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978-1-107-63986-7 - A History of the Romantic Movement in Spain: Volume I

E. Allison Peers

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A HISTORY OF
THE ROMANTIC MOVEMENT
IN SPAIN

IN TWO VOLUMES
VOLUME I

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A HISTORY OF
THE ROMANTIC MOVEMENT
IN SPAIN

BY

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Professor of Spanish in the University of
Liverpool*

VOLUME I

CAMBRIDGE
AT THE UNIVERSITY PRESS
1940

Cambridge University Press

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CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of education, learning and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781107639867

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First published 1940

First paperback edition 2013

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

ISBN 978-1-107-63986-7 Paperback

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To
MY FRIENDS & FELLOW-WORKERS
IN THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
1918–1938

*They have seemed to be together, though absent, shook hands, as over
a vast, and embraced, as it were, from the ends of opposed winds.*

SHAKESPEARE, “The Winter’s Tale”

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I

TO SAY that the Romantic movement in Spain has suffered from the most undeserved neglect is almost a truism. In England and Germany it has attracted hardly a single leading Hispanist; in Spain and France, very few. Only in the United States have any considerable number of writers thought the Romantics worthy of their attention.

Research having been so much neglected, it is not surprising that more general treatments of the subject should have been unsatisfactory. The few books dealing exclusively with the period—the best of which is Piñeyro's "discreet and impartial"¹ but misnamed *El Romanticismo en España*—are little more than studies of individual authors. The histories of Spanish literature have added to their surveys of individual achievement a few words about a Romantic "battle", or a Romantic "triumph", on the details of which they have shown a suspicious reticence. Though more than a century has passed since the Romantic movement reached its climax, no organic history of it has yet appeared² and writers on European romanticism have generally left it out of consideration altogether.

Further, the treatment usually accorded to the Movement has in several respects been inaccurate or misleading.

First of all, the accounts of it given both by Spanish and by foreign authors have been vague in the extreme. It has been described by these authors as "bursting" upon the country, as "revivifying" and "enriching" literature and as achieving a complete and definitive "triumph" in or about the year 1835. This "triumph" they have generally attributed to a single play—Rivas' *Don Álvaro*—which has come to be taken as having established the principles of romanticism in Spain. They have failed to explain what happened to the Movement after its "triumph", making, as a rule, no further mention of it whatever. They have thus left many unanswered questions: If the Movement came

¹ N.A.C., I, 156 n.

² The nearest approach to such a history has been a single chapter in Sr Alonso Cortés' biographical and critical study of Zorrilla (N.A.C., I, 125–236).

suddenly in the 1830's, how is it that we find clear indications of romanticism in the 1770's and 1780's? Is it still in progress? If so, how has it developed since 1835? If not, when did it end? Why, if it triumphed in 1835, were anti-Romantic writers and even Classical preceptists so popular, not merely in 1825 and 1830, but in 1840, 1845 and 1850? Why, again, was there no reaction from the Romantic movement? If it came in with such vehemence, one would have expected a no less vehement reaction, with possibly a counter-reaction to follow.

It was unsatisfactory that no attempt should have been made to answer these questions—which one would have thought might have occurred not only to the critics but to the historians themselves. There were worse faults, however, than this. At the time of the Romantic movement, its opponents had frequently condemned it as being not a native growth but a foreign importation from Germany and France, strongly influenced also by England. This view of the movement found its way so regularly into the histories that “Spanish romanticism” came to be considered as purely exotic—generally, for various reasons, as a product imported from France rather than from Germany or England. From the popularizing of this implication it was only a step to the forcing of the history of the Movement into a French mould. It was assumed, for example, that in Spain, as in France, it was principally a revolt. Rivas, whose *Moro Expósito* had been published with a preface devoted largely to literary theory, was spoken of as a Spanish Victor Hugo. His *Don Alvaro* became “the *Hernani* of Spain”. The Parnasillo and the literary coteries which preceded it were assumed to have been the equivalents of the French Cénacles, helping to create a Romantic “school”. The French sources of Spanish Romantic dramas were made much of, together with the debts to France of Larra, Martínez de la Rosa and Rivas. Espronceda was described, if not as the Spanish Musset, at least as the Spanish Byron. The deep-rooted native origins of the Spanish Romantic movement were hardly so much as mentioned.

Finally, nothing at all, save for exceptions to be noted later, was said of that other movement which came up and engulfed romanticism, and in appearance, though not in reality, all but swept it away. Actually the Eclectic movement was by far the most important literary phenomenon of the first half of the nineteenth century; it was eclecticism, not romanticism, that really triumphed; and of the leading authors of the half-century, hardly one has not some claim to be called an Eclectic. Yet, frequently as this word is found in the literature of the period, the

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historians appear to have been quite unaware of the Eclectic movement: it might have been a mere eccentricity—the buzzing of a literary fly which all-conquering romanticism hardly deigned to notice.

One of the few historians who took eclecticism into account was Blanco García. The weaknesses inherent in his treatment of it arose partly from the fact of his seeing it, not as the deep-seated movement it was, but as a compromise, a “point of intersection” between classicism and romanticism,¹ and partly from his failure to study with fullness and objectivity the important years 1835–40 which are so completely dominated by the Eclectic ideal. A further step was taken in 1909 by M. Le Gentil, whose work on Bretón de los Herreros, and on the literary reviews of the Romantic period, showed him something of the importance of Eclectic principles, though it is doubtful if even he realized how essential is the Eclectic movement to any intelligible description of the literary history of the century.

But these were mere hints of the truth which, except by occasional students, passed unnoticed. The general effect achieved by historians of the period was a complete fog. It was as though we were still contemporaries of Espronceda and Rivas, or at least too near to them to be able to judge their period with complete detachment. We were left with the impression that after the initial success of the Romantic movement literature had been flung into a state of indescribable turmoil, any way of issue from which was imperceptible. If we had considered the matter at all we should probably have described the state of Spanish literature about 1840 much as Cánovas del Castillo did in that very year:

Por remate y fin de todo, diré que lo que más que nada trajo esta revolución literaria fué una confusión grandísima de gustos, de creencias y opiniones.

That, at any rate, was as much as could be gathered from the historians of Spanish literature. . . .

II

In one sense this History of the Romantic movement has been in preparation for twenty years; for it was in 1918 that I decided to attempt such a task and drafted the plan of a book which to-day seems illuminatingly unlike this one. After a few months' further study, however, problems began to arise on every hand; it became clear that nothing of

¹ B.G., I, 309.

permanent value could be written until preliminary work had been done in at least five directions.¹ (1) The greater figures of the period—notably Rivas—had been insufficiently investigated. (2) Except for Professor Churchman's work on Byron (1909–10) and Dr Pfandl's on Southey (1913), little reliable information was available concerning the influence of foreign authors—e.g., Scott, Hugo and Dumas. (3) No one but M. Le Gentil had examined the Madrid periodicals of the time, and no one at all had studied those of the provinces. (4) Although the native origins of the Romantic movement had been long since indicated by Menéndez y Pelayo, his pioneer work had been little followed up. Finally, (5) save for the quarterly book-lists of the *Revista de Filología Española*, there was no bibliography of the period available for the specialist.

All this was fully realized both by amiable Spanish essayists² and by conscientious researchers. "Progress has been slow", one of the latter reported in 1910, "and results are uncertain, for one has absolutely no guides to follow. Spanish romanticism has never been treated in a thorough, detailed fashion by anyone; nothing can be taken for granted."³ After twenty years' work in the five directions already indicated I can emphatically endorse that statement. But, if much still remains to be done, we have at least made some progress. Four books and about forty articles (some of the latter written in collaboration) represent the preliminary work which I have myself thought essential to this book and I have profited still more by the work of others. M. Boussagol has carried out valuable research on Rivas; M. Sarrailh on Martínez de la Rosa; Professor Tarr on Larra; and the late Don Emilio Cotarelo y Mori on La Avellaneda. A host of younger scholars, too, have been studying the minor writers—Ventura de la Vega, Gil y Zárate, Escosura, Arolas, Fernán Caballero, the *costumbristas* and others. English influences have been investigated by Professors Buceta, Churchman, Ford, Hendrix, Hespelt, Sres Juliá Martínez, Núñez de

¹ E.A.P.: "The Study of Spanish Romanticism", in *M.H.R.A.*, 1932, No. 11, pp. 1–16.

² "No se ha estudiado todavía entre nosotros el romanticismo literario; algunos trabajos, como el de Piñeiro (*sic*), carecen de coherencia y de método. Sobre todo, los orígenes del romanticismo es cosa de que casi no se tiene idea en los manuales literarios y en las cátedras." (Azorín: *Clásicos y modernos*, Madrid, 1919, p. 185.)

³ Philip H. Churchman: "The Beginnings of Byronism in Spain", in *R.H.*, 1910, XXIII, 342.

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Arenas, Par, and many more; French influences by (among others) Professor Hendrix, Dr Pfandl and M. Sarrailh; German influences by M. Bertrand, Dr Farinelli and Professor Schneider. With the help of my pupils I have been able to make a survey (still incomplete) of the periodicals of Madrid, Barcelona, Valencia, Granada, Seville and Cádiz, and have acquired a body of material, withheld from publication only for financial reasons, all of which has been utilized for this History. In this regard, too, I am much indebted to Professor Ada M. Coe, who has rendered a great service to scholarship by publishing the results of her investigations into the press of the years 1661–1819. Finally, the work of Menéndez y Pelayo on the origins of the Romantic movement has been supplemented by Miss I. L. McClelland's recent book on the subject; to this, as will later appear, my first chapter is greatly indebted.¹

III

Twelve years had been spent in preliminary work before I returned to the project of 1918. In 1930 the first draft of this History was begun, in the invigorating atmosphere of Morningside Heights, during the tenure of a Visiting Professorship at Columbia University, and completed less than two years later. Then fresh obstacles presented themselves. Other commitments delayed progress; further preliminary work became essential; and three more successive vacations were spent in Spanish libraries. This additional period of preparation, however, was enriching both my manuscript bibliography, which at present contains about seven thousand entries, and a collection of documents, most of which have never been reprinted and which, with the bibliography, I had hoped to publish as a third volume of this History. By the end of 1935 it seemed that after one more vacation in Spain the three volumes would be ready for publication.

Then came the Civil War. It soon became clear that these plans would now have to be modified. Assuming a three-year conflict, as many of us did from the first, five or six years might pass before systematic study became practicable. One of the most valuable of the libraries utilized in the Bibliography (which records the provenance of the books listed in it) had been in great part destroyed; many others would necessarily be damaged or disorganized. It seemed best, there-

¹ Other notable contributions to the subject are enumerated in *art. cit.*, *M.H.R.A.*, No. 11, *passim*.

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fore, to postpone the publication of Bibliography and Documents and to publish only the text of the History. Doing this has meant that some of the quotations and references have not been checked at source and that a few sets of references have not been standardized. But I have tried to compensate for these deficiencies, and for the absence of a Bibliography, by means of a fuller index and additional cross-references and bibliographical footnotes.¹

IV

In view of the length of this History and the attempt which it makes at fullness of documentation, it may be as well to say that I neither claim nor suggest that it is in any way definitive. Whatever value it has lies chiefly in the facts that it *is* a History and not a collection of essays, and that it is the first work of any size to be based on considerations which I believe to be essential to a proper understanding of its subject. To me it marks not so much the goal of twenty years' work on a complicated but fascinating movement as the first stage of a period of study which would provide occupation for quite twenty years more. No critic of it will be more conscious of its deficiencies (some of them unavoidable) than its author. My greatest desire is that it may serve as at once a foundation for, and a stimulus to, further researches. It certainly indicates many problems which have still to be solved and the need for many editions and critical studies not yet written.

In this connection I might perhaps be allowed, out of a fairly wide experience, to offer future investigators, and others who use this book, a word or two of caution. First, there is at present in this period not a single major author of whose works we have an even approximately complete edition. This means that references to an author's works cannot always be made to the same edition and also that it has often been impossible to collate different parts of an author's production, not all the editions being available in the same place. It means, too, since the truth of any generalization about a writer must be contingent upon an examination of the whole of his works, that generalizations about this period have much less than the maximum chance of reliability.

A word, too, about the use of periodicals. Great as is the value of these contemporary documents, it is not always easy to employ them

¹ This does not apply to Chapter VIII, which is in the nature of an epilogue and is meant to be suggestive rather than in any place exhaustive.

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effectively. Nineteenth-century periodicals—particularly provincial periodicals—did not scruple to reprint entire articles without acknowledgment of source, or even of authorship. Occasionally their reviews of books and critiques of plays are little more than advertisements and even by present-day Spanish standards are the reverse of objective. Certain books announced in advance, and even some referred to in great detail as having been published, have been found either never to have been published at all or to have disappeared entirely, leaving no traces. Again, too much reliance should not be placed on lists of plays compiled from periodicals. Some newspapers report or criticize performances only spasmodically, while others, though generally reliable, omit their dramatic notices on the slightest provocation. Sometimes a play announced beforehand is not given; sometimes there is confusion, as, for example, between the *Lucrecia Borgia* of Hugo and that of Donizetti, or where (as often in the pre-Romantic period) one play is referred to by several titles; sometimes a play is attributed to the wrong author or translator; sometimes, though rarely, an account of a play written before its production is printed as though the play had been given, though in reality it had been withdrawn. While, therefore, theatre-lists are useful as general indications of the nature of the vogue of some author or play, statistics are often only approximately exact and it is inadvisable to press very closely any argument based upon them.

Elsewhere I have ventured to offer the less experienced researcher advice of other kinds on library work in Spain.¹ Much of it applies to the conditions under which the material for this History, and for the Bibliography which is to follow it, was obtained. The more one works on this period, the more allowances one makes for others and the more anxious one becomes to place experience and material at their service.

V

The impossibility of acknowledging in a page or two more than a very few of the debts contracted during so many years emboldens me to hope for the forgiveness of those whose names are omitted. Reflecting on the trouble I have given, year after year, to Spanish librarians and to personal friends who have made minor investigations for me, I am as much appalled at my own presumption and humbled at the insignificance

¹ *A Handbook to the Study and Teaching of Spanish*, London, 1938, pp. 244–51.

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of its results as I am amazed by the forbearance and willingness to help which have met my importunities.

Beginning with Spanish libraries, in which I worked at this subject every year but one from 1919 to 1936, my foremost debts are to the Biblioteca Nacional, Madrid, to its past and present Directors, Don Francisco Rodríguez Marín and Don Miguel Artigas, and to many other officials, among whom Don Gabriel Martín del Río y Rico and Don Federico Ruiz Morcuende take first place. My gratitude is due also to the librarians of the Biblioteca Municipal, the Hemeroteca Municipal, the Biblioteca de San Isidro, the Biblioteca del Palacio, the Academia Española, the Academia de la Historia and the Ateneo—all these in Madrid; of the Universities of Barcelona, Valencia, Granada, Seville, Valladolid, Salamanca and Zaragoza; of Provincial or Municipal libraries in Cádiz, Córdoba, Valencia and Santander; of the City Archives and Institute of Catalan Studies at Barcelona; and of the Menéndez y Pelayo Library at Santander. Of the many private libraries in which I have been kindly allowed to work, the richest (especially in minor periodicals of the Romantic epoch) have been those of the Duque de T'Serclaes, in Madrid, and of Don Antonio Aguiló, in Palma de Mallorca.

Personal debts to Spanish friends are hardly less numerous. For practically the whole of these twenty years a few of them have been in touch with my researches, and, when I have been pressed for some piece of information, one or another has procured it for me at the source. Among these trusty friends have been a little group at Santander—Don Miguel Artigas; Don Enrique Sánchez Reyes; Don José Ramón Lomba y Pedraja; Don José María de Cossío; and the indefatigable and imperturbable Maximiliano, whose family name, in all the years I knew him, I never once heard. Next must come a succession of Liverpool colleagues, the first happily still with me, the remainder ideal correspondents conveniently disposed about Spain—Srta María Victoria de Lara, Don Nicolás González Ruiz (Madrid), Dr Fernando Soldevila (Barcelona) and Don Alfredo Malo Zarco (Seville). Of all my debts to other Spanish friends I must attempt a “token” payment by mentioning three of the closest and most trusted: Dr Jorge Rubió y Balaguer, at Barcelona; Don José Deleito y Piñuela, at Valencia; and Don Narciso Alonso Cortés, at Valladolid.

Some of my outstanding debts to the United States are mentioned in the next section, and are also particularized, with others to French,

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German and Italian colleagues, in footnotes to the text. Here, however, I would make pious mention of some early friends, to whom this book owes perhaps more than they ever imagined and whom death has taken during the period of its preparation. Foremost among these were Professor J. G. Robertson, whose encouragement and help exemplify all that a true scholar can do for a younger man in a field not his own; M. Raymond Foulché-Delbosc, who did me the inestimable kindness, not only of devoting a whole volume of the lamented *Revue Hispanique* to my study of Rivas, but of criticizing it, kindly but firmly, at every stage; Don Antonio Rubió y Lluch, from whom I gathered numerous ideas on the early years of the Romantic movement and *Renaixensa* in Barcelona; and Professors Elijah Clarence Hills and Charles Carroll Marden, whose constant friendship and deep devotion to scholarship so often afforded the stimulus which only a practical idealist can give.

Acknowledgments are also due to a number of my own pupils. Many professors can boast larger, wealthier or longer established departments than the School of Hispanic Studies at Liverpool, but none can be happier in the love of his work, or in the devotion to their special studies of graduates whom he has had the privilege of training. Though fewer than a dozen of my more brilliant pupils have followed me into this particular field, I owe something concrete to nearly all of them. Debts to Mrs Emily Cotton (Cadalso and Young) and Mrs Burns (Adelaide Parker: Influence of Hugo in Spain) have been acknowledged elsewhere. From Mr Reginald F. Brown, now my colleague, I have had information on the early novel, on *Escosura* and on a few little-known Madrid periodicals; from Mr R. Silva, notes on Barcelona periodicals supplementing my own researches; from Mr J. H. Mundy, some suggestions on Arolas and Vega. All these, and others, have helped in the compilation of the Bibliography, without my continual recourse to which this History would be very much the poorer. Most of all I am indebted to Miss I. L. McClelland, not only for the light which her book has thrown on the eighteenth century, but for her constant and ungrudging help in connection with the production of my own. She has shared with Professor F. Courtney Tarr, of Princeton University, the heavy task of reading most of the manuscript, and like a younger graduate, Mr J. C. J. Metford, whose collaboration at a busy time has been invaluable, has read the whole of the proofs.

VI

For many years I have desired that the dedication page of my History, when it appeared, should bear some indication of the constant inspiration and tangible help which I have received from the United States. American scholars, for whom collaboration and intercourse are made so easy and so many of whom are working on the early nineteenth century, will hardly appreciate the sense of isolation experienced by an Englishman labouring in this field and (save for the companionship of his pupils) labouring quite alone. From almost the beginning of my professional life, however, I have been thrown by the *fuera* of a benevolent *sino* into close contact with the United States, and my three long visits to that country have intensified friendships and led to the formation of new connections with specialists in this and related fields. But that very fact makes it all the more difficult to discharge my indebtedness. Professor J. D. M. Ford, with whom I have been in close contact since 1918, has lavished such kindness upon me as I can never hope to repay. My friendship with that best-loved of Hispanists, Professor J. P. Wickersham Crawford, has made it difficult to remember that we are not of the same nation—or indeed of the same college and class. From Professor Philip H. Churchman, through a collaboration in what were (from the point of view of research) my sophomore days, I learned in a few months more of ideals and methods than perhaps from any other single person. With a number of skilled specialists in this field—such as Professors F. Courtney Tarr, E. Herman Hespelt, Nicholson B. Adams, W. S. Hendrix, Alice H. Bushee, Ada M. Coe, Stirling A. Stoudemire and (in Canada) Professor Milton A. Buchanan—I have been in constant communication. The honours accorded me by the Hispanic Society of America, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and the American Association of Teachers of Spanish I have continually in remembrance. A very special debt is that to Columbia University, whose campus has always been to me a second home, to President Nicholas Murray Butler and to many friends in the Departments of Romance Languages, English and Comparative Literature. Nor must I omit to mention my former colleagues at New York University, in California and New Mexico or in the many other Universities which I have been privileged to visit and which have welcomed me with characteristically American cordiality. And even

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now I have omitted scores of names for lack, not of gratitude, but only of space.

I sincerely trust that all my American colleagues, old or new, who have contributed to whatever usefulness these pages may possess, or have shown that neither a vast ocean nor a difference of nationality can part friends bound by common ideals will, each for himself, accept my dedication, together with the heartfelt wish that we may long continue in the happy fellowship which we owe to our community of interests and aspirations.

E. A. P.

University of Liverpool

1 October 1938

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PRINCIPAL ABBREVIATIONS

- B.A.E.—Biblioteca de Autores Españoles.
- B.B.M.P.—*Boletín de la Biblioteca Menéndez y Pelayo*. Santander, 1919 ff.
- B.G.—P. Francisco Blanco García: *La Literatura española en el Siglo XIX*. 3rd edition. Madrid, 1909–12. 3 vols.
- Coe.—Ada M. Coe: *Catálogo bibliográfico y crítico de las comedias anunciadas en los periódicos de Madrid desde 1661 hasta 1819*. Baltimore, 1935.
- Díaz-Plaja.—Guillermo Díaz-Plaja: *Introducción al estudio del romanticismo español*. Madrid, 1936.
- E.A.P.—E. Allison Peers.
- Esp.¹—José de Espronceda: *Obras poéticas y escritos en prosa*. Colección completa . . . ordenada por Don Patricio de la Escosura, etc. Madrid, 1884.
- Farinelli: *Romanticismo*.—Arturo Farinelli: *Il Romanticismo nel mondo latino*. Turin, 1927. 3 vols.
- I.E.—Marcelino Menéndez y Pelayo: *Historia de las ideas estéticas en España*. 2nd edition. Madrid, 1890–1912. 9 vols.
- Larra:¹ *Obras, ed. cit.*—*Obras completas de Figaro* (Don Mariano José de Larra). Madrid, 1855. 4 vols.²
- Le Gentil: *R. Litt.*—Georges Le Gentil: *Les Revues littéraires de l'Espagne pendant la première moitié du XIXe siècle. Aperçu bibliographique*. Paris, 1909.
- M.A.E.—*Memorias de la Academia Española*. Año 1. Madrid, 1870. 2 vols.
- M.L.R.—*Modern Language Review*. Cambridge, 1905 ff.
- M.P.—Marcelino Menéndez y Pelayo.
- McClelland.—I. L. McClelland: *The Origins of the Romantic Movement in Spain*. Liverpool, 1937.
- Mem. Set.—Ramón de Mesonero Romanos: *Memorias de un Setentón*. Madrid, 1881. 2 vols.
- N.A.C.—Narciso Alonso Cortés: *Zorrilla, su vida y sus obras*. Valladolid, 1916–20. 3 vols.
- Piñeyro.—Enrique Piñeyro: *El Romanticismo en España*. Paris, n.d.
- Piñeyro-Peers.—Enrique Piñeyro: *The Romantics of Spain*. Translated by E. Allison Peers. Liverpool, 1934.
- R.F.E.—*Revista de Filología Española*. Madrid, 1914 ff.

¹ Where any other edition of the works of this author is cited, the full reference is given.

² Vol. iv consists of earlier editions of seven plays bound up together: it has therefore no continuous pagination.

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R.H.—*Revue Hispanique*. New York, Paris, 1894–1933.*R.T.V.*—José Zorrilla: *Recuerdos del tiempo viejo*. Barcelona, 1880 (vol. 1) and Madrid, 1882 (vols. II, III).Rivas: *Obras, ed. cit.*¹—*Obras completas de D. Ángel de Saavedra, Duque de Rivas*. Madrid, 1894–1904. 7 vols.*Rivas... Study.*—E. Allison Peers: *Ángel de Saavedra, Duque de Rivas. A Critical Study*. New York, Paris, 1923.*Sem. Pint.*—*Semanario Pintoresco Español*. Madrid, 1836–1857. (Cf. II, 101, n. 3, below.)Zorrilla: *Obras, ed. cit.*¹—*Obras dramáticas y líricas de Don José Zorrilla*. Madrid, 1895. 4 vols.¹ Where any other edition of the works of this author is cited, the full reference is given.*The following notes may be of use on points of detail*

(1) Capitals are used for the words “Romantic”, “Classic(al)”, “Eclectic” when these are employed in the technical sense; lower-case letters, without exception, for “romanticism”, “classicism”, “eclecticism”; both these usages are followed irrespectively of the practices of authors who may be quoted. Where the words “movement”, “revival”, “revolt”, unqualified by an adjective, are capitalized, the word “Romantic” is to be understood as preceding them.

(2) Where no contrary indication is given, either in footnotes or in the foregoing list of abbreviations, reviews with Spanish titles may be taken as having been published in Madrid.

(3) For the naming of Catalan writers, Castilian forms are used, since it is their Castilian writings alone that are being considered.