

MANTUA = MADRID

IN Juan Nicasio Gallego's ode, *El dos de Mayo*, the third stanza reads as follows:

¡ Ay, que cual débil planta
 Que agota en su furor hórrido viento,
 De víctimas sin cuento
 Lloró la destrucción Mantua afligida!
 Yo ví, yo ví su juventud florida
 Correr inerme al huésped ominoso.
 ¿ Mas qué su generoso
 Esfuerzo pudo? El pérfido caudillo
 En quien su honor y su defensa fía,
 La condenó al cuchillo.
 ¿ Quién ¡ay! la alevosía,
 La horrible asolación habrá que cuente,
 Que, hollando de amistad los santos fueros,
 Hizo furioso en la indefensa gente
 Ese tropel de tigres carniceros?

A recent editor comments on Mantua (1.4) in these words: "The Italian town of this name was taken by Napoleon in 1797, after a famous siege." True, but why should Gallego devote the greater part of his poem to the harrowing details of an Italian siege (granted that his words could possibly apply to a siege) when he is supposed to be writing about a well-known insurrection in Madrid? Mantua is, of course, the poetical name of the Spanish Capital. In the Romantic period there was a journal published at Madrid called *El Mantuano Guerrero*, and in our own times we have a worthy successor of *Figaro* who is pleased to style himself *El Bachiller Mantuano* (Sr. D. Adolfo Bonilla y San Martín). Mira de Amescua, in *La hija de Carlos Quinto* (Act II), explains the origin of such an appellation as follows—those who prefer sober prose may turn to a discussion of the matter in Mesonero Romanos' *El antiguo Madrid* (pp. iii-iv):

Esta opinión desde Grecia
 entre otros hizo venir

en Babilonios de leños (*sic*),
 del mal errante pensil,
 á vno, hijo de Tiberio,
 Rey de los Latinos, y
 de la celebrada Monta, (Manto)
 por quien se vino á dezir
 Mantua, nombre que mudaron
 los Bárbaros en Madrid . . .

As a bibliographical curiosity (in my possession), attention may be called here to an English version of *El dos de Mayo: The second of May. An elegy. Translated from the Spanish of Don J. N. Gallego. Into English verse. By William Casey, Philomath. Land-Surveyor, late Professor of English at the College of Mahon. . . . Dedicated to his scholar El Señor Don Juan Evangelista de Erro. Barcelona: By John Pferrer, Royal Printer. 1819 (8 pp.)*. As an example of the work produced by the pedestrian muse of this land-surveyor and professor of English, I quote his translation of the stanza printed above:

As tender plants parch'd by an Artic breeze,
 Which in its fury quivers rocks and trees,
 Such *Mantua* in her num'rous offspring sees.
 I saw, I did, her florid youth assail
 Th'ominous Guest; but what did it avail?
 Unarm'd they ran to work the gen'rous deed:
 The guilty leader them condemn'd to bleed.
 His word of honour and defence they nurs'd,
 He tender'd all; then how could they but trust?
 Who can depict, what pen can ever trace
 The direful havoc which that bloody race
 Made in defenceless people, who behold
 The hungry wolf amid the timid fold?

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