

his being in love with the daughter of a very rich farmer, who was his father's vassal. The beauty of that lovely country maid, her virtue, her discretion, and the other graces of her mind, gained her the admiration of all those who approached her: and those uncommon endowments had so charmed the soul of Don Ferdinand, that, finding it absolutely impossible to corrupt her chastity, since she would not yield to his embraces as a mistress, he resolved to marry her. I thought myself obliged by all the ties of gratitude and friendship, to dissuade him from so unsuitable a match; and therefore I made use of such arguments as might have diverted any one but so confirmed a lover from such an unequal choice. At last, finding them all ineffectual, I resolved to inform the duke his father with his intentions: but Don Ferdinand was too clear-sighted not to read my design in my great dislike of his resolutions, and dreading such a discovery, which he knew my duty to his father might well warrant, in spite of our intimacy, since I looked upon such a marriage as highly prejudicial to them both, he made it his business to hinder me from betraying his passion to his father, assuring me, there would be no need to reveal it to him. To blind me

the more effectually, he told me he was willing to try the power of absence, that common cure of love, thereby to wear out and lose his unhappy passion; and that in order to this, he would take a journey with me to my father's house, pretending to buy horses in our town, where the best in the world are bred. No sooner had I heard this plausible proposal but I approved it, swayed by the interest of my own love, that made me fond of an opportunity to see my absent Lucinda.

"I have heard since, that Don Ferdinand had already been blessed by his mistress, with all the liberty of boundless love, upon a promise of marriage, and that he only waited an opportunity to discover it with safety, being afraid of incurring his father's indignation. But as what we call love in young men, is too often only an irregular passion, and boiling desire, that has no other object than sensual pleasure, and vanishes with enjoyment, while real love, fixing itself on the perfections of the mind, is still improving and permanent; as soon as Don Ferdinand had accomplished his lawless desires, his strong affection slackened, and his hot love grew cold; so that if at first his proposing to try the power of absence was only a pretence, that he might get rid of his

passion, there was nothing now which he more heartily coveted, that he might thereby avoid fulfilling his promise. And therefore having obtained the duke's leave, away we posted to my father's house, where Don Ferdinand was entertained according to his quality; and I went to visit my Lucinda, who, by a thousand innocent endearments, made me sensible, that her love like mine, was rather heightened than weakened by absence, if any thing could heighten a love so great and so perfect. I then thought myself obliged by the laws of friendship, not to conceal the secrets of my heart from so kind and intimate a friend, who had so generously entrusted me with his; and therefore, to my eternal ruin, I unhappily discovered to him my passion. I praised Lucinda's beauty, her wit, her virtue, and praised them so like a lover, so often, and so highly, that I raised in him a great desire to see so accomplished a lady; and, to gratify his curiosity, I shewed her to him by the help of a light, one evening, at a low window, where we used to have our amorous interviews. She proved but too charming, and too strong a temptation to Don Ferdinand; and her prevailing image made so deep an impression on his soul, that it was sufficient to blot out of his mind all those beauties that had

till then employed his wanton thoughts. He was struck dumb with wonder and delight, at the sight of the ravishing apparition; and, in short, to see her, and to love her, proved with him the same thing: and when I say to love her, I need not add to desperation, for there is no loving her but to an extreme. If her face made him so soon take fire, her wit quickly set him all in a flame. He often importuned me to communicate to him some of her letters, which I indeed would never expose to any eyes but my own; but unhappily one day he found one, wherein she desired me to demand her of her father, and to hasten the marriage. It was penned with that tenderness and discretion, that, when he had read it, he presently cried out, that the amorous charms which were scattered and divided among other beauties, were all divinely centered in Lucinda, and in Lucinda alone. Shall I confess a shameful truth? Lucinda's praises, though never so deserved, did not sound pleasantly to my ears out of Don Ferdinand's mouth. I began to entertain I know not what distrusts and jealous fears, the rather, because he would be still improving the least opportunity of talking of her, and insensibly turning the discourse he held of other matters, to make her the subject, though

never so far-fetched, of our constant talk. Not that I was apprehensive of the least infidelity from Lucinda: far from it; she gave me daily fresh assurances of her inviolable affection; but I feared every thing from my malignant stars, and lovers are commonly industrious to make themselves uneasy.

“It happened one day that Lucinda, who took great delight in reading books of knight-errantry, desired me to lend her the romance of Amadis de Gaul”——

Scarce had Cardenio mentioned knight-errantry, when Don Quixote interrupted him: “Sir,” said he, “had you but told me, when you first mentioned the Lady Lucinda, that she was an admirer of books of knight-errantry, there had been no need of using any amplification to convince me of her being a person of uncommon sense; yet, sir, had she not used those mighty helps, those infallible guides to sense, though indulgent nature had strove to bless her with the richest gifts she can bestow, I might justly enough have doubted whether her perfections could have gained her the love of a person of your merit; but now you need not employ your eloquence to set forth the greatness of her beauty, the excellence of her worth, or the depth of her sense, for, from this

account which I have of her taking great delight in reading books of chivalry, I dare pronounce her to be the most beautiful, nay, the most accomplished lady in the universe; and I heartily could have wished, that with Amadis de Gaul, you had sent her the worthy Don Rugel of Greece; for I am certain the Lady Lucinda would have been extremely delighted with Daryda and Garraya, as also with the discreet shepherd Darinel, and those admirable verses of his bucolics, which he sung and repeated with so good a grace. But a time may yet be found to give her the satisfaction of reading those master-pieces, if you will do me the honour to come to my house, for there I may supply you with above three hundred volumes, which are my soul's greatest delight, and the darling comfort of my life; though now I remember myself, I have just reason to fear there is not one of them left in my study, thanks to the malicious envy of wicked enchanters. I beg your pardon for giving you this interruption, contrary to my promise; but when I hear the least mention made of knight-errantry, it is no more in my power to forbear speaking than it is in the sunbeams not to warm, or in those of the moon not to impart her natural humidity; and therefore, sir, I beseech you to go on.”

While Don Quixote was running on with this impertinent digression, Cardenio hung down his head on his breast with all the signs of a man lost in sorrow; nor could Don Quixote, with repeated entreaties, persuade him to look up, or answer a word. At last, after he had stood thus a considerable while, he raised his head, and, suddenly breaking silence, "I am positively convinced," cried he, "nor shall any man in the world ever persuade me to the contrary; and he's a blockhead who says that great villain, Master Elisabat,* never lay with Queen Madasima."

"It is false!" cried Don Quixote, in a mighty heat; "by all the powers above, it is all scandal and base detraction to say this of Queen Madasima! She was a most noble and virtuous lady; nor is it to be presumed that so great a princess would ever debase herself so far as to fall in love with a quack. Whoever dares to say she did, lies like an arrant villain; and I'll make him acknowledge it either a-foot or a-horseback, armed, or unarmed, by night or by day, or how he pleases."

Cardenio very earnestly fixed his eyes on

* Elisabat is a skillful surgeon in Amadis de Gaul, who performs wonderful cures; and Queen Madasima is wife to Gantasis, and makes a great figure in the aforesaid romance. They travel and lie together in woods and deserts, without any imputation on her honour.

Don Quixote, while he was thus defying him, and taking Queen Madasima's part, as if she had been his true and lawful princess; and being provoked by these abuses into one of his mad fits, he took up a great stone that lay by him, and hit Don Quixote such a blow on his breast with it, that it beat him down backwards. Sancho, seeing his lord and master so roughly handled, fell upon the mad knight with his clenched fists; but he beat him off at the first onset, and laid him at his feet with a single blow, and then fell a trampling on his guts, like a baker in a dough-trough. Nay, the goat-herd, who was offering to take Sancho's part, had like to have been served in the same manner. So the Ragged Knight, having tumbled them one over another, and beaten them handsomely, left them, and ran into the wood without the least opposition.

Sancho got up when he saw him gone; and being very much out of humour to find himself so roughly handled without any manner of reason, began to pick a quarrel with the goat-herd, railing at him for not fore-warning them of the Ragged Knight's mad fits, that they might have stood upon their guard. The goat-herd answered, he had given them warning at first, and if he could not hear it was no

fault of his. To this Sancho replied, and the goat-herd made a rejoinder, till from *Pros* and *Cons* they fell to a warmer way of disputing, and went to fisty-cuffs together, catching one another by the beards, and tugging, hauling, and belabouring one another so unmercifully, that, had not Don Quixote parted them, they would have pulled one another's chins off. Sancho, in great wrath, still keeping his hold, cried to his master, "Let me alone, Sir Knight of the Woeful Figure: this is no dubbed knight, but an ordinary fellow like myself; I may be revenged on him for the wrong he has done me; let me box it out, and fight him fairly hand to fist like a man."—"Thou mayest fight him as he is thy equal," answered Don Quixote; "but thou oughtest not to do it, since he has done us no wrong."—After this he pacified them, and then addressing himself to the goat-herd, he asked him whether it was possible to find out Cardenio again, that he might hear the end of his story? The goat-herd answered, that, as he already told him, he knew of no settled place he used, but that if they made any stay thereabouts, he might be sure to meet with him, mad or sober, some time or other.

CHAPTER XI

OF THE STRANGE THINGS THAT HAPPENED TO THE VALIANT KNIGHT OF LA MANCHA IN THE BLACK MOUNTAIN; AND OF THE PENANCE HE DID THERE, IN IMITATION OF BELTENEBROS, OR THE LOVELY OBSCURE.

DON QUIXOTE took leave of the goat-herd, and having mounted Rozinante, commanded Sancho to follow him, which he did, but with no very good will, his master leading him into the roughest and most craggy part of the mountain. Thus they travelled for a while without speaking a word to each other. Sancho, almost dead, and ready to burst for want of a little chat, waited with great impatience till his master should begin, not daring to speak first, since his strict injunction of silence. But at last, not being able to keep his word any longer, "Good your worship," quoth he, "give me your blessing and leave to be gone, I beseech you, that I may go home to my wife and children, where I may talk till I am weary, and nobody can hinder me; for I must needs