

CHAPTER III

AN ACCOUNT OF THE PLEASANT METHOD TAKEN BY
DON QUIXOTE TO BE DUBBED A KNIGHT

DON QUIXOTE'S mind being disturbed with that thought, he abridged even his short supper; and as soon as he had done, he called his host, then shut him and himself up in the stable, and falling at his feet, "I will never rise from this place," cried he, "most valorous knight, till you have graciously vouchsafed to grant me a boon, which I will now beg of you, and which will redound to your honour and the good of mankind." The inn-keeper, strangely at a loss to find his guest at his feet, and talking at this rate, endeavoured to make him rise; but all in vain, till he had promised to grant him what he asked. "I expected no less from your great magnificence, noble sir," replied Don Quixote; "and therefore I make bold to tell you, that the boon which I beg, and you generously condescend to grant me, is, that to-morrow you will be pleased to bestow the honour of knight-

hood upon me. This night I will watch my armour in the chapel of your castle,¹ and then in the morning you shall gratify me, as I passionately desire, that I may be duly qualified to seek out adventures in every corner of the universe, to relieve the distressed, according to the laws of chivalry, and the inclinations of knights-errant like myself."—The inn-keeper, who, as I said, was a sharp fellow, and had already a shrewd suspicion of the disorder in his guest's understanding, was fully convinced of it when he heard him talk after this manner; and, to make sport that night, resolved to humour him in his desires, telling him he was highly to be commended for his choice of such an employment, which was altogether worthy a knight of the first order, such as his gallant deportment discovered him to be; that he himself had in his youth followed that honourable profession, ranging through many parts of the world in search of adventures, without so much as forgetting to visit the Percheles of Malaga,* the isles of Riaran, the compass of Sevil, the quicksilver-house of Segovia, the olive field of Valencia, the circle of Granada, the wharf of St

¹ See Appendix, Note 1 to Chapter III.

* These are all places noted for rogueries and disorderly doings. See Appendix, Note 2 to Chapter III.

Lucar, the potro of Cordova,* the hedge-taverns of Toledo, and divers other places, where he had exercised the nimbleness of his feet, and the subtlety of his hands, doing wrongs in abundance, soliciting many widows, undoing some damsels, bubbling young heirs, and in a word making himself famous in most of the courts of judicature in Spain, till at length he retired to this castle, where he lived on his own estate and those of others, entertaining all knights-errant of what quality or condition soever, purely for the great affection he bore them, and to partake of what they got in recompense of his good-will. He added, that his castle at present had no chapel where the knight might keep the vigil of his arms, it being pulled down in order to be new built; but that he knew they might lawfully be watched in any other place in a case of necessity, and therefore he might do it that night in the court-yard of the castle; and in the morning (God willing) all the necessary ceremonies should be performed, so that he might assure himself he should be dubb'd a knight, nay, as much a knight as any one in the world could be. He then asked Don Quixote whether he had any

* A square in the city of Cordova, where a fountain gushes out from the mouth of a horse, near which is also a whipping-post. The Spanish word *Potro* signifies a colt or young horse.

money? "Not a cross," replied the knight, "for I never read in any history of chivalry that any knight-errant ever carried money about him."—"You are mistaken," cried the inn-keeper; "for admit the histories are silent in this matter, the authors thinking it needless to mention things so evidently necessary as money and clean shirts, yet there is no reason to believe the knights went without either; and you may rest assured, that all the knights-errant, of whom so many histories are full, had their purses well lined to supply themselves with necessaries, and carried also with them some shirts, and a small box of salves to heal their wounds; for they had not the conveniency of surgeons to cure them every time they fought in fields and deserts, unless they were so happy as to have some sage or magician for their friend to give them present assistance, sending them some damsel or dwarf through the air in a cloud,³ with a small bottle of water of so great a virtue, that they no sooner tasted a drop of it, but their wounds were as perfectly cured as if they had never received any. But when they wanted such a friend in former ages, the knights thought themselves obliged to take care that their squires should be provided with

³ See Appendix, Note 3 to Chapter III.

money and other necessaries, as lint and salves to dress their wounds; and if those knights ever happened to have no squires, which was but very seldom, then they carried those things behind them in a little bag,* as if it had been something of greater value, and so neatly fitted to their saddle, that it was hardly seen; for had it not been upon such an account, the carrying of wallets was not much allowed among knights-errant. I must therefore advise you," continued he, "nay, I might even charge and command you, as you are shortly to be my son in chivalry, never from this time forwards to ride without money, nor without the other necessaries of which I spoke to you, which you will find very beneficial when you least expect it." Don Quixote promised to perform very punctually all his injunctions; and so they disposed every thing in order to his watching his arms in a great yard that adjoined to the inn. To which purpose the knight, having got them all together, laid them in a horse-trough close by a well in that yard; then bracing his target, and grasping his lance, just as it grew dark, he began to walk about by the horse-trough with a graceful deportment. In the meanwhile the

* Of striped stuff, which every one carries, in Spain, when they are travelling.

inn-keeper acquainted all those that were in the house with the extravagancies of his guest, his watching his arms, and his hopes of being made a knight. They all admired very much at so strange a kind of folly, and went on to observe him at a distance; where they saw him sometimes walk about with a great deal of gravity, and sometimes lean on his lance, with his eyes all the while fixed upon his arms. It was now undoubted night, but yet the moon did shine with such a brightness, as might almost have vied with that of the luminary which lent it her; so that the knight was wholly exposed to the spectators' view. While he was thus employed, one of the carriers who lodged in the inn came out to water his mules, which he could not do without removing the arms out of the trough. With that, Don Quixote, who saw him make towards him, cried out to him aloud, "O thou, whoever thou art, rash knight, that prepares to lay thy hands on the arms of the most valorous knight-errant that ever wore a sword, take heed; do not audaciously attempt to profane them with a touch, lest instant death be the too sure reward of thy temerity." But the carrier never regarded these dreadful threats; and laying hold on the armour by the straps, without any more

ado threw it a good way from him; though it had been better for him to have let it alone; for Don Quixote no sooner saw this, but lifting up his eyes to heaven, and addressing his thoughts, as it seemed, to his lady Dulcinea; "Assist me, lady," cried he, "in the first opportunity that offers itself to your faithful slave; nor let your favour and protection be denied me in this first trial of my valour!" Repeating such like ejaculations, he let slip his target, and lifting up his lance with both his hands, he gave the carrier such a terrible knock on his inconsiderate head with his lance, that he laid him at his feet in a woeful condition; and had he backed that blow with another, the fellow would certainly have had no need of a surgeon. This done, Don Quixote took up his armour, laid it again in the horse-trough, and then walked on backwards and forwards with as great unconcern as he did at first.

Soon after another carrier, not knowing what had happened, came also to water his mules, while the first yet lay on the ground in a trance; but as he offered to clear the trough of the armour, Don Quixote, without speaking a word, or imploring any one's assistance, once more dropped his target, lifted up his lance, and then let it fall so heavily on the fellow's

pate, that without damaging his lance, he broke the carrier's head in three or four places. His outcry soon alarmed and brought thither all the people in the inn, and the landlord among the rest; which Don Quixote perceiving, "Thou Queen of Beauty," cried he, bracing on his shield,¹ and drawing his sword, "thou courage and vigour of my weakened heart, now is the time when thou must enliven thy adventurous slave with the beams of thy greatness, while this moment he is engaging in so terrible an adventure!" With this, in his opinion, he found himself supplied with such an addition of courage, that had all the carriers in the world at once attacked him, he would undoubtedly have faced them all. On the other side, the carriers, enraged to see their comrades thus used, though they were afraid to come near, gave the knight such a volley of stones, that he was forced to shelter himself as well as he could under the covert of his target, without daring to go far from the horse-trough, lest he should seem to abandon his arms. The innkeeper called to the carriers as loud as he could to let him alone; that he had told them already he was mad,² and consequently the law would

¹ See Appendix, Note 4 to Chapter III.

² See Appendix, Note 5 to Chapter III.

acquit him, though he should kill them. Don Quixote also made yet more noise, calling them false and treacherous villains, and the lord of the castle base and inhospitable, and a discourteous knight, for suffering a knight-errant to be so abused. "I would make thee know," cried he, "what a perfidious wretch thou art, had I but received the order of knighthood; but for you, base, ignominious rabble! fling on, do your worst; come on, draw nearer if you dare, and receive the reward of your indiscretion and insolence." This he spoke with so much spirit and undauntedness, that he struck a terror into all his assailants; so that partly through fear, and partly through the innkeeper's persuasions, they gave over flinging stones at him; and he, on his side, permitted the enemy to carry off their wounded, and then returned to the guard of his arms as calm and composed as before.

The innkeeper, who began somewhat to disrelish these mad tricks of his guest, resolved to dispatch him forthwith, and bestow on him that unlucky knighthood, to prevent farther mischief; so coming to him, he excused himself for the insolence of those base scoundrels, as being done without his privity or consent; but their audaciousness, he said, was sufficiently

punished. He added that he had already told him there was no chapel in his castle; and that indeed there was no need of one to finish the rest of the ceremony of knighthood, which consisted only in the application of the sword to the neck and shoulders, as he had read in the register of the ceremonies of the order; and that this might be performed as well in a field as any where else: that he had already fulfilled the obligation of watching his arms, which required no more than two hours watch, whereas he had been four hours upon the guard. Don Quixote, who easily believed him, told him he was ready to obey him, and desired him to make an end of the business as soon as possible, for if he were but knighted, and should see himself once attacked, he believed he should not leave a man alive in the castle, except those whom he should desire him to spare for his sake.

Upon this the innkeeper, lest the knight should proceed to such extremities, fetched the book in which he used to set down the carriers' accounts for straw and barley; and having brought with him the two kind females, already mentioned, and a boy that held a piece of lighted candle in his hand, he ordered Don Quixote to kneel: then reading in his manual, as if he had been repeating some pious oration,

in the midst of his devotion he lifted up his hand, and gave him a good blow on the neck,¹ and then a gentle slap on the back with the flat of his sword, still mumbling some words between his teeth in the tone of a prayer. After this he ordered one of the wenches to gird the sword about the knight's waist; which she did with much solemnity, and, I may add, discretion, considering how hard a thing it was to forbear laughing at every circumstance of the ceremony: it is true, the thoughts of the knight's late prowess did not a little contribute to the suppression of her mirth. As she girded on his sword, "Heaven," cried the kind lady, "make your worship a lucky knight, and prosper you wherever you go." Don Quixote desired to know her name, that he might understand to whom he was indebted for the favour she had bestowed upon him, and also make her partaker of the honour he was to acquire by the strength of his arm. To which the lady answered with all humility, that her name was Tolosa, a cobbler's daughter, that kept a stall among the little shops of Sanchobinaya at Toledo; and that whenever he pleased to command her, she would be his humble servant. Don Quixote begged of her to do him the favour to add

¹See Appendix, Note 6 to Chapter III.

hereafter the title of lady to her name, and for his sake to be called from that time the Lady Tolosa; which she promised to do. Her companion having buckled on his spurs, occasioned a like conference between them; and when he had asked her name, she told him she went by the name of Miller, being the daughter of an honest miller of Antequera. Our new knight entreated her also to style herself the Lady Miller, making her new offers of service. These extraordinary ceremonies (the like never seen before) being thus hurried over in a kind of post-haste, Don Quixote could not rest till he had taken the field in quest of adventures; therefore having immediately saddled his Rozinante, and being mounted, he embraced the innkeeper, and returned him so many thanks at so extravagant a rate, for the obligation he had laid upon him in dubbing him a knight, that it is impossible to give a true relation of them all; to which the innkeeper, in haste to get rid of him, returned as rhetorical though shorter answers; and without stopping his horse for the reckoning, was glad with all his heart to see him go.