

related employment of every arm of warfare is involved in the very idea of an armed conflict.' That is a principle which the Germans violated in their use of the submarine.

'Intensive' their submarine campaign certainly was. But it was not 'simultaneous and correlated' (*solidaire*). Our enemies did not bring into action all their weapons, supporting their submarines by their surface vessels. They made a daring and a forlorn-hope

attack, but they managed it unskillfully. Their submarine offensive was conducted without proper liaison, as always occurs when cruiser warfare and the destruction of enemy commerce are the sole objectives. Judged by military canons, the Germans were only partly right in their strategy.

This reservation is important. That slight oversight by our enemy enabled us to win the war on the sea, and consequently the war as a whole.

## I DECIDE TO BE A HERMIT

### AN AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL INCIDENT

BY ARMANDO PALACIO VALDÉS, OF THE SPANISH ROYAL ACADEMY

*[Valdés, perhaps the most distinguished novelist in Spain, has just published a book of reminiscences somewhat resembling in theme Tolstoi's Childhood, Boyhood, and Youth, under the title, La Novela de un Novelista, from which the following chapter is translated.]*

From *La Época*, January 14, 1922  
(MADRID CONSERVATIVE DAILY)

HAPPY days of faith, return to me! Breathe into this heart torn by disillusion; breathe into this brain wasted by so much sterile effort! Refresh me once again! Let me wake up some morning the little boy who used to kneel before his little bed with his face lifted to an image of the crucified Jesus, praying with childlike fervor for the health and happiness of his parents and the salvation of his soul. Let me see again in the blue depths of Heaven the image of Mary, treading with her divine feet the crescent of the moon and surrounded by a choir of winged cherubim. Let my ears catch again, as they did then, the harmonies of celestial music. Let

me feel once more hovering over me, as I drop to sleep, the outspread pinions of my guardian angel.

I can still see myself in church at San Francisco hearing Mass with my father. The tones of the organ would bear me away with them. The deep bass voice of Brother Antonio Arenas singing from the choir thrilled me with sacred fire. The clouds of incense intoxicated me; and far above, over the main altar, I could see the beautiful image of the Virgin enveloped in what seemed to me miraculous light, which filtered through the stained-glass windows. My eyes refused to leave her, and my heart yearned toward her with

the straining of immortal longing. In those days sublime emotions used to thrill my soul, and I would give a hundred lives to have them back again — those emotions which I hope I may again feel after death.

I can still see myself walking with my mother under the archways that border the Street of Galiana toward the Chapel where they worshiped Christ carrying the Cross. Night had already descended. At this hour, just after twilight, the pious ladies of Aviles used to say a prayer before the miraculous image. The archways were scantily lighted. About half way down the street there was a niche under one of them, containing a little image of the Virgin lighted by an oil lamp. Lovers would be seated on the curbstone, dimly visible in the shadow. We would catch the low murmur of their conversation as we passed. When we reached the Chapel we ascended a few steps and knelt before the image of Jesus bowed low under the weight of the Cross, his pale forehead crowned with thorns; and a wave of infinite compassion would flow over me. His suffering eyes would seem to say: 'My son, you are happy now, but if you ever have days of sorrow, remember me.'

I still see myself in the month of May singing the litanies of the Virgin through the streets of Aviles. We school-children would march in two long files. The strongest of the boys carried by turns between us a great crucifix covered with flowers. Behind it would march several priests, accompanied by the school-teacher. How bright the sky would be! How joyous the earth would seem! It was the month of blossoms, and each of us carried a bouquet in our hand, singing as we marched to offer it to the Queen of Heaven. And when we turned our uncovered heads to the doors or balconies of the houses we did not in those days

meet sarcastic glances and critical smiles to chill our children's hearts. No, the men would be grave and silent, making an imperceptible sign of approbation. The glances of the women would shower us with affectionate benedictions. If a people is to live united in a great family, if it is to constitute a great nation, it must do something more than speak the same language — it must whisper the same prayers. Our little hearts on those days would beat happily in our bosoms, because we felt we were loved and protected by all our fellow people, because the men and women leaning from the balconies and gathered along the footpaths to watch us pass respected our faith and our innocence.

My friend Alphonso, a pale, meek little boy, was the most religious of my companions. His mother was a very pious woman, who took him to Mass every day before he came to school. We would see him in all the sacred processions, carrying a little candle in his hand; and sometimes when, on the afternoon of a Saint's Day, I would conceive the idea of stepping into the church in front of which we used to play, I would always discover him there alone praying before one of the altars.

Although I was a boy of a very different type, fond of out-door sports, and the first in every fight or escapade, I felt myself strongly attracted to him and sought his friendship. This was not so easily won. Like all boys of the spiritual and religious type, he was timid and retiring, and my boisterous manner doubtless impressed him disagreeably. However, I finally won his confidence and we became devoted friends; for with the zeal of a little apostle he sought to win me for God and the Virgin. He already was preparing for a priestly career. I was receptive to such ideas, because in the

bottom of my heart I have always been an idealist; and although in the course of my life I have thrown much dust and ashes on that sacred fire, it never has been quite extinguished.

Alphonso used to tell me that it was not right to dwell so much on our present life, which, no matter how long it might be, was of little profit to us; and that we might perhaps die before we were very old. In the latter conjecture he was right, for he died while still a youth. He used to say that we ought to be as good as the angels, in order that we might some time be received among them, and that if we committed our soul daily to the Virgin and to St. Joseph, they would rescue us from the dangers of this world. So we began to pass long hours in mystic conversations. He took me to his home, where I was profoundly impressed with a little oratory that his mother provided for him in a special room. It was furnished with everything one could find in a church — an altar picture, an altar cloth, an image of the Virgin of Carmen, others of St. Joseph, and of the child Jesus, a censer, a chasuble, and a priest's cap. We used to play Mass and I would be his assistant. On Holy Days his mother and older sisters and the servants would come to watch us. We would all sing the Litany and march in procession through the garden, burning so much incense that it would make a thick cloud in the oratory that sometimes nearly stifled us.

Our enthusiasm grew greater every day; not only would we play at Mass, but we would hold confessions. Alphonso developed a great gift for the confessional, and would impose penances like a veteran priest. Dressed in a robe which his mother had made him, and seated in a great box which we set up on end and in the bottom of which we bored several gimlet holes, he would confess his sisters and myself; some-

times even the servants would come and kneel down and with their mouths close to the little holes in the box, confess their sins and receive absolution. However, they did not show themselves as contrite and penitent as was to be desired. Often they would giggle so that the little father-confessor had to adopt a most severe air and threaten to report them to his mother. For my little friend Alphonso took these things very seriously. He gave us excellent counsel and painted with minute detail all the torments of Inferno. He would exhort us to repent, and finally absolve us, extending his little hand to be kissed as seriously as a Jesuit Father.

One day he told me that his younger sister was very ill, that he was praying every day for an hour in order that she might not die, and that he had rubbed his breast with nettles. Opening his jacket and the bosom of his shirt he showed me his inflamed chest. I was greatly impressed and eager to emulate him. 'I want to do penance, too, so that your sister will not die,' I said, and following my words by the act, I went out into the garden and resolutely started to pick some nettles. But alas! As soon as I felt the prickling and burning I began to cry. Alphonso, greatly disturbed, went into the house for some oil, which he put on my hands. Then he tried to comfort me, saying that although I was not yet inured to such severe penances, I might in time become better at them than he himself.

We read the lives of the Saints. I was most pleased with those pious men who had withdrawn into a desert and spent long years listening to the singing of the birds and living upon wild fruits and shellfish which they found along the shore of the sea. That was not remarkable; for I was exceedingly fond of cherries and of sea snails. I have forgotten which of us first suggested it, but one day we conceived the idea of

withdrawing into the desert ourselves, in order to retire from the world and its vanities and to live a life of piety and penance. We would dwell apart, though in the same vicinity, live upon the alms which the peasants gave us, and pray for our families. When we grew up we would come to preach at Aviles and other towns. But where could we find such a desert retreat? Alphonso told me that about a league from Aviles he had once seen a great cave near the sea, which he thought would be precisely the place for us to retire to and there lead our hermit life.

We discussed and considered our project for a long time and did not resolve to undertake it until we had reflected maturely upon its possibilities. One of the serious questions which we debated was whether we should renounce our families forever, or visit them occasionally. Alphonso thought we ought to come once a year to see our parents. I thought our duty bade us come every six months. Finally we decided to come home on every eighth day, to get a change of clothing. It never occurred to either of us for a moment that our parents might place obstacles in the way of our plan. Alphonso thought his mother was so pious that she would weep tears of joy at learning of his proposal. I was not quite so sure about mine, and suspected she might not exactly cry with joy, but I felt quite certain she would feel honored at seeing her son embark so bravely on a saint's career. We finally decided to leave without saying a word of our intentions, in order to avoid a touching scene.

Now that I think the matter over after the lapse of many years, I question whether my resolve to abandon the world was not strengthened by a certain desire to abandon school. I recall that the hazel switch which the teacher, Don Juan de la Cruz, used to employ,

did not appeal to my tastes, nor did I enjoy being shaken, having my ears boxed, and kneeling in a corner for an hour with my face to the wall because my copy book contained a few blots. Still I was conscious of a pang of sadness at my heart when I entered our house for what I supposed would be the last time as a son, and my father kissed me good-bye when I left for school after dinner. We separated. I departed down the arched passage toward my sad destiny, and saw my father stroll across the Plaza toward his club, smoking a Havana. When would I be big enough to do that? It is possible, then, that my pure ambition to devote myself to a life of abstinence and piety was alloyed with a trace of pleasure at escaping from other duties; for the great resolutions which we make during our lives are never inspired by a single motive. However, one should not attempt to analyze too exactly the soul of a mystic.

So we set forth right after dinner, about three in the afternoon, to find our sacred cave. I carried with me in my pockets a pair of slippers, a little box of caramels which my godmother had presented to me the day before, and a top. To be sure, this was not exactly the luggage one would expect a penitent fleeing the pleasures of the flesh to carry; but in this matter I trusted absolutely to my friend Alphonso, and was not mistaken. All that my pious little companion carried with him was a small paper package containing some scourges made by his own tiny hands. They were of leather attached to the handles of a skipping-rope, and at the end of each thong were hard little knots that promised to be not so sweet as my godmother's caramels.

At Alphonso's suggestion we prayed for a few moments in the church of San Francisco before setting out on our journey. Then, skirting the 'Field of

Cain' and the hostile suburb of Sabugo, — which we gave a wide berth, — we found ourselves upon the highway to San Cristobal. About an hour's journey ahead was a point known as La Garita, overlooking the sea. In this neighborhood was the cave which Alphonso had seen, or thought he had seen.

We walked on in silence. Alphonso was radiant with happiness. I was not so radiant. When we had gone a little more than half a mile, we saw stretched on the soft turf near the edge of the road two tough boys from Sabugo. One of them, 'Antonio the Shoemaker,' was an ugly lad, famous throughout the town as a bully and the terror of all the younger children. The other was an ugly, deformed young vagabond named Anguila, who diverted the people on Festal Days by his tricks. He would undress and roll in the sand, then climb a greased pole to get the prize at the top. In a word, he was a natural clown. When I saw them, my heart gave a jump of terror, and I fancy that my friend Alphonso, in spite of his piety, had the same experience. I whispered softly: 'There are those fellows.'

Alphonso answered briefly: 'I had seen them already. Let 's keep on as it we did not notice them.'

So, gazing at the sky, looking at the road in front of us, and glancing in every direction except the one where that pair of the Devil's jewels was sparkling on the grass, we hastened our steps. We were like poor ostriches, who thrust their heads under their wings when they see a hunter.

'Here, kids, where are you going?'

We pretended not to hear.

'Here, kids, where are you going?'

We continued to be deaf, and were hastening past, when Anguila jumped up and with two bounds planted himself in front of us. 'Where are you going, I say, you young snipes?'

To hear two beings so virtuous and

spiritual as ourselves called 'snipes' by that miserable little street gamin was more calculated to inspire laughter than anger. Neither of us could think of a reply. To tell the truth we were both of us dumb with fear. Finally I stammered with all the meek servility of which a human being is capable: 'We are going to San Cristobal.'

'For what are you going to San Cristobal?'

'We are taking a message to the priest,' I murmured, more humbly and propitiatingly than ever.

'Good. Just draw up to the wharf and drop anchor; for the *carabineros* are waiting to examine your luggage.'

Saying this, he turned back toward the field where his worthy companion remained stretched on the ground, directing toward us a steady, cold, and cruel gaze. We followed like two tame lambs. What could we do? We were nine years old and these fellows not less than twelve. Besides that, they possessed a primitive savagery, like all people who have not yet emerged from barbarism, which gave them a clear superiority when it came to a trial of strength with two such refined and well-bred boys as ourselves.

So the inspection started. Anguila conducted it thoroughly, beginning with me. 'Antonio the Shoemaker' did not deign to move. My caramels were the first thing to come to light. The paper was at once torn off them; but Antonio crisply commanded, with an imperious gesture, 'Bring those here!' and Anguila humbly placed them at his feet. A person saw at once that Antonio was the commander and Anguila the buffoon. Next came my top, which was deposited with the caramels; then my slippers appeared. Despising such trifles, they were wrapped up again and thrust back in my pocket.

Next came Alphonso's turn. He had a piece of bread in his pocket, which



Anguila promptly thrust into his mouth, having first assured himself by a rapid side glance that Antonio had no objection. Next came the little package with the scourges. When Anguila unwrapped them he stared at us in blank amazement. 'What's this? The devil take me if they are n't scourges.'

Antonio jumped to his feet in a moment and took them in his hands. 'Sure they are scourges.' His ugly face was lighted up by a cruel grin. 'Ah, what a fine idea! Scourges! What a joke!' And both he and Anguila doubled up with laughter.

'So these are the scourges with which your mother whips you, is n't it so? And you have stolen them, is n't it so? That sort of thing won't do. Take 'em back, but don't let it occur again.' And he began to slash with them at my poor little friend, who quavered protestingly in his gentle voice, 'No, no, I have not stolen them — my mother does n't whip me.'

I thought for a moment that I was safe, but this comforting idea was speedily dissipated when Antonio began to use them upon me, 'for being an accomplice,' as he said.

'Good! Now get out of here and if you say a word about what has happened at home I will deal with you,' growled Antonio, throwing himself down again on the grass with the irritating insolence of an Oriental despot. We were hastening to take this advice, but Providence decreed we should not escape so easily from the claws of those young tyrants. Anguila interrupted: 'Listen, Antonio, don't you think we ought to teach these kids to drill?'

'Do what you like,' answered 'The Shoemaker,' shrugging his shoulders in his usual surly way. Anguila cut two branches from a neighboring tree and put them in our hands. 'Halt! Attention! Present arms! Order ar-r-ms! At ease! Half turn to the right! Right dress!'

Our martyrdom lasted more than an hour. We were knocked about and kicked, and our ears were boxed until we were half beside ourselves. The most barbarous drill sergeant could not have dealt worse with his raw recruit. If we began to cry we were silenced with a blow. When Anguila tired of this amusement, he told us to get out.

Free at last, we did not continue our journey into the desert to regenerate the world by our penances, but ran off home as fast as we could go. Our eyes were red with crying and our faces with beating, but they were no redder than was my soul with rage and fury. Desire for vengeance fairly choked me, so that I could hardly utter from time to time the terrible imprecations and inarticulate cries of anger that welled up from my heart. As soon as we reached the town I posted off to 'Emilio the Horseshoer.' We little boys in the school at Aviles always had, after the custom of the Spartans, a big boy friend who acted as our protector, and who, as we said in our boyish jargon, 'danced for us.' 'Emilio the Horseshoer' had always danced for me. I was certain that as soon as he knew how I had been abused he would post off to the suburb of Sabugo, where he would not leave one stone standing on another. Poor Alphonso wept in silence.

When I now recall this incident of my childhood I wonder at my oversight. Why was I leaving home and taking refuge in the desert? Was it not to do penance and gain righteousness? If so, what penance was better than that which those young ruffians inflicted on me? What better opportunity could I wish to show resignation and meekness, and to follow the footsteps of Jesus? And it has been the same in later life. God has offered me abundant opportunities to be a saint, but I have let them pass without improving them.

# MOLIÈRE, THE PLAYWRIGHT

From the *Spectator*, January 14  
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THERE is in the Louvre a portrait by an unknown artist, 'which lights the small room in which it hangs like a flame,' says Michelet. The dark face, kindly and thoughtful, with the full lips, the rather thick nose, the black eyes burning with an extraordinary intensity under the black brows — this is Molière as his contemporaries saw him, and like a flame his genius illumines the world he lived in.

Jean Baptiste Poquelin, afterwards known as Molière, was born in Paris in January 1622, six years after Shakespeare's death. His father was a prosperous tradesman and the son was well educated at the Jesuit College of Clermont, and then studied law; but at twenty-one he renounced the solid advantages of his home and resolved to be an actor. With his company of strolling players he spent fourteen years in the provinces; in 1658 he returned to Paris, and had the good fortune to amuse the King by his little farce, *Le Docteur Amoureux*. To the man who could amuse Louis XIV success was assured, and thenceforward the good-will and protection of his splendid patron never failed him. Into the next fifteen years he crowded more than twenty-five plays, from the farces and comedy-ballets hurriedly put together at His Majesty's order for some Court entertainment — *Les Fâcheux* was planned, written, rehearsed and acted in a fortnight — to *Le Misanthrope*. Under the strain of his ceaseless effort his health failed; at forty he married a girl twenty years younger than himself and was incessantly tormented by jealous miseries; he made enemies who harassed and

angered him. He was a melancholy, worn-out man when he produced in February 1673 *Le Malade Imaginaire*, struggled through his part with difficulty, and with the laughter and applause of the theatre in his ears was carried home to die.

In 1636 Corneille's romantic play, *Le Cid*, had taken Paris by storm, and for twenty years his heroic tragedies had dominated the French stage. But his day was over; in the new Court that gathered adoringly round the young sovereign the shabby, taciturn, elderly poet was out of fashion, and so were his sublime couplets. 'Once the public demanded great situations nobly handled,' said one of his friends; 'now it is content with characters.' Molière was willing to allow that tragedy was an affair of 'situations,' but he held that character is the stuff of which comedy is made. He discarded all the customary theatrical devices, the familiar types, the complicated intrigues which had long been the comic writer's material, and he refused to be bound by the rules of the classic drama. His plots are generally very simple; *Le Misanthrope* has no plot. His dénouements are often unsatisfactory; could anything be more forced and confused than the close of *Tartufe*? It is to the eternal interest we take in our fellow men, in their aspirations, their foibles, their misadventures, that he made his appeal, supporting it by his invincible gayety, his humor, and his incomparable gift of dialogue. 'When you paint heroes,' he says, 'you do as you please; they are fancy portraits in which no one looks for a likeness, and you follow the flights of an