­ment at the Quinta da Tapada, which became a centre from which the reform of Portuguese poetry spread; for he developed great poetical activity in his retreat, and while he read and annotated Homer in the original Greek, he did not disdain domestic pleasures and country sports. His evenings were occupied by music and the performance of comedies and mimes, and by readings of Bembo and Ariosto with cultivated neighbours; and he extended hospitality to savants like Nicholas Cleynarts and Francisco de Hollanda,and launched on the career of letters such men as Diogo Bernardes, the author of the *Lima.*

In 1538 he wrote his second classical prose comedy, the *Vilhalpandos,* which was played before the Cardinal Infant Henry, afterwards king, at his request, and on the poet’s death that prince saw to the printing of this and the earlier comedy. During the years 1543 to 1553, except for a few occasional poems Sá dc Miranda kept silence, and the cause is not far to seek; the Inquisition had got to work, and the Jesuits had acquired control of the university and displaced the humanists. When