
¡ACHICAR, MUCHACHOS, ACHICAR!"

Heath's Modern Language Series

JOSÉ

POR

ARMANDO PALACIO VALDÉS

EDITED WITH INTRODUCTION AND NOTES

BY

F. J. A. DAVIDSON, Ph.D.

While Associate Professor of Italian and Spanish in the
University of Toronto

AND WITH A VOCABULARY

BY

ALICE P. F. HUBBARD, M.A.

Instructor in Spanish in Smith College

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PREFACE

THE present text was chosen for an annotated edition as being both good literature and good material for learning Spanish. It is hoped that the experience of those who may use the book will justify the choice. It is intended more particularly to follow the study of a reader or its equivalent; but there is no reason why it should not adapt itself to other stages of Spanish study, according as longer or shorter recitations are assigned, and more or less aid given by the instructor.

The purpose of the introduction is simply to "introduce" the student to the author and his work, to convey some idea of their importance and to invite to further acquaintance with both.

Nevertheless I believe that scholars will welcome the new information on the life of Sr. Valdés.

The text is that of the sole Spanish edition (Madrid, 1885), the new edition in the *Obras Completas* now in course of publication not having yet appeared. I have, however, beside correction of errata, changed two words and omitted ten to better adapt the text for class use.

In the notes I have aimed to explain all serious difficulties. With their aid and that of grammar and dictionary the student should be able to present a correct translation. I have, however, by no means exhausted possibilities in annotation, believing that the reading of a text should not be a mere recitation, preferring that the interested student should have an opportunity to exercise his ability and apply the knowledge already acquired, and holding also that many explanations are better retained when given orally by the teacher to his class.

I am happy to acknowledge here the generous aid of Professor W. H. Fraser of the University of Toronto, who examined the MS. of the notes and offered numerous valuable suggestions, not a few of which have been adopted, and also, and most particularly my debt of gratitude to the author of *José*, who so kindly accorded his sanction to this edition, who placed at my disposal hitherto unpublished biographical data, who furnished me some information otherwise inaccessible, and who by his friendly encouragement stimulated me to the completion of my work.

F. J. A. D.

STANFORD
JAN. 10, 1900.

UNIVERSITY,

CALIFORNIA,

NOTE TO EDITION OF 1909.—A vocabulary has been added in response to a considerable demand. Miss Alice P. F. Hubbard, of the University of Texas, kindly undertook the making of this vocabulary, from which I was prevented by pressure of other work. I have, however, revised the MS. and read the proof, and can heartily commend Miss Hubbard's work to users of this book. Text and notes have also been revised and a few errors eliminated.

Since the appearance of the first edition Señor Valdés has produced two excellent novels: *La Aldea Perdida*, and *Tristán, o el Pesimismo*, and a series of his *Obras Completas* is now in course of publication. The list of studies on this author has also increased, and for additional bibliography I take the liberty of referring to the scholarly edition of *La Alegría del Capitán Ribot* by Messrs. Morrison and Churchman (D. C. Heath & Co.).

F. J. A. D.

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO.

INTRODUCTION^[A]

ARMANDO PALACIO VALDÉS was born on the 4th of October, 1853, at the village of Entralgo, in the mountains of Asturias, where his parents possessed a country-house and surrounding estate. His mother belonged to an old family of landed gentry. His father, a lawyer by profession, was in temperament emotional, and endowed with much imagination and an extraordinary talent for story-telling; these qualities rendered his society so agreeable that he attracted the sympathies of all

who approached him. Sr. Valdés has said of his father, with characteristic modesty: "If I possessed but the half of his imagination and narrative talent I do not doubt that I should be a good novelist."

Most of the members of his mother's family resided in Avilés (a maritime town of Asturias, described in *Marta y María* under the name of Nieva), and between this town and Entralgo the Valdés alternated their residence, passing the winter in the former and the summer in the latter. Thus early the future novelist learned to know the life of sea-faring folk and also that of country people and farmers.

At the age of twelve he began his secondary education at Oviedo, where he was under the care of a paternal uncle. This city, the capital of Asturias, is described in *El Maestrante* under the name of Lancia. Although entering fully into the pleasures of school life he was a faithful student, and soon acquired a taste for both science and literature, aided in no small degree by the stimulus of other eager youths whose acquaintance he made. His friends, however, considered at this time that he was better endowed for the former.

At seventeen he went to Madrid to begin the study of law, to which he devoted himself with great enthusiasm. His sole ambition now was to become a professor of political economy. He was admitted to membership in the famous literary and scientific club *El Ateneo*, studying deeply in its library and taking an active part in its labors. Before the end of his law course he was elected first secretary of the section of moral and political science of that association.

Sr. Valdés celebrated his admission to the bar by the publication of several articles on philosophic and political subjects which attracted the attention of the proprietor of the *Revista Europea*, at that time the most important scientific periodical in Spain. In spite of his extreme youth—he was then but twenty-two years of age—the editorship of this review was entrusted to him, and he successfully fulfilled its duties for three years.

Nothing as yet made the young editor imagine that he was to become a novelist. But in order to add to the interest of his publication he began to produce a series of literary portraits of orators, poets and novelists. This task revived the literary inclinations of his early years, and abandoning the control of the *Revista*, he wrote his first novel, *El Señorito Octavio*, a work which the author himself regards as of little merit, too lyric, and marred by a straining after effect. His friends, however, were quick to see the talent displayed, and their encouragement stimulated the production of a second novel, *Marta y María*, which is perhaps the best known of all. It was the occasion of the author's introduction to the American public through an article by Mr. W. Dean Howells in Harper's Magazine.

Since then Sr. Valdés has continued to produce new novels at the rate of one each year or every two years. Those which have enjoyed the greatest popularity in Spain are *La Hermana San Sulpicio* and *Los Majos de Cádiz*, novels of Andalusian life, in spite of the author's not being a native of that province.

In the summer of 1882 Sr. Valdés met, in the small coast-town of Candás, Asturias, a young lady of fifteen, Luisa Prendes of Gijón (the Sarrió of *El Cuarto Poder*), who in the year following became his wife. The newlywedded pair established their

household in Madrid, but were not destined long to enjoy their happiness, for eighteen months after their marriage Sra. Valdés expired in the arms of her husband, leaving him an infant son nine months old. This fatal event is the most important in the life of our author. From this time on he has lived devoted to his son, reading, writing, and retired from all political and literary commotion.

Such are the biographical data which Sr. Valdés has thought fit to give to the public. More personal details he has not divulged, such "confessions" appearing to him both absurd and a profanation. But there is a key of which those who are interested in the life and character of the novelist may avail themselves, without violating his reserve. This key he gives us himself in a sentence which vindicates the personality of all art, "subjective" or "objective," realistic or romantic. "We novelists," he says, "write our biography, though disguisedly, in the works which we create." And he adds: "In mine is found almost all that has affected me in my life, but most particularly in *Maximina*."

The following are, in chronological order, the novels of Valdés, produced between the years 1881-1899; *El Señorito Octavio*, 1 vol.; *Marta y María*, 1 vol.; *El Idilio de un enfermo*, 1 vol.; *José*, 1 vol.; *Aguas fuertes (novelas y cuadros)*, 1 vol.; *Riverita*, 2 vols.; *Maximina*, 2 vols.; *El Cuarto Poder*, 2 vols.; *La Hermana San Sulpicio*, 2 vols.; *La Espuma*, 2 vols.; *La Fe*, 1 vol.; *El Maestrante*, 1 vol.; *El Origen del Pensamiento*, 1 vol.; *Los Majos de Cádiz*, 1 vol.; *La Alegría del Capitán Ribot*, 1 vol.

Beside these he has written the following critical works: *Los Oradores del Ateneo*, 1 vol., 1878; *Los Novelistas Españoles*, 1 vol., 1878; *Nuevo Viaje al Parnaso*, 1 vol., 1879; *La Literatura en 1881*, 1 vol., in collaboration with Leopoldo Alas.

Valdés, if we must classify him, belongs to the ranks of realism. Infact, Mr. J. Fitzmaurice Kelly declares that "he has a fair claim torank as the chief of the modern naturalistic school." But we must hastento modify this definition by restriction in one direction, amplificationin another. This modification is necessary because Valdés has known howto maintain his originality amid the strife of schools, the seductionsof praise, and the onslaught of adverse criticism. Blanco García speaksof him as a convert to naturalism, but we feel that his literary creedas manifested practically in his novels, theoretically in the prefacesto *Marta y María* and *La Hermana San Sulpicio*, is the result of anatural bent of mind foreshadowed in his early affection for science,just as we may trace much of his fine description and character-drawingto his early observation of city, sea and country. To differentiate inthe novelist what he derives from the general point of view which he hasadopted from the measure of originality which marks his work, is thereal difficulty in attempting to characterize Valdés.

He chooses his material throughout from contemporary Spanish life. Hiswork is based on an exactness of observation that shows him to havethoroughly studied the *milieux* which he describes. His *tertulias*,aristocratic or plebeian, the envies and vanities, the petty intrigues,the fervors of religion, feigned or real, the flirtations and grandpassions, all pulsate with life and truth, no less than the setting ofnature with which his characters are so intimately interwoven that itseems as much a part of them as their words and acts. "The labor ofPalacio amounts to cutting from the immeasurable canvas of realityheterogeneous portions, of warp coarse or fine, smooth or rough,according to the order in which they attract his eye, and demand theembroidery of his

fancy and his pen."^[B] In the choice of these "sections" we can divine the predilections of the artist. He is an optimist at heart and believes in the possibility of human nobleness, and so prefers the brighter colors of his palette. Not that his pictures lack in shadow: as a faithful novelist he does not hesitate to describe scenes of gloom and even horror, when they form a natural part of the story; he does so undeterred by any scruple. But though he believes that everything is worthy of being painted, he does not insist too much upon unpleasant detail, and often, as in the account of the quarrel between the mothers of José and Elisa in the present novel, cuts short a description of the ugly and sordid and turns with relief to brighter things. Even his baser characters, whose defects are brought out with remorseless justice, are not lacking in all human virtue and not seldom are explained, if not excused, by heredity or the circumstances of their environment. Valdés has a wide knowledge of life and though as a true realist he abstains from personal comment, we feel that he deeply sympathizes with human nature. For him *tout comprendre, c'est tout pardonner*. It is with shafts of gentle irony that he transfixes human foibles, an irony softened by the play of a delicate humor which is one of the most potent charms of his work. Valdés too, is a poet and knows how, not to idealize, but to emphasize the ideal and æsthetic elements that exist already in the most ordinary life, to weave from them a veil of poetry which softens the too familiar features of prose.

There has been a steady development in the work of this author. Not so much in style, of which he has shown himself a master almost from the outset of his literary career. Not so much, either, in ideas, literary or general, though he never repeats himself, and each succeeding work brings to light new treasures

of his mind. Rather should we say that his understanding of life has grown more comprehensive and more calm, and that he gives us more and more of his originality and less and less of the phase of literature which he still undoubtedly represents. In a recent letter to the present editor he says, apropos of *El Capitán Ribot*: "*Verá V. que me aparto cada día más del gusto predominante en la literatura moderna.*" There is more synthesis of character, less analysis, and a distinct philosophy, indicated in earlier works, begin to stand out clearly as the final rounding of his view of life. It is a philosophy of sublime morality for its own sake and because immorality is fatal, the philosophy of a man who believes in the sanity of virtue and the wholesomeness of work, and who abhors sin without the hopes and fears inspired by theology. For Valdés is not orthodox; more than one of his novels is iconoclastic in this respect; but such is his sympathetic comprehension of attitudes of faith that we feel that his religion is deep and pure in spite of its dispensing with creed.

Blanco García has only words of praise for *José*. He calls it "an idyll of truth, impregnated with the most chaste tenderness." "Valdés," he says, "shows himself penetrated by the panoramas of the sea and coast, and studies affectionately the manners and customs of a fishing-village, and an every-day story of two young people crossed in love, which furnishes the basic theme. The struggles of José, the chief character, who lends his name to the book, with his vixenish mother, with the rigors of fate and the fury of the waves, to gain the hand of his adored Elisa, and the heroism with which he suffers, and resigns himself, and triumphs over adversity, lend to the novel an epic hue, combined with realistic exactitude and beautified by the aureole of religious feeling." No less interesting, though in a different

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