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THE PHILOSOPHY OF JUAN VALERA

BY

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THESIS

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Degree of

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I HEREBY RECOMMEND THAT THE THESIS PREPARED UNDER MY SUPERVISION BY

Arthur L. Cliven

ENTITLED The Philosophy of Jumne Valera

BE ACCEPTED AS FULFILLING THIS PART OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE

DEGREE OF Master of Arts

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Final Examination
Juan Valera y Alcalá Galiano was born at Cabra, near Cordoba, October 18, 1824. His father was a rear-admiral in the Spanish navy and his mother the noble Marchioness Paniega, a pious woman and a devout catholic. From his parents, Valera inherited two characteristics that influenced his life and writings, intense patriotism and deep religious feeling. He received his early education from two religious schools, one at Malaga, the other the Sacro Monte in Granada. He studied philosophy, letters and jurisprudence at the University of Granada, receiving the degree of Licenciado en Leyes in 1846. The practice of law did not prove attractive and, through his family connections with the nobility, he secured a secretaryship at the Spanish embassy in Naples, where the Duke of Rivas held the post of ambassador, and subsequently was legation secretary at Lisbon, Rio Janeiro, Dresden and St. Petersburg. During this period he familiarized himself with the Greek and Latin classics, as well as with some of the lesser known of foreign literatures. On his return to Madrid, he became (1859) one of the editorial staff of El Contemporaneo, a paper of liberal tendencies, which for a time wielded great influence. In 1866, he was sent by the O'Donnell cabinet, as minister-plenipotentiary to Frankfort. He took part in the revolution of 1868, and was chosen Minister of Public Instruction and member of the commission which offered the crown of Spain to Amadeo. He was later sent as minister to Lisbon (1881), Washington (1885) and Brussels (1886);
he was ambassador to Austria (1893). In 1881, he became Senator for life. In recognition of his distinguished services to the world of letters and to his country, he was admitted to the Royal Academy (1862) and received (1882) the Great Cross of the Order of Merit of Charles III. He died in 1905.

"His was a life of great capitals, long residence in foreign lands, active political as well as literary movements, and high honors and emoluments. It was a kind of life calculated to sharpen the natural intelligence and confer ease and distinction of manners. Canovas de Castillo, the Spanish premier, said of him, 'More man of the world than Valera there is not in Spain.'"

Literary View-Point

Rudolph Schwill, in the introduction to his edition of "El Comendador Mendoza", says that Valera must be classed among the realists of fiction. The assertion seems difficult of defense. We may first consider the novelist's own avowed attitude towards realism. He says, "In my opinion, the most extravagant and absurd of all the imaginable methods of writing novels, is that of realism...... It is an experimental science rather than an art. The fact is, as Zola himself declares, that the realistic novel is not a novel at all. We call it a novel because no one has yet been able to invent or discover a name which applies to it...... In ancient times, novels were written to entertain, to bring good cheer, to beguile with beautiful imaginings souls which had grown sad with the vulgar and prosaic realities of existence. Then,

2. Apuntes sobre el arte de escribir novelas, in Nuevos Estudios Criticos, p. 10, ff.
every novelist might have placed at the beginning of his work the verse with which Zorilla begins the legend of Alhamar:

'Tal es la historia peregrina y bella,
Que os doy en estas hojas extendida
Pera que el pasto y el deleite de ella
Os alivien las penas de la vida.'

"Today, the opposite is true: the test of the good novel is that it shall give its readers some unpleasant hours, disturb their digestions, injure their health, overcome their natural repugnance and spleen, in order that they may endure with fortitude and without nausea the revolting spectacle of the most frightful miseries. . . . . It is necessary, however, to bend our necks to the yoke of fashion, to follow on with the current, and disguise ourselves as realists, if we wish to be read". In the prologue to Pepita Jiménez he says further, "It is evident that a good novel cannot consist in the servile, prosaic and vulgar representation of human life; a good novel should be poetry, not history; that is, it should depict things, not as they are, but fairer than they are, illuminating them with a light which shall impart a certain fascination and charm." And again "The purpose of a novel is to cause pleasure, imitating human actions and passions, and creating, through this imitation, a work of beauty. The end of art is the creation of beauty, and he debases it, who attempts to employ art to any other purpose, however great may be its utility." So much for Valera's attitude toward realism.

It is difficult to affiliate him with any of the recognized

literary schools obtaining in his time. Philosophical and psychological in their tendency, his novels can not be grouped either with those of Zola and the realists or with the romantic school of Hugo and Dumas, although all of them contain something of the realistic, and some, notably La Buena Fama, border upon the romantic.

It was inevitable that the literary genius of one living his varied and active life should develop along many and diverse lines. He says of himself 1 "At first I was a lyric poet, then journalist, then a critic, then I aspired to be a philosopher, then I was drawn to writing for the light opera, and at last I attempted to find a place as novelist in the long list of our writers." We may safely say that he attained to some merit in each of these diverse branches of literature, though only in the last named is he truly great. His poems, among which may be mentioned "Suenos", "Ultimo Adiós" and "El Fuego divino" are rather expressive of his learning and broad culture than of originality and poetic inspiration. He possessed an almost ideal equipment for critical work in his cosmopolitan learning, wide reading, taste, and lucid and beautiful style, but, as Fitz-Maurice-Kelly says, "his diplomatic training . . . . instinctive courtesy and desire to please often stay him from arriving at a clear conclusion. 2"

His triumph as a novelist is incontestable and his "Pepita Jimenez marks an epoch in the history of the Spanish novel.

1. Dedication of the first edition of El Comendador Mendoza.
2. Spanish Literature, p. 387.
Philosophical Outlook

We have already seen that Valera was born of Catholic parents and educated at two religious schools. He early became attracted to the writings of the great Spanish mystics, Santa Teresa, Fray Luis de León and San Juan de la Cruz, from whose devout and inspired pages he drew strong religious feeling and a deep appreciation of things spiritual. His life as a man of the world, his contact with all classes of society in the great cities of many countries, a very human love of life, and a certain inquiring turn of mind that was his by nature, combined, on the other hand, to produce in him a sort of critical curiosity that verged upon scepticism. Both attitudes of mind appealed to him strongly and the conflict between Mysticism and Scepticism may be said to form the underlying philosophical motif of many of his novels. Before 1874 he had acquired the reputation of a free thinker.¹

In formal philosophy he has written little, little, at least, that is available. Apparently, the most of those philosophical articles which he may have published in periodicals were not considered worthy of preservation in the bound volumes of his work. In "Disertaciones y Juicios Literarios", vol. 2, we find an article of some length, entitled "La Filosofía Española". It was first published in La Revista de España, for Dec., 1873; written after the publication of that volume of Rivadeneyra's Biblioteca de Autores Españoles; entitled, "Obras escogidas de filósofos", and criticizing its introduction by Adolfo de Castro, together with a book brought out in the same year by D. Luis Vidart, under the title, "La filosofía española, Indicaciones bibliográficos." The

¹ See Intro. to Pepita Jimenez, p. 12.
criticisms concern rather the nature of the matter treated than the manner in which it was handled. Valera thinks that Sr. Vidart has used the term "philosophy" in too elastic a sense, making it include everything that is not experimental science, fiction, history, law or medicine. In the introduction to this article we find the following: "I flatter myself that I am one among Spanish writers who has, though in works of a not very serious nature, insisted with great perseverance that the history of our philosophers should be studied, that their forgotten doctrines should be explained anew, and that we should, if possible, connect our thought of today with that of the past."¹ Concerning Spanish philosophy, he says² that if by this term we understand the philosophical development of Spanish thought in one direction, brought about by a succession of thinkers, whose works supplement and complete each other, forming a dialectic whole, with distinctive features of its own, in spite of its diversity, then, such a Spanish philosophy cannot be said to exist. There have been however, in all ages, and especially in more ancient times, Spanish philosophers who have individually exercised great influence upon the general progress of thought and civilization. In more modern times the best work has been that done in imitation of the French and Scottish schools. Later in the article,³ he gives an outline of the philosophical system of Solomon ben Jeuhdah Gabirol,⁴ whom he calls the most profound of Jewish philosophers. This brief account is written with the sure touch of the trained philosopher

². Ibid p. 65.
³. P. 71, ff.
⁴. b. Malaga, 1035.
and contains frequent and apt references to the writings of the
great thinkers of all times and countries, showing the writer to
have been, if nothing more, at least an accurate student of the
history of philosophy.

Turning now from formal philosophy, let us consider briefly
the circumstances which operated to give a philosophical trend to
his first novel.

The school of philosophy, founded at the University of Madrid
by Julián Sanz del Río, which produced a brilliant galaxy of phil-
osophers and statesmen, men illustrious for their learning, elo-
quence and virtues, was attacked by the clerical party and accused
of mystic pantheism. Valera came to their defense.¹

He had previously maintained that the great Spanish dogmatic
theologians, as, for example, Domingo de Soto, had been more lib-
eral than the liberal rationalists of his own day, since they af-
irmed the sovereignty of the people by divine right; because, if
power comes from God, as St. Paul says, it is through the people,
whom God inspires to establish it; and because there is no power
of immediate divine origin save that of the church. Valera’s task
was to demonstrate that, if Sanz del Río and those of his school
were pantheists, the mystic dogmatists of the sixteenth and sev-
enteenth centuries were also pantheists. To this end he read and
studied every Spanish mystical writing he could lay hands upon,
and became charmed with their poetry and with the profound and
delicate observation with which they examined the functions of the
soul. He greatly admired the way in which they succeeded in pene-
trating to, and losing themselves in the center of the mind, the

¹. See Introduction to Pepita Jiménez, p. 11 ff.
very root of the spirit itself, so as to see God therein and unite themselves with Him, not losing their own personalities nor their value for active life, but coming out of their ecstasies of divine love, better fitted for any task that is useful to the human species, just as steel comes from the fiery furnace, cleaner, brighter and more highly tempered. This picture he wished to give to the Spanish public, but because of his already mentioned reputation as a free thinker, he thought best not to speak in his own name, but invented a young theological student that he might speak. Then he imagined that he would be able to paint more clearly the ideas and sentiments of that student if he set over against them an earthly, human love. "Thus", he says, "my novel was born spontaneously, at a time when I was far from desiring to be a novelist."

In order that we may, if possible, understand at the outset his original, basic philosophical attitude, it will be necessary to examine at some length this book, the first and perhaps the greatest of his novels, certainly the one of widest influence, since from it dates the renaissance of the novel in Spain. After its first publication in *La Revista de España*, men of discernment saluted its author as a great novelist, one might almost say the creator of a new class of novel. By reason of the lucid and clear-cut beauty of its style, Pepita Jiménez would seem calculated to arouse the esteem only of the small literary aristocracy capable of appreciating its merit. It was however printed in serial form and admirably received in France, England and Italy.  

1. Pepita Jiménez.  
2. Fitz-Maurice-Kelly, p. 388.  
3. Mar. 28, 1874 and succeeding numbers.  
4. See Blanco García, *La Literatura Española en el siglo XIX*, Ch. 7 XVI.
continues; "Those who are familiar with the works of Valera will recall the fondness which he shows for semi-philosophical speculations, and how strange is the union of his utilitarian with spiritualistic views. He continually preaches the coalition of the two worlds which he cannot believe are opposed to each other; one, the material and sensible world, wherein dwell ease and pleasure, the other the abode of Plato's 'Ideals' and of the dreams and hopes of all mankind. Valera's Christianity is not carried to the point of characterizing without restriction this planet, upon which we live, as a vale of tears; on the other hand, doubt has not closed his eyes to the beauties of religion and philosophy. With his aesthetic feeling open to every noble speculation, and well content with an existence which does not force him to abandon his optimism, he travels calmly along the "middle way". This criticism, though from one who, as a churchman, was not in perfect sympathy with the novelist's inquiring turn of mind, outlines fairly well his philosophical attitude. As one critic says, "As a philosopher, he cultivated the auream mediocritatem between blind belief in all dogma and rabid refusal to believe in any dogma". His moderation and tolerance are all the more striking in that he is before all things a thorough-going Spaniard, for "sober and temperate as the Spaniards are in most respects, their convictions in spiritual matters have ever tended to run to extremes. In this they are like their own climate, for they live in a land which is never temperate, but always subject to the contending clash of heat and cold, of blazing sun and icy blasts. The first Christian martyrs and the first Christian persecutors were alike Spaniards." Valera is first of all eclectic, choosing what seems to him the best from 1. P. 497.
3. Havelock Ellis, in the Critic for Sept. 1901.
among conflicting creeds, harmonizing and reconciling wherever he can, and always with his mind unprejudiced and open to fresh conviction. Elements of scepticism and pessimism there certainly are, which reach their culmination in "Las Ilusiones del Dr. Faustino", but they are counter-balanced by an abundance of optimistic faith. His philosophy is broad rather than profound; its breadth indeed renders it somewhat difficult of definition and analysis.

Pepita Jiménez

The outline of the story, which has for its motif the struggle between the material and the spiritual, is as follows:

The hero, Don Luis de Vargas, is a young man, rich, intelligent, of good appearance and possessed of the purpose of consecrating his great gifts to the service of heaven. The education which he received in the house of his uncle the Dean and in the theological seminary, left him completely imbued with religious doctrines, and reduced the circle of his aspirations to the one of being a saint. Returning to his native town to pass some time with his father, he is at once forced into a conflict with the counsels of that good old worlding, the admiration and deference of his fellow-townsmen, and, above all, the glances of a certain fair young widow, who is as partial toward him as she is cold to the rest of the world. The poor student, who believed himself exalted above the miseries of the world, finds himself drawn almost irresistibly toward them. His mysticism, after a hard struggle, yields before the ardent glances from Pepita's eyes. In vain he applies all the remedies which he finds in his books for the recalcitrant; in vain his united pride and virtue struggle. He
goes to take leave of her, with his mind full of irrefutable arguments calculated to convince and console her. His syllogisms fall before those of Pepita. Although he resists bravely the first attacks, he succumbs at last to the shrewd strategem which brings him into the net while pretending to allow him to go free.

As might be expected, Garcia has little patience with a book in which the doctrines of the church come off second best. His criticism follows. 1 "The insidious mysticism of this book is a mysticism essentially false, a carefully veiled rehabilitation of sensual pleasure opposed to the aspirations of the spirit, an attempt at the reconciliation of Christian and Epicurean morality. For, if Valera seems to be adopting as his own the ideals of our great ascetics, he does not do so without adding to them a leaven of his own, falsely platonic, together with certain practical corollaries sufficiently potent to destroy everything that seems opposed to them. . . . Such scenes would have been excellent in the hands of a follower of Zola, who would have treated frankly that which Valera enshrouds with diaphanous idealism. . . . Luis was an insolent youth, who dared to attempt to bring about by his own efforts that which can be accomplished only by divine grace, therefore he abandons God among the crowd of Christian imperfections instead of mounting to those regions where alone he manifests himself to the chosen. With what cleverness the novelist argues! The pity of it is that at the end he proves traitor to himself with the badly concealed sympathy which he shows toward his protegé, the verses of Lucretius which he cites and the whole half pagan air which the book breathes out toward the last. Does Sr. Valera sincerely believe that his book opposes only false vocations

to the priesthood? . . . In the matter of analysing the secret, shadowy and tortuous ways of the spirit, he could not have gone farther nor subtilized with more care and delicacy. Now the author seduces us with wandering disquisitions on transcendental asceticism, now he draws a sketch not unworthy of Plato's dialogues; now he decks with beauty the brilliant paradoxes of the Alexandrine school, finally he reproduces with marvellous touch the sublime ideas of Rivadeneira, Granada and Fr. Luis de León."

The above criticism has been transcribed at length for the reason that despite its hostility, it reveals how admirably the book accomplished its avowed purpose, viz: the bringing before the eyes of modern readers, in such a way as to claim their attention, the beautiful thoughts of the old mystic pantheists. Valera was not concerned, as is Father Garcia, with the triumph of the doctrines of the Church; probably he never thought of opposing any vocation to the priesthood, whether true or false; if he does defend his hero, it is only as a conscious artist giving verisimilitude to his book. The motif of the story, as has been said, is the struggle between the material and the spiritual, the combat, in this case, taking the form of a strife between the love of woman and the love of God. If the former triumphs, it does so naturally and causes neither surprise nor shock, the author making use of a bit of clever machinery, by causing the final yielding to fall on the night of the feast of San Juan, a church festival to be sure, but one containing more of lovemaking than of religious rites.

The struggle within the mind of the young student, which is revealed in his letters to his uncle is a skillful psychological study. At first he is conscious only of a vague feeling of
trouble, of the nature of which he is ignorant, but which is probably the beginning of regret for the bright, happy life which he must renounce if he becomes a priest. Somewhat later, aroused by his uncle's hints he consciously defends himself against the charge, - brought, not by his uncle, but by his own conscience - that he loves Pepita, saying and believing that his feeling for her is purely Platonic. Soon the active out-door life, into which his father's wishes lead him, begins to set the red blood flowing more strongly in his veins; he admits to his uncle that he is conscious of an opposition between the image of Pepita and his duty and promise toward God and the church. The very spirituality of the girl's nature seems a dangerous weapon against the spirituality of a religious life; still, he does not feel that he is in danger. His next letter is full of Pepita and conspicuously lacking in references to his religious vocation. Some time passes in an eloquent silence, then, in an incoherent letter he confesses without reserve that he is madly in love with Pepita, and that his passion is proving too strong for his devotion. He would flee, but cannot and begs his uncle to send for him. In a final, bitter struggle he seems to have conquered his love and goes, filled with determination, to say farewell, only to succumb, as we have seen to a force that was stronger than himself. The conclusion seems to be that, as a good husband and father, he may prove of more use in the world than as an embittered and discontented priest.

Mysticism

All through his works, Valera gives evidence of an inward struggle between the faith of his early training and home life and the conclusions to which his inquiring intellect continually drew
him. That he was strongly attracted to mysticism appears in a hundred places. It would moreover, be the natural refuge of a man of strong religious instinct, whose reason yet balked at dogma. Here he could cast aside arguments for the existence of God, arguments which his reason told him all failed to prove the Deity, and allow his soul to be swayed by religious emotion. The mystic does not reason, but after going through a certain discipline he sees, and having seen he can report the truth. He feels the presence of God in all nature and in himself. This kind of religion is highly comforting and consolatory; it imparts a perfect sense of security.

William James, in his series of lectures entitled "Pragmatism," divided mankind on a basis of temperament into two types of mental make-up, which he calls rather oddly the "Tough-minded" and the "Tender-minded". The following are the characteristics of the two types.

1. **Tough-minded**
   - Empiricist
   - Sensationalistic
   - Materialistic
   - Pessimistic
   - Irreligious
   - Fatalistic
   - Pluralistic
   - Sceptical

2. **Tender-minded**
   - Rationalistic
   - Intellectualistic
   - Idealistic
   - Optimistic
   - Religious
   - Free-willist
   - Monistic
   - Dogmatical

To have been an absolute mystic Valera would have had to reject all the qualities of column 1 and subscribe to all those of column 2 excepting the last. This latter he was able to do, and in so far he is a mystic, but he was unable to renounce all of

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1. Pragmatism, p. 12.
column 1, especially the first three items, and by just so much he falls short of being a thorough mystic. Something of the struggle between the two attitudes will be shown in the following section. A single example will be sufficient to show that, in spite of it, mysticism still retained a strong hold upon him.

No more perfect mystical system is to be found than that of the Vedanta philosophy of India. In his novel "La Buena Fama", Valera shows that he had been influenced by this philosophy.¹

"There is a sovereign beauty which beautifies all things, a light which illuminates all things, a will which moves all things, and an intelligence which fills, permeates and directs all things. No human being, however devout and learned he may be, can succeed in comprehending, except very vaguely, this infinite Being. We must content ourselves with forming the incomplete concept of Him which we find in our souls, ascribing to him all the human excellencies raised to the nature of the divine. Our souls, however, derive nobility from the fact that they are created in the image and likeness of God, and if we penetrate the depths of the soul we find God so near us that we approach directly to him. . . .² Our own poor human faculties are not sufficient to attain to happiness during our mortal life, to perceive God in the depths of our souls and to unite ourselves with him. There is needful the aid and grace of the Almighty and, on our part, the purest faith and charity. So lofty a union is attained only by a miracle. The science which treats of this union of our souls with God is called mysticism. . . . We cannot thus attain to God by wisdom but by love;

¹ La Buena Fama p. 152 ff.
the way is not natural but supernatural. . . . ¹ The science of introspection possesses resources which we are not able even to conceive. He who is learned in this science, sees in the innermost recesses of his mind the world of ideas, of which the external world is a copy, clearly and without the limitations of space and time, so that for him hidden things are clear and the future is revealed; the toruous progress of events is laid down in his mind like the winding course of rivers on a map. . . . ² He who concentrates his mind within itself, slays his passions, withdraws from the world, and sees everything clearly within himself."

Materialism

Valera had read with attention the writings of the French sensationalists of the 18th century, Voltaire, Condillac, Diderot, and others of the school. ³ We find in his novels frequent evidence of their empiricism, in his general attitude toward the source of our ideas. This point of view does not necessarily imply scepticism - Condillac, its most profound exponent, was a churchman - but the transition is an easy one, and was made by several of Condillac's followers, notably la Mettrie. Valera seems to have been drawn somewhat to this conclusion, but rarely yields to it altogether, usually combining a materialistic metaphysic and a sensational epistemology with a mystical interpretation of things religious.

A good example of this synthesis of the two points of view is found in the character of the personage whom he creates to recount

¹. La Buena Fama p. 178.
². Ibid p. 179.
³. See El Compendador Mendoza Schwilz's Ed., p. 34.
the narrative of "Las Illusiones del Doctor Faustino".¹ "Don Juan was an empiricist. He credited only that which he observed by means of his senses, or by the truths of mathematics. He neither knew nor wished to know anything aside from this, nay, he even denied the possibility of anything further being known. He was, notwithstanding, much given to speculation and metaphysical system. He compared these to novels full of genius, where the spiritual and the material, God and the World, the ego and the non-ego, the finite and the infinite, are the characters which the daring and vivid fancy of the novelist shuffles, rearranges and puts in motion to suit his caprice. Don Juan however, was far from being impious. Although there was for him no science of things spiritual and supernatural, this did not prevent him from having a belief. By an effort of faith, Don Juan believed that man might seize upon that to which reason could not attain and elevate himself to that divine state whence the soul by miraculous intuition, discovers things that, for the reason, remain in impenetrable darkness."

A little later a sceptical note creeps into the moralizing of the philosopher.² "What", he says, "is that which I see and know, what is that which I verify by experience, except something external and superficial? I know something of happenings, but who may see and know the mysterious essence of beings themselves? What microscope however perfect, can discover the spirit of life which renders fertile the stamens of the flowers? What law of mathematics or of physics is obeyed by the goblin, spirit, or demon which animates me, which identifies itself with me, which touches and communicates with my soul? What demonstration proves to me

¹. See Intro. p. 26, 5th Ed.
². Ibid, p. 37.
its non-existence? Who has set a limit to human perception such that it may confidently be said of it: 'beyond here men shall not see nor perceive?' Has anyone demonstrated that there may not be personalities which feel and see and communicate with other hidden personalities? We communicate with each other by clothing our ideas in words, mere sounds which agitate the air. Who knows by what means these other personalities hold intercourse? We hear continually talk of the natural and the supernatural, as if a clearly marked boundary-line existed between these two. No, the border between the natural and the supernatural either never existed or has been blotted out. The line of demarcation lies rather between the known and the unknown."

Another materialistic philosopher with still more pronounced sceptical tendencies is Don Anselmo, who acts as a foil to Padre Eurique in "Dona Luz". Their controversies represent the difference in viewpoint between a devout churchman, founding his faith upon a mystical interpretation of the scriptures, and a sceptically inclined empiricist. Specimens of their arguments will serve to illustrate the breadth of Valera's thinking.\(^1\)

Don Anselmo denies absolutely the truth of all that which does not come to us through sense experience. With faith, one can believe in the supernatural, with imagination, one can create a transcendental world of religious and metaphysical ideas. Reason, however, can know only that, which, operating along the lines dictated by its own laws, it induces from the study and observation of those phenomena which come to its knowledge through the senses. This only is knowledge, all else is vain, poetical imagining. The

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first essential truth for Don Anselmo was that there is an infinite substance, which, by virtue of the inexplicable agitation and activity which constitute its essence, produces a variety of beings, whose relative perfection, within the space of our lives, and as far back into the past as we can see, goes on continually increasing, thanks to a certain ascending process and evolution, which, in our opinion will have no end. Concerning the beginning and the end, Don Anselmo maintains that we are, and shall remain, ignorant. It were vain to persist in trying to see beyond these limits; to seek to discover whether, before the beginning of this evolution, there was another; whether, after the course of this present one has been run, there will awaken a new activity of the atoms, which will induce them to group themselves anew and create another universe, new lives, progress, consciousness and that which we call soul, and finally die again. Concerning all this we can only concoct theories and dream dreams, launching ourselves forth into empty speculations, beyond the limits and boundaries whither reason can conduct us. The same applies to the life of the individual. During each life, there can be observed a gradual development until that life is finished. But before its birth and after its death nothing can be known; these are two dark depths, two unfathomable abysses, between which the life appears. And these depths are, as it were, covered by substance, by matter, by that which affects our senses, that which we cannot conceive without forms and accidents, which we can think of as changing these forms and accidents, but which in its essence cannot be thought out of existence by the human mind. The only metaphysics accepted by this enemy of all metaphysics was the eternity of this vague and indefinite something. It alone was for him immutable. Everything
else, that is the appearances and changes of form which take place in this substance, since outside of it there is nothing, is perpetual change and fluctuation without end.

It is clear that in such a system there could logically be no morality, no duty, no responsibility, no freedom of action. But Don Anselmo, who was a good and charitable man at heart, scarcely dared admit such a diabolical condition of affairs, even to himself. Accordingly, he wove together an infinity of subtleties in order to prove that we are free, that we ought to be good, and that there is at least something fixed in which goodness exists. Charity towards man and devotion to God, Don Anselmo characterizes as alike manifestations of egoism. "For", he says, "it is not pity, it is not live for your fellow creatures that moves you, but the desire of salvation and the fear of hell."

In answer to this, Padre Enrique calls his adversary's attention to the fact that there is no love so disinterested as not to be selfish at bottom. Compassion is nothing but a certain quality, by virtue of which we suffer through seeing the sufferings of others; any sacrifice, then, that we may make to allay their suffering, must be ascribed to selfishness.

Don Anselmo asks if the divine virtue of charity is less selfish than the human one of philanthropy. In the latter case, we perform a kind act for the sake of our own self-esteem, in the former for the sake of God's favor. Is there anything to choose between the two? "Nay", he says, "the natural quality of the soul, which feels, as if they were its own, the sufferings of another, and does good in order to free itself from these sufferings,

2. Ibid, p. 91.
seems to me more noble than the somewhat supernatural quality in
the soul of the believer, who does good from the fear of punish-
ment or the hope of reward, not for love of the wretched being
whom he aids, but for fear of the powerful Being from whom he hopes
all things.

Padre Enrique answers this by saying that it were as absurd
to censure the soul for seeking its own good as to censured the law
of gravity. For it is an immutable law that, where there is no
liberty of action, there is no merit or demerit. The will goes
straight toward its goal of blessedness where alone it can find
peace, as the stone, dislodged from the top of the tower, falls
straight to the ground. That which is important, which is left to
our free choice and which is susceptible of either praise or
blame, is insight into the real nature of this supreme good. This
once determined, rightly or wrongly, who would not strive for it
by an act both voluntary and necessary, since to love and crave
the good is the very essence of all will. 1

In the sceptical reasoning of Don Anselmo, we find, perhaps,
a touch of modern pragmatism, when he asks, à propos of the ego-
istic character of religious devotion,- "The soul which retires
within itself, which sinks itself in the unfathomable abyss of its
own essence, where it believes that it becomes united with God,-
of what use is such a soul to mankind? What love does it show for
men? What earthly being can there be in whose fate it is inter-
ested? The soul which thus plunges itself into devout abstraction,
disdains everything except its own inwardness where it lives
identified with the Eternal, from whom it receives complete hap-

2. Ibid, p. 94.
In recording Padre Enríquez's reply, Valera laments that the fervent priest should have a chronicler so "profane, cold and sceptical" as himself. The answer is as follows. For the human soul to attain to the condition of excellence where it can withdraw into itself and hold direct communion with its Creator, it will have had to undergo a thousand tests of devotion and self-denial, of charity and good works, of humility and meekness unimagined. Supposing, then, the soul once arrived at this state of blessedness to be of no aid to mankind, before it can thus arrive it must have been of the greatest service. But it does not follow that the soul's usefulness must cease then. In its direct knowledge and contemplation of God it comes to know His presence in the world and all within it, and, loving Him, it loves also the world and its fellow-creatures, and this love burns stronger than any earthly love. Moreover, it has attained insight; it rates things at their true value; it is without envy, for its own happiness is complete; finally, it is willing to endure suffering and death for the sake of its fellow-men, as did Christ, who also was united with God. The souls of the Christian mystics do not lose themselves in the supreme essence, as in the Nirvana of the Buddhists; they do not fall into an eternal sleep, but attain the full plenitude of life.

The preceding extracts show somewhat of the breadth of our novelist's philosophical reading. Don Anselmo's substance, "the supposed but unknown support of those qualities we find existing, which we imagine cannot exist, 'sine re substante,'" calls to mind 1. See "Don Luz", Madrid, 1891, p. 95. 2. Ibid, p. 100.
the British empiricist from whom the quotation is taken while the mystic pantheism defined by Padre Enrique suggests the Hindoo Upanishads.

Materialism, as we have seen, tends rather easily toward scepticism, and scepticism not infrequently results in the blackest pessimism. We have, however, an excellent example of an optimistic materialist in the sturdy old soldier, El Commandador Mendoza. The philosophy of Don Fadrique was the sensationalism of Condillac, which he considered the *ne plus ultra* of human speculation. This was based upon a theology somewhat shadowy and confused, but very common in that day. Don Fadrique believed in God and imagined that he had a knowledge of the Deity, conceiving of him as a free and supreme intelligence which had created the world because it willed that it should exist, and had then ordered and governed it according to the most profound principles of mechanics and of physics. In spite of "L' Optimisme," Voltaire's novel ridiculing the theory of Leibnitz 'that all is all for the best in this best of possible worlds', a work which caused him to laugh most heartily, Don Fadrique was almost as optimistic as Dr. Pangloss (a character in the above-mentioned novel) and was assured that everything was supremely good by divine decree, and that nothing could be better than it already was. Evil seemed to him to be accidental, despite its prevalence and apparent extent, and good the fundamental and positive element in all things.

Concerning the spiritual and the material, the future life, and the justification of Providence, based on the compensation of

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2. See Dewing's Hist. of Mod. Phil. p. 47.
an infinite duration, he was somewhat uncertain, but his optimism was such that he saw, as patent and demonstrated, the kindness of Heaven manifested in the world. In defense of this point of view, he had adopted a theory entirely new at that period. It seemed to the philosopher of Villabermeja that there was in all history a providential and eternal law, as unchangeable as the laws of mathematics by which the stars revolve in their orbits. By virtue of this law, humanity eternally ascends along a way of infinite perfectibility: its ascension toward the good, the true and the beautiful knowing no pause nor end. In this, the human race follows a necessary impulse. All the glory of the outcome belongs to the Supreme Being who has given the impulse; but within that divine impulse, each individual enjoys complete freedom of action, thought and purpose. The marvelous works of Providence, the most beautiful mystery of its infinite wisdom consists in synthetizing harmoniously all the results of human freedom, so that they shall unite in fulfilling the eternal law of progress, or in foreseeing them with such divine insight that they shall not in any particular depart from the predetermined order; as, to make use of a humble simile, the skilled inventor of a delicate mechanism calculates in advance all the details of its practical working. Such a manner of looking upon events accorded well with the character of D. Padrique, corroborating his disdain for trifles and his propensity for considering as trifles many of those things which many men hold to be most important, and transforming his love of laughter and good spirits into an olympic serenity worthy of the immortals."

In "Las Illusiones del Doctor Faustino" we find a defense of 1. P. 62.
this materialistic attitude, an attitude which seems to be fundamental in Valera's philosophy. "It is evident," he says, "that, in the whole splendid and complicated mechanism of the world, nothing is purposeless; everything has its use; everything concurs in producing the perfect order and harmony of the whole. . . . . It is the same thing, whether we say that we see because we have eyes and run because we have legs, or the opposite, - that we have eyes because we see and legs because we run. Which would be the better clock-maker, he who devises with care each little wheel and spring, considering separately its office and function, adjusts and arranges each in its proper order and then winds the clock and sets it in motion, so that it marks the time and strikes the hours, or he who, taking a bit of metal, places therein an active principle or idea of marking the time and striking the hours; which principle shall stir the atoms of which the metal is composed, so that it shall in all respects discharge the office of a clock? . . .

The effective desire which has been placed in the atoms that form the universe, viz: that of grouping themselves in such a way as to form beings which shall run and see, is either a term as mysterious and confused as the most unintelligible doctrine of the most metaphysical religion, or else it presupposes in the causal idea whose development has produced the universe, a sovereign will and intelligence, no less transcendent than that of a personal Being who should make us eyes wherewith to see and legs wherewith to run. It thus appears that the doctrine of the materialists can cleanse itself from the stigma of impiety, and even show itself a very pious creed, highly consolatory moreover, and rich in prognostications of infinite progress, improvement and evolution.
upward. . . . God is everywhere, animating and ordering all things!

Scepticism and Pessimism

Valera escapes pretty generally the charge of downright scepticism. His early religious training and his tendencies toward mysticism usually save him from the conclusion into which, otherwise he might logically have been forced. He approaches however, very closely to the pessimistic position of Schopenhaur in one of his later novels - "Las Illusiones del Dr. Faustino." Indeed his whole creed shows certain points of similarity with that of the German philosopher. Both adopt the theory of the will-activity, the effective desire, an unconscious force behind our world of appearance. Nature is for both the expression of an unthinking force, the forms of which struggle for their existence in the temporal and spacial order. In its innermost reality, the nature of the Absolute Will can never be known to the human consciousness, yet the desires, the ambitions, the struggles which control the conscious life of every individual are the reflections of the Supreme Will beneath. Both show the influence of Eastern mysticism. 1 "Schopenhauer's metaphysic is an approach near to mystic pantheism." 2 Finally, "Las Illusiones del Dr. Faustino" expresses the doctrine of both Schopenhauer and Buddha, 'that all our sensuous life is built upon the chimera of unfulfilled desire, that existence is in itself evil, and that the highest ideal of life is the recognition of this great truth of universal pessimism.' 3 This pessimistic attitude is not to be regarded as fundamental with Valera, but rather as manifesting a conclusion against

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1. See "La Buena Farnia".
2. Dewing's Hist. of Mod. Phil., p. 281.
3. Ibid, p. 47.
which he continually struggled and to which he was only occasionally forced against his will.

The following short extracts from his most sceptical novel will serve to illustrate this position. ¹ The doctor says: "If I believed in the progress of humanity, in the spiritual bond which unites our souls, in the communion of spirit, in the upward movement of all hearts towards the good and the beautiful, what would I not be capable of doing in order to contribute somewhat to this progress, to this ascension, to this happiness and grandeur of humanity? Unfortunately, I do not believe in these things and thus I do nothing. I regret that there should be in my soul so sterile a love for humanity. If I considered that this fatherland, this people or nation of which I form a part, were worthy of all my love, what heroic efforts would I not make to raise her to loftier glory? But I do nothing because at heart I am not sure that what we call the fatherland may not be simply a certain portion of the earth, like any other whatsoever, in which I happened to be born and which is inhabited by human beings bound together by no closer tie than a set of laws, institutions and beliefs, forced upon the weak by those who are stronger." Again ² we find him lamenting his lack of faith. "What happiness it must be to believe in an infinite mercy, in a limitless love which pardons in its object that which he cannot pardon in himself. I find within me an ideal of perfection which serves only to torment me, since I never attain it; when I examine myself closely, I find that I grow farther from it each day. Happy are they who imagine

¹ Las Illusiones del Dr. Faustino, v. I, p. 241.
that they perceive a supreme reality whose inexhaustible kindness
purifies them and raises them up to itself. But where is this
faith, this belief in something outside of the soul and outside of
the world before which one may prostrate himself and finally be
united with, cleansing thereby his soul from every sin and finally
raising himself to that grade of perfection to which he has vainly
sought to attain unaided?" This faith Dr. Faustino fails to find
in his own soul.

Ethics

Valera states his creed of idealistic ethics, his belief in
the doctrine of self-realization, very clearly, in "Las Illusiones
del Dr. Faustino." ¹ "The mission of man is to realize in this
life all the virtues, potentialities and gifts of his nature, thus
contributing to human progress, placing his stone in the monument
of history, and completing with his active, noble and generous
personality, the dignity and magnificence of created things, among
which and over which ought to shine resplendent spirit, intelli-
gence, and the divine fire, of which his heart and mind are the
temple."

That he felt something to be wanting in the moral code of his
age and country, and laboured with the best there was within him
to supply this want, appears everywhere in his works, despite the
hostile attacks of churchmen like Garcia, who were too much
blinded by their love of dogma to see the sanity and practical
value of his moral teaching. No harmful conclusion can be drawn
from any of his books and when he treats a scabrous subject, as
he does in "Genio y Figura", he does it with infinite taste and

¹ l. V. l, p. 44.
delicacy.

The following quotation illustrates the moral purpose of his most severely criticized novel. "Doctor Faustino represents the present generation in Spain. He is a compound of the vices, ambitions, dreams, scepticism, agnosticism and licentiousness which afflict the youth of our time. In him are united the three principal types under which the man of a certain class in this generation appears. In his soul are seen the vain philosophy, the political ambition and the false aristocracy which ruin so many of our young men."¹

He criticizes the morality of the so-called higher society in Madrid and other Spanish cities as follows: "It is such a common thing, and so much a matter of course, that any gentlemen should express his boldest thoughts to a married woman, that she is rarely offended by it. However virtuous she may be, she will confine herself to repelling or undeceiving him with gentleness. She will not manifest indignation, when in fact she has been asked to break a moral, civil and religious law, to dishonor herself and her family, and, perhaps, stoop to actual robbery if she should have an illegitimate child."²

Valera even dares to attack on ethical grounds that most sacred and cherished of Spanish amusements, the bull-fights. He says, "It is no doubt a sublime spectacle to see a brave fellow, with no more defense than a waving red scarf, clothed in silk more fitting for a ball than for a terrible combat, stand up to face an angry brute and give it its death with a few inches of cold steel. If by ill fortune it should prove to be the human

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¹ Las I. del Dr. T. Conclusion, v. 2, p. 263.
² Don Braulio, p. 35.
combatant that falls, his death, though not moral, has a touch of
grandeur, and the pity and terror occasioned by it are purified by
beauty.

"The worst of it is that to reach this supreme moment of
death, we must first look on at the coarse and brutal torturing of
the noble creature that is doomed to die; we must see its skin
pierced by darts and spikes, which remain in it unless they are
torn out with fragments of the hide; and above all we must witness
the atrocious cruelty inflicted upon the hapless horses. They
vary the show by the conculsions and snortings of their death
agony; their blood and entrails are spilled on the sand; trampling
upon their own bowels, on they go, nevertheless, under the spurs
of the picador and the blows on their hollow flanks dealt by a
villainous rascal, who ignominiously and grotesquely comes behind,
belaboring them as they go, to increase their agony and wring a
remnant of motion and energy from a dying beast, which, even though
it cannot think, has nerves and can feel as we do. . . . Before
such scenes as these, can we have hearts so hard as to know no
pity, so little artistic feeling as not to be disgusted by their
coarseness and baseness, or such brazen stomachs as not to turn
positively sick at the sight?" ¹ It may seem a small evidence of
enlightenment and humanity that Valera should enter this protest
against such a scene. It behooves us, however, to consider that
bull-fighting is the national sport of Spain, a relic of darker
times when indifference to suffering was the rule rather than the
exception among the nations. The excitement, the danger, even the
gay colored clothing of the human participants appeal strongly to

¹ Pasarse de listo, Madrid 1884, p. 4.
the amusement-loving Spanish nature, and the deeply engrained custom has, through long use, wrought indifference, even blindness to its cruelty. "Pan y toros" will long be the motto of the Spanish populace, and Valera's protest is in advance of his time.

There can be but two points of view among moralists. One implies, as the guiding motive of conduct, obedience to the divine commands, revealed to man through the holy scriptures, the other, less emotional and more materialistic, considers rules of conduct in their relation to mankind, their binding force depending on their practical value to humanity. Which of these view-points we adopt, depends upon our individual temperament. Valera seeks to show, in "El Comendador Mendoza", that pragmatically considered they are the same, in that the results attained by each are identical. Thus Padre Jacinto says: 1 "There is no merely moral case of conscience whose solution presents any difficulty to a cultivated understanding."

God, no doubt in order to exercise our mental activity and sharpen our intelligence, or to give greater value to our faith, has surrounded with darkness the great metaphysical problems; he has wrapped them in mystery, at times impenetrable; but in all that concerns the fulfillment of our duties, there is no mystery whatever; everything is as clear as water. Our sovereign Lord, in his infinite goodness and mercy, has not desired, in spite of our wickedness, that anyone should need to be a Seneca to know perfectly what his duty is, and much less that he should need to be a wonderful hero in order to fulfill it." This insight, Don Padrique ascribed to the reasoning faculty of man. Padre Jacinto believed with all the earnestness of his earnest soul that it required divine revelation to disclose it. What both agreed

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upon was that, the code once formulated, human reason was immediately forced to accept it.

Don Padrique's code of ethics was the outgrowth of a long and active life, the earlier years of which can hardly be said to have been conspicuous for their morality. However, according to "the good will", and our Commander mankind. Disregarding the question of that he had formed for himself, amid him firmly, and efficiently directed on the other hand felt that his insight came as a direct revelation from God. er, and that which made discussion be- but both recognized the same code and that for each.

Don Padrique, moved to deep con- is youth, which placed Doña Clara in a ly the wealth of her supposed father, vowal of, and, as far as possible, re-

paration for the wrong. He felt however, that the trouble and shame resulting to the two innocent persons involved, Doña Clara and Don Valentín, would over-balance the good to be attained by confessing the truth and putting an end to the false position.

To supplement and strengthen his own judgment by that of the priest, he had asked Padre Jacinto what should be done in a case, where, by putting an end to a deception which entailed evil consequences, other and greater evils would arise.
upon was that, the code once formulated, human reason was immediately forced to accept it.

Don Fadrique's code of ethics was the outgrowth of a long and active life, the earlier years of which can hardly be said to have been conspicuous for their morality. However, according to Bentham, 'nothing is good but the good will', and our Commander bore good will toward all mankind. Disregarding the question of his past, the moral code that he had formed for himself, amid storm and stress, now held him firmly, and efficiently directed his conduct. The priest, on the other hand felt that his insight into the laws of morality came as a direct revelation from God. The crux of the whole matter, and that which made discussion between them useless, is that both recognized the same code and that it was equally effective for each.

In further confirmation of what has been said of the pragmatic similarity of the moral codes of these widely different men, may be adduced the following. Don Fadrique, moved to deep contrition for the error of his youth, which placed Doña Clara in a position to inherit unjustly the wealth of her supposed father, had considered making an avowal of, and, as far as possible, reparation for the wrong. He felt however, that the trouble and shame resulting to the two innocent persons involved, Doña Clara and Don Valentín, would over-balance the good to be attained by confessing the truth and putting an end to the false position. To supplement and strengthen his own judgment by that of the priest, he had asked Padre Jacinto what should be done in a case, where, by putting an end to a deception which entailed evil consequences, other and greater evils would arise.
The good priest's answer was as follows. "Here we must distinguish. If you are called upon to declare the truth, you should never tell a lie, however great may be the evils which would result from telling the truth. The profitable, as well as the hurtful lie, is to be condemned. You should not tell a lie, even to save a fellow-creature's life, to preserve one's honor, nor for the good of religion; but I venture to maintain that you should not speak the truth, when not called upon to do so, if more evil than good would result therefrom. . . . I will explain my position in a few words. You commit a sin. You tell a lie, for example. The evils which spring from your crime, you should remedy as far as it is possible and lawful to do so, that is, without committing a fresh crime to atone for the former one. God, in order to make clear to us the enormity of our sins, at times permits evils to spring from them, the human remedies of which would be worse than the sins themselves. To try by your own means to avoid them or to remedy them, is not humility but pride, satanic pride, it is to strive against God; to seek to play the role of Providence; it is to strike in the dark; to try to right the wrong you have yourself committed, by making crooked that which is straight and disturbing the natural and necessary order of things."

If there is any exception to the statement already made that each of Valera's novels is productive of moral uplift, it is found in "Pasarse de listo". Here we have portrayed the sufferings of a poor man, whose very cleverness is a source of torture to him, showing him wise courses of action which he lacks the resolution to pursue, and tormenting him with a thousand hateful subtleties. He wears out his wits with thinking of the woman whom God has
given him, and of whom he conceives himself to be unworthy, doubtful of her fidelity but without the moral courage to put an end to his doubts, and finally seeks oblivion by the aid of the revolver. The wife, Doña Beatriz, although actually innocent of any wrongdoing, amuses herself in her life of idleness, by playing with fire, indifferent and unconscious of her husband's misery. Valera perhaps strikes a false note when he attempts seriously to defend his heroine's conduct.

Blanco García attacks, on ethical grounds, another novel, Dona Luz.

"Encouraged perhaps by the success of his first attempt, the author now goes a step farther. The adversary of the divine love is not now a human passion, sensual and thus censurable if you like, but at bottom legitimate, but an openly criminal one, which in vain pretends to free itself from blame by hair-splitting arguments. The enamoured friar falls a victim to feminine beauty and to his own weakness, by a process that is easily understood and is very similar to that which we saw in Pepita Jiménez. Doña Luz is not merely a handsome woman of the highest rank; she possesses also that treasure of mingled discretion and learning which Sr. Valera so generously grants to his heroines. She discourses with profundity about abstruse psychological problems and listens with religious attention to the friar who expounds them admirably in their tertulias. Unfortunately, they understand each other only too well and pass from the theory to the practice of love, although without communicating their secret feelings to each other,

1. P. 486.
2. Pepita Jiménez.
3. Padre Enrique.
along a path which the hand of the novelist strews with flowers.

"The fall of Padre Enrique is portrayed in a masterly manner, and is the more affecting because it is so natural and so human. By this admission I would not by any means appear to excuse the motive which gives form to the novel. If the sad history, which is related in detail by means of the priest's diary and the expressive words of Dona Luz, had ended in repentance or in any form of moral reformation, there would be nothing to censure, but the very spirituality and beauty of the ethereal passion which unites the souls of Dona Luz and Padre Enrique, and the sordid grossness of Don Jaime (the man to whom she gives her hand in fulfillment of her plighted word) seem to legitimatize the kiss pressed upon the forehead of the dead monk."

This criticism is not intemperate, coming, as it does, from a churchman, one naturally interested in proving the immaculateness of his brethren. It does not, however, seem to a layman to be borne out by the facts. Can any man, even a priest, prevent his heart from being stirred by deep natural passions, and close his eyes so as not to see the beauty of a lovely woman into whose society he is forced by circumstances? And if, although so moved, he dies, not only without being guilty of any overt act, but without even giving his passion expression in word or deed, what greater moral sacrifice can anyone look for in man?

In answer to the criticis, 'Why does he never show us in his tales pure and honest women who are faithful to their duty and who may inspire us and serve us as examples?' Valera says:

"In reply to this accusation, I feel bound to say that neither Clara nor Lucia in 'El Comendador Mendoza', nor, much less, 1. Don Braulio, p. 175.
Irene in 'Dr. Faustino', lacks the qualities and graces which may and do make woman an angelic creature. I cannot, on the other hand, deny that Doña Blanca 1 sinned, and that the violence of her repentance was worse than the sin itself; that Pepita Jiménez was an outrageous coquette and more passionate than was seemly; that María 2 abandoned herself to her passion as though she were bereft of reason and will; that Constancita 3 was selfish, calculating and capricious; and that Rosita 4 acknowledged no law, human or divine, but her own judgment. Still, in all these women - and no one can maintain the contrary,- through all their greatest errors, we may discern such ardor of infinite love, such sweet tenderness, so fervent a yearning to play the part of preservers and redeemers and to win beatitude, or a semblance of beatitude for the men they loved even at the cost of their own damnation, that we pardon them without an effort. And, again, I must here once more repeat, though it be somewhat trite: no action of interest or of dramatic value, can be derived from perfect virtue, without imagining horrible monsters who persecute that virtue. And as I am also accused, no doubt with better reason, of poverty of imagination, it is not astonishing that hitherto I have not been able to invent such wretches. Finally, it must be remembered that in these profane histories which are called novels, the characters should not appear like allegorical figures of the virtues and vices, but should be drawn from real life, in which we commonly see a certain mixture of good and bad qualities, of sublime transports and

1. In El Com. Mendoza.
2. In Dr. Faustino.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid, and also in Pasarse del isto.
pitable weaknesses, which is the truth of real characters and which gives to imaginary ones a more lively and consistent reality than that of historical figures."

There has just come to my hand, after the completion of my own study of this subject, Brunetière's article, "La Casuistique dans le Roman", published in "Histoire et Litterature" vol. 1, pp. 180-205. M. Brunetière had read three of Valera's novels in translation, Pepita Jiménez, Las Illusiones del Dr. Faustino, and El Comendador Mendoza. He says nothing about the first named, dismisses the "Illusions", with a word or two, as a book to be read for amusement only and once laid down, never to be thought of again, and turns his attention to the ethical question involved in "El Comendador". He defends Doña Blanca at length in her remorse for her early sin and her mistaken efforts to make reparation and, in closing, speaks in high terms of Valera's art as a novelist of manners. He apparently was not attracted by the writer's philosophical disquisitions as he speaks of them as interpolations which mar the stories.

Conclusion

Valera's position in the world of letters - that of a novelist who loved art for its own sake, rather than a formal philosopher with a creed to establish - prevents us from pointing to any definite philosophical attitude and saying 'this is the philosophy of Juan Valera.' He chose what seemed best to him from among the many creeds with which he was familiar and made it his own, his choice influenced on the one hand by his inherited tendencies and his education, on the other, by the conclusions which he drew from observation of his fellow men during a long and active life as a
man of affairs. The former drew him toward mysticism and religious faith, two qualities which never disappear from his works, and the latter, toward materialism and utilitarianism.

The second influence must be admitted to have been the stronger. He is more materialist than mystic. A certain quality of daring in his temperament, a certain brave spirit of inquiry, a desire to draw his own conclusions from the data given him, rendered distasteful all blind adherence to mere dogma. Thus we find that, among his characters, those of this type are more convincing, because drawn with greater appreciation and sympathy.

On the other hand, his aesthetic sense found much to admire in the beautiful teachings of the old Spanish mystics and in the splendid subtleties of oriental philosophy. Only a radically empirical mind can altogether fail to be attracted by the conception of the human soul withdrawing from the cares and evils of the world and finding within itself direct communion with God. Valera employs the whole of that marvelous gift of beautiful expression with which he is endowed, in portraying this conception.

Both of these viewpoints, then, were dear to him, and he continually seeks to reconcile the two, often with remarkable success. He is prone to interpret nature pantheistically; to conceive of God as present and manifest in all the phenomena of our external experience, thereby giving to his materialism a certain dignity that is almost piety.

He is able almost always to avoid the charge of scepticism, from which he saves himself by a certain mystic faith, that, whether his reason can establish the fact or not, somehow or other there must be a divine power behind, or rather within the ordered arrangement of observed phenomena.
He never actually yields to pessimism, in spite of "Las Ilusiones del Dr. Faustino" which seems at first glance to contradict the statement. Here he is attacking an attitude with which he no doubt felt, at times, some sympathy, and now and then in the progress of the story he departs from his rôle of accuser. Optimism is however, the key-note of his novels as a whole, as it was also of his nature. He looked at the world with kind, wise tolerance, and with unjaundiced eyes, sometimes with a smile at its weaknesses, but with the cynic's sneer.

He suggests, now and again, the position of Mr. Schiller of Oxford and Mr. James of Harvard - that truth is to be measured by its practical value for our experience.

In Ethics he is a rationalistic idealist. Man owes to his fellow-men the most perfect possible realization of his gifts and potentialities. Each must fill his niche, must contribute his mite to the general progress and uplift of the whole. Valera recognized that his fellow-countrymen had, at times, shown indifference to this duty, and one of the guiding motives of his life may be said to have been to direct their attention to it by precept and example.

The End.