

CHAPTER V.

OF THE WISE DISCOURSE BETWEEN SANCHE AND HIS MASTER; AS ALSO OF THE ADVENTURE OF THE DEAD CORPSE, AND OTHER FAMOUS OCCURRENCES.

“Now, sir,” quoth Sancho, “I can’t help thinking, but that all the mishaps that have befallen us of late, are a just judgment for the grievous sin you have committed against the order of knighthood, in not keeping the oath you swore, not to eat bread at board, nor to have a merry bout with the queen, and the Lord knows what more, until you had won what d’ye call him, the Moor’s helmet, I think you named him.”—“Truly,” answered Don Quixote, “thou art much in the right, Sancho; and to deal ingenuously with thee, I wholly forgot that: and now thou may’st certainly assure thyself, thou wert tost in a blanket for not remembering to put me in mind of it. However, I will take care to make due atonement; for knight-errantry has ways to conciliate all sorts of matters.”—“Why,” quoth Sancho, “did I ever swear to mind you of your

vow?”—“It is nothing to the purpose,” replied Don Quixote, “whether thou sworest or no: let it suffice that I think thou art not very clear from being accessory to the breach of my vow; and therefore to prevent the worst, there will be no harm in providing for a remedy.”—“Hark you then,” cried Sancho, “be sure you don’t forget your atonement, as you did your oath, lest those confounded hobgoblins come and maul me, and mayhap you too, for being a stubborn sinner.”

Insensibly night overtook them before they could discover any lodging; and, which was worse, they were almost hunger-starved, all their provision being in the wallet which Sancho had unluckily left behind; and to complete their distress, there happened to them an adventure, or something that really looked like one.

While our benighted travellers went on dolefully in the dark, the knight very hungry, and the squire very sharp set, what should they see moving towards them but a great number of lights, that appeared like so many wandering stars. At this strange apparition, down sunk Sancho’s heart at once, and even Don Quixote himself was not without some symptoms of surprise. Presently the one pulled to him his

ass's halter, the other his horse's bridle, and both made a stop. They soon perceived that the lights made directly towards them, and the nearer they came the bigger they appeared. At the terrible wonder Sancho shook and shivered every joint like one in a palsy, and Don Quixote's hair stood up on end: however, heroically shaking off the amazement which that sight stamped upon his soul, "Sancho," said he, "this must doubtless be a great and most perilous adventure, where I shall have occasion to exert the whole stock of my courage and strength."—"Woe's me," quoth Sancho, "should this happen to be another adventure of ghosts, as I fear it is, where shall I find ribs to endure it?"—"Come all the fiends in hell," cried Don Quixote, "I will not suffer them to touch a hair of thy head. If they insulted thee lately, know there was then between thee and me a wall, over which I could not climb; but now we are in the open field, where I shall have liberty to make use of my sword."—"Ay," quoth Sancho, "you may talk; but should they bewitch you as they did before, what the devil would it avail us to be in the open field?"—"Come, Sancho," replied Don Quixote, "be of good cheer; the event will soon convince thee of the greatness of my

valour."—"Pray heaven it may," quoth Sancho; "I will do my best."

With that they rode a little out of the way, and, gazing earnestly at the lights, they soon discovered a great number of persons all in white. At the dreadful sight, all poor Sancho's shuffling courage basely deserted him; his teeth began to chatter as if he had been in an ague fit, and as the objects drew nearer his chattering increased. And now they could plainly distinguish about twenty men on horseback, all in white, with torches in their hands, followed by a hearse covered over with black, and six men in deep mourning, whose mules were also in black down to their very heels. Those in white moved slowly, murmuring from their lips something in a low and lamentable tone. This dismal spectacle, at such a time of night, in the midst of such a vast solitude, was enough to have shipwrecked the courage of a stouter squire than Sancho, and even of his master, had he been any other than Don Quixote; but as his imagination straight suggested to him, that this was one of those adventures of which he had so often read in his books of chivalry, the hearse appeared to him to be a litter, where lay the body of some knight either slain or dangerously wounded, the revenge of whose

misfortunes was reserved for his prevailing arm; and so without any more ado, couching his lance, and seating himself firm in the saddle, he posted himself in the middle of the road where the company were to pass. As soon as they came near, "Stand," cried he to them in a haughty tone, "whoever you be, and tell me who you are, whence you come, whither you go, and what you carry in that litter? for there is all the reason in the world to believe that you have either done or received a great deal of harm; and it is requisite I should be informed of the matter, in order either to punish you for the ill you have committed, or else to revenge you of the wrong you have suffered."—"Sir," answered one of the men in white, "we are in haste; the inn is a great way off, and we cannot stay to answer so many questions;" and with that, spurring his mule, he moved forwards. But Don Quixote, highly dissatisfied with the reply, laid hold on the mule's bridle and stopped him: "Stay," cried he, "proud discourteous knight! Mend your behaviour, and give me instantly an account of what I asked of you, or here I defy you all to mortal combat."—Now the mule, that was shy and skittish, being thus rudely seized by the bridle, was presently scared, and, rising up on her hinder legs, threw her rider to

the ground. Upon this one of the footmen that belonged to the company gave Don Quixote ill language, which so incensed him that, being resolved to be revenged upon them all, in a mighty rage he flew at the next he met, who happened to be one of the mourners. Him he threw to the ground very much hurt; and then turning to the rest with a wonderful agility, he fell upon them with such fury, that he presently put them all to flight. You would have thought Rozinante had wings at that time, so active and so fierce he then approved himself.

It was not indeed for men unarmed, and naturally fearful, to maintain the field against such an enemy; no wonder then if the gentlemen in white were immediately dispersed. Some ran one way, some another, crossing the plain with their lighted torches: you would now have taken them for a parcel of frolicsome masqueraders, gambling and scouring on a carnival night. As for the mourners, they, poor men, were so muffled up in their long cumbersome cloaks, that, not being able to make their party good, nor defend themselves, they were presently routed, and ran away like the rest, the rather, for that they thought it was no mortal creature, but the devil himself, that was come to fetch away the dead body which they

were accompanying to the grave. All the while Sancho was lost in admiration and astonishment, charmed with the sight of his master's valour; and now concluded him to be the formidable champion he boasted himself.

After this the knight, by the light of a torch that lay burning upon the ground, perceiving the man who was thrown by his mule lying near it, he rode up to him, and, setting his lance to his throat, "Yield," cried he, "and beg thy life, or thou diest."—"Alas, sir," cried the other, "what need you ask me to yield? I am not able to stir, for one of my legs is broken; and I beseech you, if you are a Christian, do not kill me. I am a master of arts, and in holy orders; it would be a heinous sacrilege to take away my life."—"What a devil brought you hither then, if you are a clergyman?" cried Don Quixote.—"What else but my ill fortune?" replied the supplicant.—"A worse hovers over thy head," cried Don Quixote, "and threatens thee, if thou dost not answer this moment to every particular question I ask."—"I will, I will, sir," replied the other; "and first I must beg your pardon for saying I was a master of arts, for I have yet but taken my bachelor's degree. My name is Alonzo Lopez: I am of Alcovendas, and came now from the town of

Baęa, with eleven other clergymen, the same that now ran away with the torches. We were going to Segovia to bury the corpse of a gentleman of that town, who died at Baęa, and lies now in yonder hearse."—"And who killed him?" asked Don Quixote.—"Heaven, with a pestilential fever," answered the other.—"If it be so," said Don Quixote, "I am discharged of revenging his death. Since heaven did it, there is no more to be said; had it been its pleasure to have taken me off so, I too must have submitted. I would have you informed, reverend sir, that I am a knight of La Mancha, my name Don Quixote; my employment is to visit all parts of the world in quest of adventures, to right and relieve injured innocence, and punish oppression."—"Truly, sir," replied the clergyman, "I do not understand how you can call that to right and relieve men, when you break their legs: you have made that crooked which was right and straight before; and heaven knows whether it can ever be set right as long as I live. Instead of relieving the injured, I fear you have injured me past relief; and while you seek adventures, you have made me meet with a very great misadventure."*—

* The author's making the bachelor quibble so much, under such improper circumstances, was designed as a ridicule upon the younger students of the universities, who are apt to indulge in this species of wit.

“All things,” replied Don Quixote, “are not blessed alike with a prosperous event, good Mr. Bachelor: you should have taken care not to have thus gone a processioning in these desolate plains at this suspicious time of night, with your white surplices, burning torches, and sable weeds, like ghosts and goblins, that went about to scare people out of their wits: for I could not omit doing the duty of my profession, nor would I have forborne attacking you, though you had really been all Lucifer’s infernal crew; for such I took you to be, and till this moment could have no better opinion of you.”—

“Well, sir,” said the bachelor, “since my bad fortune has so ordered it, I must desire you, as you are a knight-errant, who have made mine so ill an errand, to help me to get from under my mule, for it lies so heavy upon me, that I cannot get my foot out of the stirrup.”—“Why did not you acquaint me sooner with your grievance?” cried Don Quixote; “I might have talked on till tomorrow morning and never have thought on it.”—With that he called Sancho, who made no great haste, for he was much better employed in rifling a load of choice provisions, which the holy men carried along with them on a sumpter-mule. He had spread his coat

on the ground, and having laid on it as much food as it would hold, he wrapped it up like a bag, and laid the booty on his ass; and then away he ran to his master, and helped him to set the bachelor upon his mule: after which he gave him his torch, and Don Quixote bade him follow his company, and excuse him for his mistake, though, all things considered, he could not avoid doing what he had done.—“And, sir,” quoth Sancho, “if the gentlemen would know who it was that so well threshed their jackets, you may tell them it was the famous Don Quixote de la Mancha, otherwise called the Knight of the Woeful Figure.”

When the bachelor was gone, Don Quixote asked Sancho why he called him the Knight of the Woeful Figure?—“I’ll tell you why,” quoth Sancho; “I have been staring upon you this pretty while by the light of that unlucky priest’s torch, and may I never stir if ever I set eyes on a more dismal figure in my born-days; and I can’t tell what should be the cause on’t, unless your being tired after this fray, or the want of your worship’s teeth.”—“That is not the reason,” cried Don Quixote; “no, Sancho, I rather conjecture, that the sage who is commissioned by fate to register my achievements, thought it convenient I should assume

a new appellation, as all the knights of yore; for one was called the Knight of the Burning Sword, another of the Unicorn, a third of the Phoenix, a fourth the Knight of the Damsels, another of the Griffin, and another the Knight of Death; by which by-names and distinctions they were known all over the globe. Therefore, doubtless, that learned sage, my historian, has inspired thee with the thought of giving me that additional appellation of the Knight of the Woeful Figure:¹ and accordingly I assume the name, and intend henceforward to be distinguished by that denomination. And, that it may seem the more proper, I will with the first opportunity have a most woeful face painted on my shield."—"On my word," quoth Sancho, "you may even save the money, and instead of having a woeful face painted, you need no more but only shew your own. I am but in jest, as a body may say; but what with the want of your teeth, and what with hunger, you look so queerly and so woefully, that no painter can draw you a figure so fit for your purpose as your worship's."—This merry conceit of Sancho extorted a smile from his master's austere countenance: however, he persisted in his resolution about the name and

¹ See Appendix, Note 1, Book III., Chapter V.

the picture; and after a pause, a sudden thought disturbing his conscience, "Sancho," cried he, "I am afraid of being excommunicated for having laid violent hands upon a man in holy orders, *Juxta illud; si quis suadente diabolo, &c.* But yet, now I think better on it, I never touched him with my hands, but only with my lance; besides, I did not in the least suspect I had to do with priests, whom I honour and revere as every good Catholic and faithful Christian ought to do, but rather took them to be evil spirits. Well, let the worst come to the worst, I remember what befel the Cid Ruy-Dias, when he broke to pieces the chair of a king's ambassador in the pope's presence, for which he was excommunicated;¹ which did not hinder the worthy Rodrigo de Vivar from behaving himself that day like a valorous knight, and a man of honour."

This said, Don Quixote was for visiting the hearse, to see whether what was in it were only dead bones: but Sancho would not let him; "Sir," quoth he, "you are come off now with a whole skin, and much better than you have done hitherto. Who knows but these same fellows that are now scampered off, may chance to bethink themselves what a shame it is for

¹ See Appendix, Note 2, Book III., Chapter V.

them to have suffered themselves to be thus routed by a single man, and so come back, and fall upon us all at once? Then we shall have work enough upon our hands. The ass is in good case; there's a hill not far off, and our bellies cry cup-board. Come, let us even get out of harm's-way, and not let the plough stand to catch a mouse, as the saying is; to the grave with the dead, and the living to the bread." With that he put on a dog-trot with his ass; and his master, bethinking himself that he was in the right, put on after him without replying.

After they had rid a little way, they came to a valley that lay skulking between two hills. There they alighted, and Sancho having opened his coat and spread it on the grass, with the provision which he had bundled up in it, our two adventurers fell to; and their stomachs being sharpened with the sauce of hunger, they eat their breakfast, dinner, afternoon's luncheon, and supper, all at the same time, feasting themselves with variety of cold meats, which you may be sure were the best that could be got; the priests who had brought it for their own eating, being like the rest of their coat, none of the worst stewards for their bellies, and knowing how to make much of themselves.

But now they began to grow sensible of a very great misfortune, and such a misfortune as was bemoaned by poor Sancho, as one of the saddest that ever could befall him; for they found they had not one drop of wine or water to wash down their meat or quench their thirst, which now scorched and choked them worse than hunger had pinched them before. However, Sancho, considering they were in a place where the grass was fresh and green, said to his master—what you shall find in the following chapter.