

CHAPTER IX

WHAT BEFEL THE RENOWNED DON QUIXOTE IN THE SIERRA MORENA (BLACK MOUNTAIN) BEING ONE OF THE RAREST ADVENTURES IN THIS AUTHENTIC HISTORY

DON QUIXOTE, finding himself so ill treated, said to his squire; "Sancho, I have always heard it said, that to do a kindness to clowns, is like throwing water into the sea.* Had I given ear to thy advice, I had prevented this misfortune; but since the thing is done it is needless to repine; this shall be a warning to me for the future."—"That is," quoth Sancho, "when the devil is blind: but since you say, you had escaped this mischief had you believed me, good sir, believe me now, and you will escape a greater; for I must tell you, that those of the holy brotherhood do not stand in awe of your chivalry, nor do they care a straw for all the knights-errant in the world. Methinks I already hear their arrows whizzing about my ears." †—"Thou art naturally a coward.

* It is labour lost, because they are ungrateful.

† The troopers of the holy brotherhood used cross-bows.

Sancho," cried Don Quixote; "nevertheless, that thou mayest not say I am obstinate, and never follow thy advice, I will take thy counsel, and for once convey myself out of the reach of this dreadful brotherhood, that so strangely alarms thee; but upon this condition, that thou never tell any mortal creature, neither while I live, nor after my death, that I withdrew myself from this danger through fear, but merely to comply with thy entreaties: for if thou ever presume to say otherwise, thou wilt belie me; and from this time to that time, and from that time to the world's end, I give thee the lie, and thou liest, and shalt lie in thy throat, as often as thou sayest, or but thinkest to the contrary. Therefore do not offer to reply; for shouldst thou but surmise, that I would avoid any danger, and especially this which seems to give some occasion or colour for fear, I would certainly stay here, though unattended and alone, and expect and face not only the holy brotherhood, which thou dreatest so much, but also the fraternity or twelve heads of the tribes of Israel, the seven Maccabees, Castor and Pollux, and all the brothers and brotherhoods in the universe."—"An't please your worship," quoth Sancho, "to withdraw is not to run away, and to stay is no wise

action, when there is more reason to fear than to hope; it is the part of a wise man to keep himself to-day for to-morrow, and not venture all his eggs in one basket. And for all I am but a clown or a bumpkin, as you may say, yet I would have you to know I know what's what, and have always taken care of the main chance; therefore do not be ashamed of being ruled by me, but even get on horseback an you are able: come, I will help you, and then follow me; for my mind plaguily misgives me, that now one pair of heels will stand us in more stead than two pair of hands."

Don Quixote, without any reply, made shift to mount Rozinante, and Sancho on his ass led the way to the neighbouring mountainous desert called Sierra Morena,* which the crafty squire had a design to cross over, and get out at the farthest end, either at Viso, or Almadovar del Campo, and in the mean time to lurk in the craggy and almost inaccessible retreats of that vast mountain, for fear of falling into the hands of the holy brotherhood. He was the more eager to steer this course, finding that the

* Sierra, though Spanish for a mountain, properly means (not a chain, but) a saw, from the Latin Serra, because of its ridges rising and falling like the teeth of a saw. This mountain (called Morena from its Moorish or swarthy colour) parts the kingdom of Castile from the province of Andalusia.

provision which he had laid on his ass had escaped plundering, which was a kind of miracle, considering how narrowly the galley-slaves had searched everywhere for booty. It was night before our two travellers got to the middle and most desert part of the mountain; where Sancho advised his master to stay some days, at least as long as their provisions lasted; and accordingly that night they took up their lodging between two rocks, among a great number of cork-trees: but fortune, which, according to the opinion of those that have not the light of true faith, guides, appoints, and contrives all things as it pleases, directed Gines de Passamonte (that master-rogue, who, thanks be to Don Quixote's force and folly, had been put in a condition to do him a mischief) to this very part of the mountain, in order to hide himself till the heat of the pursuit, which he had just cause to fear, were over. He discovered our adventurers much about the time that they fell asleep; and as wicked men are always ungrateful, and urgent necessity prompts many to do things, at the very thoughts of which they perhaps would start at other times, Gines, who was a stranger both to gratitude and humanity, resolved to ride away with Sancho's ass; for as for Rozinante, he looked

upon him as a thing that would neither sell nor pawn: so while poor Sancho lay snoring, he spirited away his darling beast, and made such haste, that before day he thought himself and his prize secure from the unhappy owner's pursuit.

Now Aurora with her smiling face returned to enliven and cheer the earth, but alas! to grieve and affright Sancho with a dismal discovery: for he had no sooner opened his eyes, but he missed his ass; and finding himself deprived of that dear partner of his fortunes, and best comfort in his peregrinations, he broke out into the most pitiful and sad lamentations in the world; insomuch that he waked Don Quixote with his moans. "O dear child of my bowels," cried he, "born and bred under my roof, my children's play-fellow, the comfort of my wife, the envy of my neighbours, the ease of my burthens, the staff of my life, and in a word, half my maintenance; for with six and twenty maravedis, which were daily earned by thee, I made shift to keep half my family." Don Quixote, who easily guessed the cause of these complaints, strove to comfort him with kind condoling words, and learned discourses upon the uncertainty of human happiness; but nothing proved so effectual to assuage his

sorrow, as the promise which his master made him of drawing a bill of exchange on his niece for three asses out of five which he had at home, payable to Sancho Pança, or his order; which prevailing argument soon dried up his tears, hushed his sighs and moans, and turned his complaints into thanks to his generous master for so unexpected a favour.

And now, as they wandered further in these mountains, Don Quixote was transported with joy to find himself where he might flatter his ambition with the hopes of fresh adventures to signalize his valour; for these vast deserts made him call to mind the wonderful exploits of other knights-errant, performed in such solitudes. Filled with those airy notions, he thought on nothing else: but Sancho was for more substantial food; and now, thinking himself quite out of the reach of the holy brotherhood, his only care was to fill his belly with the relics of the clerical booty; and thus sitting sideling, as women do, upon his beast, he slyly took out now one piece of meat, then another, and kept his grinders going faster than his feet. Thus plodding on, he would not have given a rush to have met with any other adventure.

While he was thus employed, he observed, that his master endeavoured to take up some-

thing that lay on the ground with the end of his lance: this made him run to help him to lift up the bundle, which proved to be a portmanteau, and the seat of a saddle, that were half, or rather quite rotted with lying exposed to the weather. The portmanteau was somewhat heavy, and Don Quixote having ordered Sancho to see what it contained, though it was shut with a chain and a padlock, he easily saw what was in it through the crack, and pulled out four fine holland shirts, and other clean and fashionable linen, besides a considerable quantity of gold tied up in a handkerchief. "Bless my eye-sight," quoth Sancho; "and now, heaven, I thank thee for sending us such a lucky adventure once in our lives;" with that, groping further in the portmanteau, he found a table-book richly bound. "Give me that," said Don Quixote, "and do thou keep the gold."—"Heaven reward your worship," quoth Sancho, kissing his master's hand, and at the same time clapping up the linen and the other things into the bag where he kept the victuals. "I fancy," said Don Quixote, "that some person, having lost his way in these mountains, has been met by robbers, who have murdered him, and buried his body somewhere hereabouts."—"Sure your worship's mistaken,"

answered Sancho, "for, had they been highway-men, they would never have left such a booty behind them."—"Thou art in the right," replied Don Quixote; "and therefore I cannot imagine what it must be. But stay, I will examine the table-book, perhaps we shall find something written in that, which will help us to discover what I would know." With that he opened it, and the first thing he found was the following rough draught of a sonnet, fairly enough written to be read with ease; so he read it aloud, that Sancho might know what was in it as well as himself:

THE RESOLVE.

A SONNET.

Love is a god ne'er knows our pain,
Or cruelty's his darling attribute;
Else he'd ne'er force me to complain,
And to his spite my raging pain impute.

But sure if Love's a god, he must
Have knowledge equal to his power;
And 'tis a crime to think a god unjust:
Whence then the pains that now my heart devour?

From Phyllis? No: why do I pause?
Such cruel ills ne'er boast so sweet a cause;
Nor from the gods such torments we do bear.
Let death then quickly be my cure:
When thus we ills unknown endure,
'Tis shortest to despair.

"The devil of any thing can be picked out of this," quoth Sancho, "unless you can tell

who that same Phyll is.”—“I did not read Phyll, but Phyllis,” said Don Quixote.—“O then, mayhap, the man has lost his filly-foal.”—“Phyllis,” said Don Quixote, “is the name of a lady that is beloved by the author of this sonnet, who truly seems to be a tolerable poet,* or I have but little judgment.”—“Why then,” quoth Sancho, “belike your worship understands how to make verses too?”—“That I do,” answered Don Quixote, “and better than thou imaginest; as thou shalt see when I shall give thee a letter written all in verse to carry to my Lady Dulcinea del Toboso: for, I must tell thee, friend Sancho, all the knights-errant, or at least the greatest part of them, in former times, were great poets, and as great musicians; those qualifications, or, to speak better, those two gifts, or accomplishments, being almost inseparable from amorous adventures: though I must confess the verses of the knights in former ages are not altogether so polite, nor so adorned with words, as with thoughts and inventions.”

“Good sir,” quoth Sancho, “look again into the pocket-book, mayhap you will find somewhat that will inform you of what you would know.” With that Don Quixote turning over

* Cervantes himself.

the leaf, “Here’s some prose,” cried he, “and I think it is the sketch of a love-letter.”—“O! good your worship,” quoth Sancho, “read it out by all means, for I delight mightily in hearing of love stories.”

Don Quixote read it aloud, and found what follows:

“The falsehood of your promises, and my despair, hurry me from you forever; and you shall sooner hear the news of my death, than the cause of my complaints. You have forsaken me, ungrateful fair, for one more wealthy indeed, but not more deserving than your abandoned slave. Were virtue esteemed a treasure equal to its worth by your unthinking sex, I must presume to say, I should have no reason to envy the wealth of others, and no misfortune to bewail. What your beauty has raised, your actions have destroyed; the first made me mistake you for an angel, but the last convince me you are a very woman. However, O! too lovely disturber of my peace, may uninterrupted rest and downy ease engross your happy hours; and may forgiving heaven still keep your husband’s perfidiousness concealed, lest it should cost your repenting heart a sigh for the injustice you have done to