

## CHAPTER X

## THE ADVENTURE IN THE SIERRA-MORENA CONTINUED

THE history relates, that Don Quixote listened with great attention to the disastrous Knight of the Mountain, who made him the following compliment. "Truly, sir, whoever you be, (for I have not the honour to know you,) I am much obliged to you for your expressions of civility and friendship; and I could wish I were in a condition to convince you otherwise than by words of the deep sense I have of them: but my bad fortune leaves me nothing to return for so many favours, but unprofitable wishes."—"Sir," answered Don Quixote, "I have so hearty a desire to serve you, that I was fully resolved not to depart these mountains till I had found you out, that I might know from yourself, whether the discontents that have urged you to make choice of this unusual course of life, might not admit of a remedy; for if they do, assure yourself I will leave no means untried, till I have purchased you that ease which I heartily wish

you: or if your disasters are of that fatal kind that exclude you for ever from the hopes of comfort or relief, then will I mingle sorrows with you and, by sharing your load of grief, help you to bear the oppressing weight of affliction; for it is the only comfort of the miserable to have partners in their woes. If, then, good intentions may plead merit, or a grateful requital, let me entreat you, sir, by that generous nature that shoots through the gloom with which adversity has clouded your graceful outside; nay, let me conjure you by the darling object of your wishes, to let me know who you are, and what strange misfortunes have urged you to withdraw from the converse of your fellow-creatures, to bury yourself alive in this horrid solitude, where you linger out a wretched being, a stranger to ease, to all mankind, and even to your very self. And I solemnly swear," added Don Quixote, "by the order of knighthood, of which I am an unworthy professor, that if you so far gratify my desires, I will assist you to the utmost of my capacity, either by remedying your disaster, if it is not past redress; or, at least, I will become your partner in sorrow, and strive to ease it by a society in sadness."

The Knight of the Wood, hearing the



Knight of the Woeful Figure talk at that rate, looked upon him stedfastly for a long time, and viewed, and reviewed him from head to foot; and when he had gazed a great while upon him, "Sir," cried he, "if you have anything to eat, for heaven's sake give it me, and when my hunger is abated, I shall be better able to comply with your desires, which your great civilities and undeserved offers oblige me to satisfy." Sancho and the goat-herd, hearing this, presently took out some victuals, the one out of his bag, the other out of his scrip, and gave it to the ragged knight to allay his hunger, who immediately fell on with that greedy haste, that he seemed rather to devour than feed; for he used no intermission between bit and bit, so greedily he chopped them up; and all the time he was eating, neither he, nor the bystanders, spoke the least word. When he had assuaged his voracious appetite, he beckoned to Don Quixote and the rest to follow him; and after he had brought them to a neighbouring meadow, he laid himself at his ease on the grass, where the rest of the company sitting down by him, neither he nor they having yet spoke a word since he fell to eating, he began in this manner:

"Gentlemen," said he, "if you intend to be

informed of my misfortunes, you must promise me beforehand not to cut off the thread of my doleful narration with any questions, or any other interruption; for in the very instant that any of you does it, I shall leave off abruptly, and will not afterwards go on with the story." This preamble put Don Quixote in mind of Sancho's ridiculous tale, which by his neglect in not telling the goats, was brought to an untimely conclusion. "I only use this precaution," added the ragged knight, "because I would be quick in my relation; for the very remembrance of my former misfortune proves a new one to me, and yet I promise you, will endeavour to omit nothing that is material, that you may have as full an account of my disasters as I am sensible you desire." Thereupon Don Quixote, for himself and the rest, having promised him uninterrupted attention, he proceeded in this manner:

"My name is Cardenio, the place of my birth one of the best cities in Andalusia; my descent noble, my parents wealthy, but my misfortunes are so great, that they have doubtless filled my relations with the deepest of sorrows; nor are they to be remedied with wealth, for goods of fortune avail but little against the anger of heaven. In the same town dwelt the



charming Lucinda, the most beautiful creature that ever nature framed, equal in descent and fortune to myself, but more happy and less constant. I loved, nay adored her almost from her infancy; and from her tender years she blessed me with as kind a return as is suitable with the innocent freedom of that age. Our parents were conscious of that early friendship; nor did they oppose the growth of this inoffensive passion, which they perceived could have no other consequences than a happy union of our families by marriage; a thing which the equality of our births and fortunes did indeed of itself almost invite us to. Afterwards our loves so grew up with our years, that Lucinda's father, either judging our usual familiarity prejudicial to his daughter's honour, or for some other reasons, sent to desire me to discontinue my frequent visits to his house: but this restraint proved but like that which was used by the parents of that loving Thisbe, so celebrated by the poets, and but added flames to flames, and impatience to desires. As our tongues were now debarred their former privilege, we had recourse to our pens, which assumed the greater freedom to disclose the most hidden secrets of our hearts; for the presence of the beloved object

offens heightens a certain awe and bashfulness, that disorders, confounds, and strikes dumb, even the most passionate lover. How many letters have I wrote to that lovely charmer! how many soft moving verses have I addressed to her! what kind, yet honourable returns have I received from her! the mutual pledges of our secret love, and the innocent consolations of a violent passion. At length, languishing and wasting with desire, deprived of that reviving comfort of my soul, I resolved to remove those bars with which her father's care and decent caution obstructed my only happiness, by demanding her of him in marriage: he very civilly told me, that he thanked me for the honour I did him, but that I had a father alive, whose consent was to be obtained as well as his, and who was the most proper person to make such a proposal. I thanked him for his civil answer, and thought it carried some shew of reason, not doubting but my father would readily consent to the proposal. I therefore immediately went to wait on him, with a design to beg his approbation and assistance. I found him in his chamber with a letter opened before him, which, as soon as he saw me, he put into my hand, before I could have time to acquaint him with my business.



—'Cardenio,' said he, 'you will see by this letter the extraordinary kindness that Duke Richardo has for you.' I suppose I need not tell you, gentlemen, that this Duke Richardo is a grandee of Spain, most of whose estate lies in the best part of Andalusia. I read the letter, and found it contained so kind and advantageous an offer, that my father could not but accept of it with thankfulness; for the duke entreated him to send me to him with all speed, that I might be the companion of his eldest son, promising withal to advance me to a post answerable to the good opinion he had of me.

"This unexpected news struck me dumb; but my surprise and disappointment were much greater, when I heard my father say to me, 'Cardenio, you must get ready to be gone in two days: in the mean time give heaven thanks for opening you a way to that preferment which I am so sensible you deserve.' After this he gave me several wise admonitions both as a father and a man of business, and then he left me. The day fixed for my journey quickly came; however, the night that preceded it, I spoke to Lucinda at her window, and told her what had happened. I also gave her father a visit, and informed him of it too,

beseeching him to preserve his good opinion of me, and defer the bestowing of his daughter till I had been with Duke Ricardo, which he kindly promised me: and then, Lucinda and I, after an exchange of vows and protestations of eternal fidelity, took our leaves of each other with all the grief which two tender and passionate lovers can feel at a separation.

"I left the town, and went to wait upon the duke, who received and entertained me with that extraordinary kindness and civility that soon raised the envy of his greatest favourites. But he that most endearingly caressed me, was Don Ferdinand, the duke's second son, a young, airy, handsome, generous gentleman, and of a very amorous disposition; he seemed to be overjoyed at my coming, and in a most obliging manner told me, he would have me one of his most intimate friends. In short, he so really convinced me of his affection, that though his elder brother gave me many testimonies of love and esteem, yet could I easily distinguish between their favours. Now, as it is common for bosom friends to keep nothing secret from each other, Don Ferdinand, relying as much on my fidelity, as I had reason to depend on his, revealed to me his most private thoughts; and among the rest,