

## CHAPTER II

## OF DON QUIXOTE'S FIRST SALLY

THESE preparations being made, he found his designs ripe for action, and thought it now a crime to deny himself any longer to the injured world, that wanted such a deliverer; the more when he considered what grievances he was to redress, what wrongs and injuries to remove, what abuses to correct, and what duties to discharge. So one morning before day, in the greatest heat of July, without acquainting any one with his design, with all the secrecy imaginable, he armed himself cap-a-pee, laced on his ill-contrived helmet, braced on his target, grasped his lance, mounted Rozinante, and at the private door of his back-yard sallied out into the fields, wonderfully pleased to see with how much ease he had succeeded in the beginning of his enterprize. But he had not gone far ere a terrible thought alarmed him, a thought that had like to have made him renounce his great undertaking; for now it came into his mind, that the honour of knighthood had not yet been conferred upon him, and therefore,

according to the laws of chivalry, he neither could, nor ought to appear in arms against any professed knight; nay, he also considered, that though he were already knighted, it would become him to wear white armour, and not to adorn his shield with any device, until he had deserved one by some extraordinary demonstration of his valour.

These thoughts staggered his resolution; but his folly prevailing more than any reason, he resolved to be dubbed a knight by the first he should meet, after the example of several others, who, as his distracting romances informed him, had formerly done the like. As for the other difficulty about wearing white armour, he proposed to overcome it, by scouring his own at leisure until it should look whiter than ermine. And having thus dismissed these busy scruples, he very calmly rode on, leaving it to his horse's discretion to go which way he pleased; firmly believing, that in this consisted the very being of adventures. And as he thus went on, I cannot but believe, said he to himself, that when the history of my famous achievements shall be given to the world, the learned author will begin in this very manner, when he comes to give an account of this my early setting out: "Scarce had the ruddy-

coloured Phœbus begun to spread the golden tresses of his lovely hair over the vast surface of the earthly globe, and scarce had those feathered poets of the grove, the pretty painted birds, tuned their little pipes, to sing their early welcomes in soft melodious strains to the beautiful Aurora, who having left her jealous husband's bed, displayed her rosy graces to mortal eyes from the gates and balconies of the Manchegan horizon, when the renowned knight Don Quixote de la Mancha, disdainng soft repose, forsook the voluptuous down, and, mounting his famous steed Rozinante, entered the ancient and celebrated plains of Montiel."\*<sup>1</sup> This was indeed the very road he took; and then proceeding, "O happy age! O fortunate times!" cried he, "decreed to usher into the world my famous achievements; achievements worthy to be engraven on brass, carved on marble, and delineated in some masterpiece of painting, as monuments of my glory, and examples for posterity! And thou, venerable sage, wise enchanter, whatever be thy name; thou whom fate has ordained to be the compiler

\* Montiel, a proper field to inspire courage, being the ground upon which Henry the Bastard slew his legitimate brother Don Pedro, whom our brave Black Prince Edward had set upon the throne of Spain.

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix, Note 1 to Chapter II.

of this rare history, forget not, I beseech thee, my trusty Rozinante, the eternal companion of all my adventures." After this, as if he had been really in love; "O Princess Dulcinea," cried he, "lady of this captive heart, much sorrow and woe you have doomed me to in banishing me thus, and imposing on me your rigorous commands, never to appear before your beauteous face! Remember, lady, that loyal heart your slave, who for your love submits to so many miseries." To these extravagant conceits, he added a world of others, all in imitation, and in the very style of those, which the reading of romances had furnished him with; and all this while he rode so softly, and the sun's heat increased so fast, and was so violent, that it would have been sufficient to have melted his brains, had he had any left.

He travelled almost all that day without meeting any adventure worth the trouble of relating, which put him into a kind of despair; for he desired nothing more than to encounter immediately some person on whom he might try the vigour of his arm.

Some authors say, that his first adventure was that of the pass, called Puerto Lapice; others, that of the Wind-Mills; but all that I could discover of certainty in this matter, and

that I meet with in the annals of La Mancha, is, that he travelled all that day; and towards the evening, he and his horse being heartily tired, and almost famished, Don Quixote looking about him, in hopes to discover some castle, or at least some shepherd's cottage, there to repose and refresh himself, at last near the road which he kept, he espied an inn, as welcome a sight to his longing eyes as if he had discovered a star directing him to the gate, nay, to the palace of his redemption. Thereupon hastening towards the inn with all the speed he could, he got thither just at the close of the evening. There stood by chance at the inn-door two young female adventurers, alias common wenches, who were going to Seville with some carriers, that happened to take up their lodging there that very evening; and, as whatever our knight-errant saw, thought or imagined, was all of a romantic cast, and appeared to him altogether after the manner of the books that had perverted his imagination, he no sooner saw the inn, but he fancied it to be a castle fenced with four towers, and lofty pinnacles glittering with silver, together with a deep moat, draw-bridge, and all those other appurtenances peculiar to such kind of places.

Therefore when he came near it, he stopped

a while at a distance from the gate, expecting that some dwarf would appear on the battlements,<sup>2</sup> and sound his trumpet to give notice of the arrival of a knight; but finding that nobody came, and that Rozinante was for making the best of his way to the stable, he advanced to the inn-door, where spying the two young doxies, they seemed to him two beautiful damsels, or graceful ladies, taking the benefit of the fresh air at the gate of the castle. It happened also at the very moment, that a swine-herd getting together his hogs (for, without begging pardon, so they are called\*) from the stubble-field, winded his horn; and Don Quixote presently imagined this was the wished-for signal, which some dwarf gave to notify his approach; therefore, with the greatest joy in the world, he rode up to the inn. The wenches, affrighted by the approach of a man cased in iron, and armed with a lance and target, were for running into their lodging; but Don Quixote perceiving their fear by their flight, lifted up the pasteboard beaver of his helmet, and discovering his withered

\* In the original, (*que sin perdon assi se llaman.*) In this parenthesis the author ridicules the affected delicacy of the Spaniards and Italians, who look upon it as ill manners to name the word hog or swine, as too gross an image.

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix, Note 2 to Chapter II.

dusty face, with comely grace and grave delivery accosted them in this manner: "I beseech ye, ladies, do not fly, nor fear the least offence; the order of knighthood, which I profess, does not permit me to countenance or offer injuries to any one in the universe, and, least of all, to virgins of such high rank as your presence denotes." The wenches looked earnestly upon him, endeavouring to get a glimpse of his face, which his ill-contrived beaver partly hid; but when they heard themselves styled virgins, a thing so out of the way of their profession, they could not forbear laughing outright, which Don Quixote resented as a great affront. "Give me leave to tell ye, ladies," cried he, "that modesty and civility are very becoming in the fair sex; whereas laughter without ground is the highest piece of indiscretion; however," added he, "I do not presume to say this to offend you, or incur your displeasure; no, ladies, I assure you, I have no other design but to do you service." This uncommon way of expression, jointed to the knight's scurvy figure, increased their mirth, which incensed him to that degree, that this might have carried things to an extremity, had not the innkeeper luckily appeared at that juncture. He was a man whose burden of fat inclined him to peace and

quietness, yet when he had observed such a strange disguise of human shape in his old armour and equipage, he could hardly forbear keeping the wenches company in their laughter; but having the fear of such a warlike appearance before his eyes, he resolved to give him good words, and therefore accosted him civilly: "Sir Knight," said he, "if your worship be disposed to alight, you will fail of nothing here but of a bed; as for all other accommodations, you may be supplied to your mind." Don Quixote observing the humility of the governor of the castle, (for such the inn-keeper and inn seemed to him,) "Senior Castellano," said he, "the least thing in the world suffices me; for arms are the only things I value; and combat is my bed of repose." The inn-keeper thought he had called him Castellano,\* as taking him to be one of the true Castilians, whereas he was indeed of Andalusia, nay, of the neighbourhood of St. Lucar, no less thievish than Cacus, or less mischievous than a truant-scholar, or court-page, and therefore he made him this reply: "At this rate, Sir Knight, your bed might be a pavement, and your rest to be still awake; you may then safely alight, and I dare assure you,

\* Castellano signifies both a constable or governor of a castle, and an inhabitant of the kingdom of Castile in Spain.

you can hardly miss being kept awake all the year long in this house, much less one single night." With that he went and held Don Quixote's stirrup, who, having not broke his fast that day, dismounted with no small trouble or difficulty. He immediately desired the governor (that is, the inn-keeper) to have special care of his steed, assuring him that there was not a better in the universe; upon which the inn-keeper viewed him narrowly, but could not think him to be half so good as Don Quixote said. However, having set him up in the stable, he came back to the knight to see what he wanted, and found him pulling off his armour by the help of the good-natured wenches, who had already reconciled themselves to him; but though they had eased him of his corslet and back-plate, they could by no means undo his gorget, nor take off his ill-contrived beaver, which he had tied so fast with green ribbons, that it was impossible to get it off without cutting them; now he would by no means permit that, and so was forced to keep on his helmet all night, which was one of the most pleasant sights in the world; and while his armour was taking off by the two kind lasses, imagining them to be persons of quality, and ladies of that castle, he very gratefully made

them the following compliment, (in imitation of an old romance,)

"There never was on earth a knight  
So waited on by ladies fair,  
As once was he, Don Quixote hight,  
When first he left his village dear:  
Damsels to undress him ran with speed,  
And princesses to dress his steed." \*

O Rozinante! for that is my horse's name, ladies, and mine Don Quixote de la Mancha. I never thought to have discovered it, until some feats of arms, achieved by me in your service, had made me better known to your ladyships; but necessity forcing me to apply to present purpose that passage of the ancient romance of Sir Lancelot, which I now repeat, has extorted the secret from me before its time; yet a day will come, when you shall command, and I obey, and then the valour of my arm shall evince the reality of my zeal to serve your ladyships."

The two females, who were not used to such rhetorical speeches, could make no answer to this; they only asked him whether he would eat anything? "That I will with all my heart," cried Don Quixote, "whatever it be, for I am of opinion nothing can come to me more seasonably." Now, as ill-luck would have

\* See Appendix, Note 3, to Chapter II.

it, it happened to be Friday, and there was nothing to be had at the inn but some pieces of fish, which is called *abadexo* in Castile, *bacallao* in Andalusia, *curadillo* in some places, and in others *truchuela*, or little trout, though after all it is but poor Jack; so they asked him, whether he could eat any of that *truchuela*, because they had no other fish to give him. Don Quixote imagining they meant a small trout, told them, "That, provided there were more than one, it was the same thing to him, they would serve him as well as a great one; for," continued he, "it is all one to me whether I am paid a piece of eight in one single piece, or in eight small reals, which are worth as much. Besides, it is probable these small trouts may be like veal, which is finer meat than beef; or like the kid, which is better than the goat. In short, let it be what it will, so it comes quickly; for the weight of armour and the fatigue of travel are not to be supported without recruiting food." Thereupon they laid the cloth at the inn-door, for the benefit of the fresh air, and the landlord brought him a piece of that salt fish, but ill-watered, and as ill-dressed; and as for the bread, it was as mouldy and brown as the knight's armour. But it would have made one laugh to have seen him

eat; for having his helmet on, with his beaver lifted up, it was impossible for him to feed himself without help, so that one of those ladies had that office; but there was no giving him drink that way, and he must have gone without it, had not the inn-keeper bored a cane, and setting one end of it to his mouth, poured the wine in at the other; all which the knight suffered patiently, because he would not cut the ribbons that fastened his helmet.

While he was at supper, a sow-gelder happened to sound his cane-trumpet, or whistle of reeds, four or five times as he came near the inn, which made Don Quixote the more positive of his being in a famous castle, where he was entertained with music at supper, that the poor jack was young trout, the bread of the finest flour, the wenches great ladies, and the inn-keeper the governor of the castle, which made him applaud himself for his resolution, and his setting out on such an account. The only thing that vexed him was, that he was not yet dubbed a knight; for he fancied he could not lawfully undertake any adventure till he had received the order of knighthood.