

MODERN SPAIN AND ITS LITERATURE¹

PERSONALITIES OF MODERN SPAIN

BEFORE I start my lectures tonight I feel that I should explain certain points with regard to the course of three lectures which I shall give. First, I would like to explain why, being an Irishman, I should be lecturing on Spain. We, in Ireland, feel that a close bond of friendship unites us to Spain, for a great part of our history of civilization came to us from Spain. I remember once having seen an old document of Philip V in which it was stated that every Irishman who went to Spain was *ipso facto* a Spanish citizen. And then there are a great many documents extant which remind us that civilization came into Ireland in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries direct from Spain. If you go back further into the Middle Ages there are more documents: I remember at Toledo seeing a manuscript which told of an expedition made by a Spanish knight all the way to the shrine of St. Patrick, which was known as St. Patrick's Purgatory. I thus feel that the great traditions which unite us to Spain justify an Irishman in speaking on this subject.

In order to explain the purpose of this course of lectures on Modern Spain, I am tonight going to occupy myself in a general way with the country and I shall attempt to create a background for the salient personalities. Tomorrow night

¹A course of three lectures delivered at the Rice Institute on March 20, 21, and 22, 1929, by Dr. Walter Fitzwilliam Starkie, Professor of Spanish in Trinity College, Dublin.

I shall deal with that great manifestation of the Spaniard, the drama. In concluding the course I shall speak of novelists and poets, with special reference to a few personalities.

I shall take as the theme of this first lecture the "hero," that word which sums up all that characteristically Spanish chivalry, courage and pride which are included in the word *nobleza*. Then tomorrow in dealing with the theatre I shall choose as my theme Don Juan, the gallant; and lastly, Don Quixote, the mystic. So in this way we shall get the three themes of Spain—the hero, the gallant, and the mystic.

Spain is unique in the whole world, and especially in Europe and most Europeans feel that, in a way, the Pyrenees seem to end Europe. In a sense it is true that after we cross the Pyrenees we arrive at an entirely different land. Here there is a rugged strength that we do not find in the rest of Europe; and that is why so many writers have stated that Spain does not belong to Europe but to Africa, for if we take the physical features of the country after we cross the Pyrenees, we discover a parched and desert-like land in greatest contrast to the smiling fields of France. Then when we go through the plateau land of Castile it all seems like a vast desert which has imposed its will on Spain. And this primitive strength of the Castilian landscape leads all our thoughts away from the tender suavity of Europe to the ruggedness of Africa, where, as someone has said, "the weather then dried up a soul too tender."

The history of Spain is an immense tribute to all the sturdy virtues of man. The Spaniard has created his world empire from this country that looks so much like a desert; he has mastered it, and in a way has created himself in its image. And it is important to note that it has been the Castilian, who has absorbed all the other nationalities contained in the country. Take for instance Basques like Unamuno or Zulo-

aga, Andalusians like Gongora or Machado, Asturians like Ayala; you find in them all the Castilian spirit—a universal sense of their country. But in this country which looks so unified on the map, there are in reality divisions into various kingdoms all so unlike one another in blood as well as in language. A consequence of this is that the Spaniard does not call himself a Spaniard, but Basque or Galician or Catalan or Andalusian. The country is divided into these separate kingdoms by a series of transverse mountain ranges. In the north we have the Basque; he is supposed to be the primitive inhabitant of the peninsula, and you find a strong primitive instinct in him: he is incurably obstinate in character and preserves carefully his language and his traditions. When we go further west we find the Galician, who is the opposite in character. I remember during my wanderings among the peasants in that region they called us Irish “Brother Celts.” Even in their music their dances resemble the jigs and Celtic laments which they play on the bagpipe. Then when we go to the other side we discover in the Catalans an entirely different mentality. They are the most progressive people in the country and it has been said that the Catalans “can even make bread out of stones.” They are intensely thrifty and their natural intelligence has been awakened by modern life. Part of Catalonia around the city of Valencia has been called the “garden of Spain” and some of its fragrance may be found in certain of the early novels of Ibañez. In the middle of Spain we find the dry plateau land of Castile, that has united the destinies of Spain. Lastly, in the south we meet the Andalusians, descendants in great part of the Moors who made the country the fairest jewel “in the crown of the Prophet.”

Thus, in Spain in spite of the apparent unity there is great diversity, and yet it has been Castile’s spirit that has unified

it. When we look back over the whole history of Spain we see one great race emerging from the ceaseless internal struggles of peppery little states. Then comes the period when the country gradually unites to drive out the Moors who were the most progressive element in their own nation, and centuries it took before this was accomplished. As one of Spain's early kings once said: "There is no need for us to go on the Crusades because we have enough crusades at home." And yet in all this internecine strife we find very little bitterness until quite late in the twelfth century; all through the struggle the people live together and intermarry as if there were no war on. The true prototype of Spanish heroism is to be found in the Cid Campeador, who spent part of his life fighting with the Christians against the Moors, and part of it fighting with the Moors. In his personality we may see the tensions that are always to be found in the Spaniard. Another interesting point is that it was in the year 1492 that the Moors were finally driven out of their last stronghold, Granada—the same year in which America was discovered. In those two outstanding historical events we may read the fate of Spain. Their empire was a guerdon for their faith: the same qualities that had enabled them to persevere in the war against the Moors inspired them to become the Conquistador. It is a curious coincidence of history that those two wonderful events should take place in the same year.

As we visualize that day when the Silver Cross of the Catholic King and Queen was planted on the town of the Alhambra and the succeeding years of the Empire, we feel inclined to agree with the Spanish writer who said that all that bid for world empire was a wonderful gesture—and a rapid gesture at that—for it all took place between 1492 and 1588, the year when we notice the decline of power.

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From 1492 to 1568 we have a rapid rise; then from 1568 to 1898 comes the long period of dreary decline, as Spain lost her colonies, one by one, until nothing was left of the great empire.

We can explain this "gesture" when we show that it is based on two ideas, as I said in the beginning—the theme of heroism and the theme of chivalry—that mediaeval chivalry which you find as the basis of the Spanish character. Unamuno had this in mind when he said: "I feel my soul is mediaeval, and that the soul of my country is mediaeval;" that is the cry of the mystic—that the soul may be touched and Spanish mediaevalism be restored; that is the cry of the Middle Ages against the modern, and it is characteristic that it should be a Spaniard who utters it today. The Spanish Empire, that wonderful empire of Ferdinand and Isabella, was based on the idea of chivalry possessed by the Spanish knights. It was a wonderful drama but it was not economic.

From a study of the history of the Spanish Empire it is evident that those explorers or Conquistadores did not work from an economic standpoint; it is true that they went where gold was to be found, but it only served to build wonderful cathedrals and there was no attempt to create an economic nation. This has been shown by various historians who have written to prove that the whole system was wasteful because it tended to sacrifice one class, the nobles, without touching the mass of the Spanish people. That is where you find the weakness from the beginning in the Spanish Empire and this weakness caused it to be an extraordinary gesture made by the band of nobles headed by the King, and whose lives were dominated by the idea of honor and chivalry.

Another point to be noted in the Spanish character is its sense of antithesis which makes it contradictory. All

through Spanish literature writers have worshipped the man of flesh and bones in all his stark realism. They were so much in love with real life that they never thought of founding schools of abstract thought; the tendency in Spain has always been that while the schools failed the individuals became great. Spanish literature unfolds for us a vast panorama of great individuals. The Spaniard in all his folklore is rooted to the earth, and yet just as every tendency creates its own opposite, we find this desert-dweller weaving fantastic images far away from the real world. It is thus that Spain has produced an extraordinary band of mystics of the calibre of St. Theresa and St. John of the Cross. Take the "Night of the Soul" by St. John, with all its ethereal journey of the soul. Here we are in the higher realms of fantasy and yet the book was created by a mystic and realist who was intensely alive to life in this world. In such allegorical works we follow the mystic as he journeys in his dream-world; he climbs the mystic ladder and his soul wears successively the three colors of "faith," "hope," and "charity"—the white representing faith, the green, hope, and then finally it dons the red of charity. It is important to realize this antithesis between intense realism and mysticism because the antithesis is as true today of Spain as it has always been. Spain is always the same because always the same forces are at work.

All the representative deeds of Spaniards have been patterned on the epics of the Cid and Don Quixote, the Conquistadores, who set out with their tiny bands to conquer new countries; St. Ignatius Loyola, and St. John of the Cross; all these are representative of what I have said. Every Spaniard stands alone. As Ortega once said: "Our greatest artist has always been Adam." Goya was an Adam; he stands alone. Even though like every other Mediter-

anean, he sees himself from the viewpoint of others, yet he must live his life alone.

Now I want to deal more with this idea of honor, this *nobleza*, this beautiful quality you find in Spanish literature, and which the Spaniard calls *Pundonor*. That concept of honor is his litany, and it springs from the pathos of the lone individual who knows that he depends alone on himself; he does not offer or seek pity. And generally speaking, the Spaniard cannot understand certain ideas in our western justice. He cannot understand the idea of justice you get in England, for the ideas of Spanish justice are entirely different. I always think of that picture of Goya's which I saw while in Madrid this last spring—two duelists stand facing one another, yet sunk deep in the sand so that neither can have an advantage. That is characteristic of the Spanish; both sunk knee deep in the sand. You will find in certain parts of Spain where dueling is allowed instances where two people are tied together by the left elbow, while they hold the knife in their right hand.

This hard and austere element in the Spanish character will also explain their institution of the Inquisition. Many foolish books have been written about the Inquisition by people who did not understand Spain. Their ideas of its scope and enforcement were exaggerated; they branded it as infamously cruel, without realizing that it was less cruel in Spain than in other countries. When we examine the records impartially we find that the tortures used were less inhuman than in other countries. However we should all admit that there is in the Spanish character a certain hardness which appears whenever his passions are aroused.

There is another element in the Spanish character which I want to mention, for we see it all through their literature, whether ancient or modern, and that is their preoccupation

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with the idea of death. There is no literature in the world that has occupied itself so much with death as the Spanish. Outside the idea of Christianity, it is closely allied to the Islamic certainty of mortality. You find this same idea of Death in the biggest monument to death—the Escorial—that magnificent building erected by Philip II to be at once convent, church, palace, and mausoleum. The Spaniards worship life with passion and death with passion, but above all we meet this obsession of death. In life man is a king, seated on a golden throne, wielding the sceptre of power and majesty. He looks on Death as the terrible avenger, coming, so to speak, to dethrone him. So you have this man of flesh and bones, the king of creation, who has perforce to perform the Dance of Death with the skeleton which is to dethrone him. The Spaniard is obsessed by this thought because he cannot submit to the idea of nonsurvival. He longs always for corporeal immortality, and hence it is that all through Spanish literature we feel as if death were ever present behind the writer's desk. You discover that this idea is the mainspring of the greatest writer of modern Spain—Unamuno. In spite of his ceaseless soul-struggles he is essentially Catholic, because he recognizes the reality of the spirit only in its fleshy embodiment. And that reminds me of a story he once told me. His little son sat in a café with him one day, and he found him scribbling on the table ceaselessly: "I am made of flesh, I am made of flesh," *Soy de carne*, and Unamuno quotes this example of the survival of the flesh. Another example I should like to mention from Don Quixote and Don Juan—every dream of theirs runs to fleshly reality and every reality embodies the super-earthly spirit.

I now desire to say a few words about Cervantes because he was to my mind the great symbol of this idea of *nobleza*; he was a noble and a soldier, and thus in line with the Cid.

We should remember that there never has been any literature so inspired by soldiers as the Spanish, for they were always soldiers, in the army or in the spirit; it is essentially a military literature. Cervantes is a symbol of the spirit of Spain—he was a soldier, and he fought in that great battle of Lepanto in 1571, in which he was seriously wounded. Afterwards he was captured with his ship by Algerian corsairs and brought to Africa, and he tells us how he lived in imprisonment as a slave, and how he made many attempts to escape, which always failed through the disloyalty of others. He nevertheless was loyal and would never tell; but always take the blame, so much so that the Arabs instead of wrecking him still more by torture, treated him better, because they respected him as an example of noble manhood. Then he is ransomed and returns to Spain, and his story is like that of so many in the Great War. He returned after having given everything, all the best years of his life, fighting for this idea of universal Spain, and he finds that all has been forgotten, and instead of Spain being fit for heroes to live in, he finds it in a sorry state. Nothing but picaros, and hungry soldiers wandering about the country and thronging the streets with beggars. All through life he fought poverty, and on several occasions it was in the debtor's prison that he penned his works. Those are the conditions under which writes this work, *Don Quixote*. He conceived the idea while in prison. In the beginning his idea was to satirize the Spaniards who tried to put all their beliefs in the pageant of Spanish World-Power: he wanted to attack those who read nought but romances of chivalry and dreamt of an impossible chivalry. But as soon as he starts to create his hero, his hero rises and begins to live his own life contrary to his author. Instead of being a pendant to a satire, *Don Quixote* becomes the noblest knight that Spain

ever created. As in Pirandello's play the character rises against his author, and insists on living a life independent of the author. Thus Don Quixote becomes the symbol of the whole chivalry of Spain, the embodiment of the idea of *nobleza*, and I think it is important to realize this in dealing with the whole of Spanish literature after that book, because in Spain you will find, even today, that every Spaniard knows *Don Quixote* by heart. It is the basis of nearly everything in Spanish literature ever since, and the flavor of its irony, sadness, chivalry, and humor is reflected in writers from Quevedo to Ramón Pérez de Ayala. And today you have Unamuno writing the tragic history of Don Quixote to show that the knight is the symbol of the whole Spanish race.

Now, with regard to our days that I have said must be taken as a basis for an interpretation of modern Spain. What do you find when you come to the nineteenth century? The most miserable era in Spanish history; there is the sad vision of a Spain torn in twain by the Carlist wars, enduring one oppressive government after another; her gradual decline, and the loss of her remaining colonies in 1898. But this disaster aroused the Spanish people and after that year you notice the inauguration of an era of progress in modern Spain. It was immediately after that time that a new page was turned, and we hear of what is called the generation of 1898. I might add that the leaders in this generation were Unamuno, Martínez Ruiz (Azorín), Benavente, Baroja, Valle-Inclán, Maeztu, and Rubén Darío.

Now 1898 was the year also in which Spain turned its attention seriously to economic reforms, and after that you have an era of improvement in the country; we find a great change on all sides. New ideas came in, and the Spaniards awoke to a great activity in a period which we might set between the years 1902, when the present King came to the

throne, and 1923. I consider the years from 1902 to 1923 a most effective period in many ways. I think it is just to compare it with what we call the Victorian age of progress in England. As it was an age of commercial development, so was it an age of development in economics. In 1918 the Bank of Spain showed the biggest gold reserve in Europe. The nineteenth century had left a heavy burden; the army theretofore had been the main support of the crown, and it continually interfered with the government, through its "officers' committees," and even among the most conservative there were cries of "let those govern who can be governed." Thus you find the military party interfering always with the government, and this had its logical outcome when a military dictatorship came to ask the King for powers to administer the country. And thus came into being the military directorate and civilian cabinet, presided over by Primo de Rivera under whose benevolent energies many new reforms have been carried out.

Now turning from politics to what is more interesting, let us consider the economic change, which is far more striking than the political revolution. The Great War was important because of its effect economically on Spain. During that time wealth poured in, and there was a decided development in agriculture. There was also a great increase in hydraulic engineering, and this increase has been maintained under the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera. Hence there has been a great increase in the productivity and manufacturing power of the country. Spain is now a manufacturing nation; it is no longer a market, or a country where industrial concessions may be easily secured by foreigners. Spanish railroads which had been foreign-built and foreign-owned, during the war were bought over by Spain—at least a great many of them—and Bilbao, Barcelona, and other such centres, famous for

their industries and up-to-date methods, are gradually developing and bringing in new methods. And these hydraulic schemes I spoke of are intended to transform the marshes in the south and give them to agriculture, thus enlarging the cotton-and fruit-producing districts. Then too, you have the trade with other countries, and especially the trade in Catalonia. Let us take Barcelona as an example—its population was one hundred thousand a hundred years ago, and now it is eight hundred thousand; it is the most important port of the whole Mediterranean, and its trade has developed by leaps and bounds. Catalonia only represents about one-half of the country, yet it dominates Spain as regards trade. One of the greatest boons that the present government in Spain has conferred on the country has been the termination of the war in Morocco, which had been continually waging since 1921, the year in which Abd-el-Krim came to the front. In May 1926 he surrendered, and since then there has been a very great increase in the power of Spain, as less money has to be spent on the army.

During this period there have been attempts to reform the education of the country. A great work is being done by certain bodies, in Madrid especially, mainly through the great influence of such men as Francisco Giner de los Rios. It was through his great influence that non-sectarian teaching was introduced and as a result of this reform various schools have sprung up that compare with the best in Europe. We find such European scholars as Menéndez, Pidal, Cotarelo y Mori, Rodríguez Marin, and Aménco Castro, who have done great service to their country by their investigation of the ancient manuscripts. It is interesting to notice that there are two methods, in a sense, in Spanish scholarship—the French and the German. In the schools of Spain you find some following the German method, with its

mass of detail work; then you have others following the French, with their light touch and logical treatment. It is only in these last twenty-six or twenty-eight years that we find this active work done on the old texts of Spanish literature. Before that Spanish scholarship labored under very great disadvantages. In Spain now the scholars are producing each year good texts for students to work with, and this example is an inspiration to Hispanic schools all over the world.

I have shown you the external background of Spain, and have outlined generally its progress in modern days, and I would like to deal now with certain personalities belonging to the country in our days. As I said before, we find in the modern Spaniard the same qualities that I described at the beginning. Take, for instance, the personality of the King of Spain. He is characteristic of the Spanish people; he acts the King from case to case; that is to say, he is always adapting himself plastically to the needs of his own country. He has always been a King in his life, therefore, he is devoid of any uncertainty as to his own prerogatives; he has always been able to adapt his personality to the essentially Spanish soul. He is true to the mediaeval characteristics, and also to that concept of *nobleza* I spoke of—a King among his people, but when he plays polo, he puts himself on a level with his subjects, and the nobles with whom he plays do not permit him to win simply because he is a King.¹ It is as in the ancient tournaments—a battle of equal people. Then also you find in whatever he does there is reflected the spirit of a King. With his kingship is linked his personal courage. You all know the terrible adventures he has had—the attempted assassinations; yet, all the time he was respected by the Spanish for his courage. On one occasion at Barcelona,

¹ Cf. H. Keyserling, *Europe*.

upon his arrival there, his life was threatened, and he was watched by detectives, and yet he dismissed and pushed aside all guards, and walked unarmed down the middle of the crowd. Here we find that essentially personal courage, which has always been demanded by the Spaniard. His Majesty also has a pronounced sense of irony or humor, which is a counter-weight to the weighty solemnity we often find in Spain, and to this we should add his great sense of dignity.

Then take the nobles who surround the King, men like the Duke of Alba, who has done so much to rehabilitate Spain, as much a patron of art and literature as were his ancestors. You find in him, as in the King, that sense of tradition which links him with the earlier members of his family, in the age of Garcilaso de Vega, who were patrons of art and literature.

Now we will take some other characters. Take, for instance, Unamuno, that philosophical mystic, who was so long a director of the University at Salamanca; he has been essentially a Don Quixote of Modern Spain. At this time he sits in exile only a few miles from the Spanish frontier, awaiting the outcome of the present dictatorship; and always he is waiting until something happens, some amazing shock which will pulverize all those people and bring him back to Spain. There is a certain pathos in the figure of this man. I remember him as I saw him in 1921 in Salamanca, his real city, where he was beloved by everybody; he was the cynosure of all who came there; all called him "master," and as he sat surrounded by people who came from all parts of the town, he was the symbol of the city. One time he had been put into semi-exile by the King of Spain for something he had written, and was not allowed to leave his city. Then the King pardoned him, and when the telegram granting

him pardon came, he sat there and looked at it, and instead of being glad, he was angry, for pardon had taken away the idea of conflict. You see he was always the embodiment of the contradictory character. Even after that he could not resist the impulse to attack again and again. He is a descendant of Fray Luis de León, whom the Inquisition took and put in prison for about five years, underground, yet after five years of suffering when he came back to Salamanca University, and stood before his class in the University, he started his lecture by saying: "As I was saying yesterday"—to him the whole five years was blotted out; that is typical of Unamuno. I always think that in the poetry of Calderón de la Barca you find the same idea as you do in Unamuno.

You find many characters the exact opposite in modern Spain. Such a well-known personage as Blasco Ibañez, a writer of a certain notoriety, is an entirely different character—a man not having the asceticism of Unamuno, that mysticism of thought; he is rash, a person of first impulse, possessing the florid imagination of the Valencian. His imagination is rich, luxuriant, but without any sort of *Casticismo*, as we say in Spanish. I remember once while in Salamanca with him, Unamuno asked him if he would not go back and look again at one of the cathedrals he had visited, but he replied: "I don't care for anything that does not strike me at first sight." He wrote his earlier books about Valencia without deep thought but with a certain erratic talent. In his short stories he beautifully depicts scenes of emotions and character with bold simplicity. Later in his life he became a writer for the films and lost his direct vision of Spanish life.

I feel I should tell a few anecdotes about him. He had a beautiful villa that he had built along the Riviera; and in this villa he conceived the idea of building an immense Roman

triclinium which would overlook the sea; he called in an architect and plans were made, and this Roman dining-room was to be a very gorgeous baroque affair. At last the building ceased and it was to be inaugurated by a banquet. Alas on that very day the cliff gave way, and pillars and all were precipitated into the sea. That is characteristic of his personality—building on an unstable foundation.

Another story of him that I was told, and which shows his temperament, dates from his visit to America some years ago. It was after the great success of his *Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse*. He did not know a word of English and brought along with him an interpreter, with whom he fought continuously. When the newspaper reporters would gather around him and ask him, through this interpreter, what Mr. Ibañez thought of their city and of America, he would say: "I hate your city; I hate America; I loathe coming here," and the interpreter would turn to the reporters smilingly and say: "Mr. Ibañez thinks America is in the forefront of progress; that it is the great country of the future, and full of all the civilization of today." This went on merrily until one day when he had been unusually cross and unusually uncivil to his interpreter. Just as the newspaper reporters appeared, the interpreter flew into a temper. When they started their usual questioning he replied: "As a matter of fact, Mr. Ibañez says he hates your beastly city; he thinks it is awful, and he loathes being here," and thus the tour was finished then and there.

Those are a few anecdotes regarding the temperament of this man, but there are certain other things I want to say about him also. There is in him a certain genuineness of character; whether he will ever be given a niche of a literary artist or not remains to be seen, but a friend of mine whom I consider a great critic said to me once that he thought the

character of the bandit Plumitas in *Blood and Sand* is one of the most living characters in modern Spanish fiction, and it is interesting to note that it was taken from real life. Then if you read *Reeds and Mud*, *The Cabin*, and *Blood and Sand*, you will find certain characters that are essentially moving and characteristic of Spanish literature.

I have told you of Unamuno the Basque, and Ibañez the Valencian, and now I want to take another character—a very different sort of person—Ramón del Valle-Inclán. He comes from Galicia. I do not know whether he is so well-known or not, but he is a man of very fine literary ideas; he is characteristic of the Celtic Galicia, and, although his style is individual, yet you get a certain quality characteristic of modern Spanish literature—a *mélange* of modern and ancient art for art's sake mixed with feudalism. In Ramón del Valle-Inclán we find characteristics that recall D'Annunzio; his style resembles that of D'Annunzio, and even with regard to the man himself there is a something of D'Annunzio about him—his beautiful cloak and long beard; he is a very picturesque figure, and he cultivates in addition the manners of a feudal baron. His books seem to have sprung from the thirteenth century when there were troubadours in Galicia. We meet words of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries mixed with words of the twentieth century; there is always a hodge-podge of the two personalities, the ancient and the modern. When I think of Ramón del Valle-Inclán I am reminded of a story of D'Annunzio, which, I think, is characteristic of del Valle-Inclán; it was a story told me by an acquaintance of the Italian author about Chicherin who happened to be in Italy as a representative of the Soviet government, and D'Annunzio asked him to dine with him in his palace of the Vittoriale. Dinner was served in the Franciscan refectory. At the end of the meal, two footmen

came in bringing a beautifully chiseled sword, and withdrew, locking the door after them. D'Annunzio took the sword in his hand and fondled the blade, all the time gazing fixedly at his guest. Then he said: "You know I have suddenly conceived the idea of cutting your head off," and then he stopped and waited for the effect his words would have on his guest, who drew back nervously saying to himself: "I don't know what may happen; with this mad poet anything would be possible, and if he cuts my head off probably Europe wouldn't care," and he drew back. After a few minutes of silence D'Annunzio said: "I don't know what's wrong with me tonight; I am not in form; I will put it off until another day," and the two footmen carried away the sword. That story is a striking example of D'Annunzio's play-acting for the purpose of seeing the effect on his guest. I think that is also characteristic of del Valle-Inclán—his grotesque sense of humor and his play-acting. He compares himself to Cervantes. He lost an arm, not at Lepanto but in a duel which he fought with a critic in Madrid and as the wound went septic his arm had to be removed. Del Valle-Inclán has a very interesting personality. But what a contrast to Ibañez and Unamuno. You cannot include any of them in a school, for they are too rebellious. In Spain there is no such thing as a literary school. We find there the striving individual, but they are all solitary figures. Everything in Spanish literature, even today, as in the days of old, counts according to its individual worth. We do not think of a political or literary movement, but we think of the political or literary individual. Nothing is more typical of Spain than the discussions or *tertulias*. The *tertulias* are groups that meet in the cafés around Madrid, where a writer draws around him his special friends and admirers to discuss literature, politics, and more often his rivals and enemies.

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These *tertulias* are a very important element in the modern literary life of Spain's capital. For the foreign critic who goes the round of these clubs there is a disconcerting variety of opinions. As an Irishman I feel inclined to agree that the greatness of a country depends upon the element of conflict or struggle you find existing there. I do not think that a country really lives when everybody is at peace; you must have struggle between the various elements and from the state of tension we get positive values. If you go to these *tertulias* you would find that very few have a charitable attitude towards one another; all are eager to give their own individual expression.

There is one big personality in Spain today who is not mediaeval, and he is one of the biggest personalities in the Spanish world, and that is Ortega y Gasset. He is the one example in Spain of the great European. He is a penetrating thinker, and a great German scholar, and also is very well acquainted with French literature, but above all he is European-minded, the one European in Spain. He has turned the minds of his countrymen to big problems of thought in other countries, and when he writes a definitely great work he will probably be the biggest of all Spanish literary men. He is an exception—perhaps the one exception who will be able to build a school for pupils. As a rule the greatness of Spain arises out of the primitiveness that exists in its literature, and it springs from the tense individualism of the people; the form it has is always regional. In Europe we suffer from our literature having lost its sense of nationality, and we do not know where it will go. Some of our modern novels might be written of any country, and so have no definite flavor about them.