

CHAPTER III

THE PLEASANT STRATAGEMS USED TO FREE THE EN-
AMOURED KNIGHT FROM THE RIGOROUS PENANCE
WHICH HE HAD UNDERTAKEN

SCARCE had the curate made an end, when Sancho addressing himself to him, "Faith and truth," quoth he, "Master Curate, he that did that rare job was my master his nown self, and that not for want of fair warning; for I bid him have a care what he did, and told him over and over, it would be a grievous sin to put such a gang of wicked wretches out of durance, and that they all went to the galleys for their roguery."—"You buffle-headed clown," cried Don Quixote, "is it for a knight-errant, when he meets with people laden with chains, and under oppression, to examine whether they are in those circumstances for their crimes, or only through misfortune? We are only to relieve the afflicted, to look on their distress, and not on their crimes. I met a company of poor wretches, who went along

sorrowful, dejected, and linked together like the beads of a rosary; thereupon I did what my conscience and my profession obliged me to. And what has any man to say to this? If any one dares say otherwise, saving this reverend clergyman's presence and the holy character he bears, I say, he knows little of knight-errantry, and lies like a son of a whore, and a base-born villain; and this I will make him know more effectually, with the convincing edge of my sword!" This said with a grim look, he fixed himself in his stirrups, and pulled his helm over his brows; for the basin, which he took to be Mambrino's helmet, hung at his saddle-bow, in order to have the damage repaired which it had received from the galley-slaves. Thereupon Dorothea, by this time well acquainted with his temper, seeing him in such a passion, and that everybody, except Sancho Panza, made a jest of him, resolved with her native sprightliness and address, to carry on the humour.—"I beseech you, sir," cried she, "remember the promise you have made me, and that you cannot engage in any adventure whatsoever, till you have performed that we are going about. Therefore, pray assuage your anger; for had Master Curate known the galley-slaves were rescued by your

invincible arm, I am sure he would rather have stitched up his lips, or bit off his tongue, than have spoken a word, that should make him incur your displeasure."—"Nay, I assure you," cried the curate, "I would sooner have twitched off one of my mustachoes¹ into the bargain."—"I am satisfied, madam," cried Don Quixote, "and for your sake the flame of my just indignation is quenched; nor will I be induced to engage in any quarrel, till I have fulfilled my promise to your highness. Only, in recompense of my good intentions, I beg you will give us the story of your misfortunes, if this will not be too great a trouble to you; and let me know who and what, and how many are the persons of whom I must have due and full satisfaction on your behalf." "I am very willing to do it," replied Dorothea; "but yet I fear a story like mine, consisting wholly of afflictions and disasters, will prove but a tedious entertainment."—"Never fear that, madam," cried Don Quixote.—"Since then it must be so," said Dorothea, "be pleased to lend me your attention." With that Cardenio and the barber gathered up to her, to hear what kind of story she had provided so soon; Sancho also hung his ears upon her side-

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

saddle, being no less deceived in her than his master; and the lady having seated herself well on her mule, after coughing once or twice, and other preparations, very gracefully began her story.

"First, gentlemen," said she, "you must know my name is"—here she stopped short, and could not call to mind the name the curate had given her; whereupon finding her at a non-plus, he made haste to help her out. "It is not at all strange," said he, "madam, that you should be so discomposed by your disasters, as to stumble at the very beginning of the account you are going to give of them; extreme affliction often distracts the mind to that degree, and so deprives us of memory, that sometimes we for a while can scarce think on our very names: no wonder then, that the Princess Micomicona, lawful heiress to the vast kingdom of Micomicon, disordered with so many misfortunes, and perplexed with so many various thoughts for the recovery of her crown, should have her imagination and memory so encumbered; but I hope you will now recollect yourself, and be able to proceed."—"I hope so too," said the lady, "and I will try to go through with my story, without any further hesitation. Know then, gentlemen, that the

king, my father, who was called Tinacrio the sage, having great skill in the magic art, understood by his profound knowledge in that science, that Queen Xaramilla, my mother, should die before him, that he himself should not survive her long, and I should be left an orphan. But he often said, that this did not so much trouble him, as the foresight he had by his speculations, of my being threatened with great misfortunes, which would be occasioned by a certain giant, lord of a great island near the confines of my kingdom; his name Pandafilando, sirnamed of the Gloomy Sight; because though his eye-balls are seated in their due place, yet he affects to squint and look askew on purpose to fright those on whom he stares. My father, I say, knew that this giant, hearing of his death, would one day invade my kingdom with a powerful army, and drive me out of my territories, without leaving me so much as the least village for a retreat; though he knew withal that I might avoid that extremity, if I would but consent to marry him; but as he found out by his art, he had reason to think I never would incline to such a match. And indeed I never had any thoughts of marrying this giant, nor really any other giant in the world, how immeasurably great and mighty soever he were. My father therefore

charged me patiently to bear my misfortunes, and abandon my kingdom to Pandafilando for a time, without offering to keep him out by force of arms, since this would be the best means to prevent my own death and the ruin of my subjects, considering the impossibility of withstanding the devilish force of the giant. But withal, he ordered me to direct my course towards Spain, where I should be sure to meet with a powerful champion, in the person of a knight-errant, whose fame should at that time be spread over all the kingdom; and his name, my father said, should be, if I forget not, Don Azote, or Don Gigote."—"And it please you, forsooth," quoth Sancho, "you would say Don Quixote, otherwise called the Knight of the Woeful Figure."—"You are right," answered Dorothea, "and my father also described him, and said he should be a tall thin-faced man, and that on his right side, under the left shoulder, or somewhere thereabouts, he should have a tawny mole² overgrown with a tuft of hair, not much unlike that of a horse's mane."—With that Don Quixote calling for his squire to come to him, "Here," said he, "Sancho, help me off with my clothes, for I am resolved to see whether I be the knight of whom the necromantic king has prophesied."—"Pray, sir,

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

why would you pull off your clothes," cried Dorothea?—"To see whether I have such a mole about me as your father mentioned," replied the knight.—"Your worship need not strip to know that," quoth Sancho, "for to my knowledge, you have just such a mark as my lady says, on the small of your back, which betokens you to be a strong-bodied man."—"That's enough," said Dorothea; "friends may believe one another without such a strict examination; and whether it be on the shoulder or on the back-bone, it is not very material. In short, I find my father aimed right in all his predictions, and so do I in recommending myself to Don Quixote, whose stature and appearance so well agree with my father's description, and whose renown is so far spread, not only in Spain, but over all La Mancha, that I had no sooner landed at Ossuna, but the fame of his prowess reached my ears; so that I was satisfied in myself he was the person in quest of whom I came."

"But pray, madam," cried Don Quixote, "how did you do to land at Ossuna, since it is no seaport town?"—"Doubtless, sir," said the curate, before Dorothea could answer for herself, "the princess would say, that after she landed at Malaga, the first place where she heard of

your feats of arms, was Ossuna."—"That is what I would have said," replied Dorothea.—"It is easily understood," said the curate; "then pray let your majesty be pleased to go on with your story."—"I have nothing more to add," answered Dorothea, "but that fortune has at last so far favoured me, as to make me find the noble Don Quixote, by whose valour I look upon myself as already restored to the throne of my ancestors; since he has so courteously and magnanimously vouchsafed to grant me the boon I begged, to go with me wheresoever I should guide him. For all I have to do is, to show him this Pandafilando of the Gloomy Sight, that he may slay him, and restore that to me of which he has so unjustly deprived me. For all this will certainly be done with the greatest ease in the world, since it was foretold by Tinacrio the sage, my good and royal father, who has also left a prediction written either in Chaldean or Greek characters (for I cannot read them) which denotes, that after the knight of the prophecy has cut off the giant's head, and restored me to the possession of my kingdom, if he should ask me to marry him, I should by no means refuse him, but instantly put him in possession of my person and kingdom." "Well, friend Sancho," said Don

Quixote, hearing this, and turning to the squire, "what thinkest thou now? Dost thou not hear how matters go? Did not I tell thee as much before? See now, whether we have not a kingdom which we may command, and a queen whom we may espouse."—"Ah, marry have you," replied Sancho, "and a pox take the son of a whore, I say, that will not wed and bed her majesty's grace as soon as master Pandaflando's wind-pipes are slit. Look what a dainty bit she is! ha! would I never had a worse flea in my bed!" With that, to show his joy, he cut a couple of capers in the air; and turning to Dorothea, laid hold on her mule by the bridle, and flinging himself down on his knees, begged she would be graciously pleased to let him kiss her hand, in token of his owning her for his sovereign lady.

There was none of the beholders but was ready to burst for laughter, having a sight of the master's madness, and the servant's simplicity. In short, Dorothea was obliged to comply with his entreaties, and promised to make him a grandee, when fortune should favour her with the recovery of her lost kingdom. Whereupon Sancho gave her his thanks, in such a manner as obliged the company to a fresh laughter. Then going on with her relation, "Gentlemen,"

said she, "this is my history; and among all my misfortunes, this only has escaped a recital, that not one of the numerous attendants I brought from my kingdom has survived the ruins of my fortune, but this good squire with the long beard: the rest ended their days in a great storm, which dashed our ship to pieces in the very sight of the harbour; and he and I had been sharers in their destiny, had we not laid hold of two planks, by which assistance we were driven to land, in a manner altogether miraculous, and agreeable to the whole series of my life, which seems, indeed, but one continued miracle. And if in any part of my relation I have been tedious, and not so exact as I should have been, you must impute it to what Master Curate observed to you, in the beginning of my story, that continual troubles oppress the senses, and weaken the memory."—"Those pains and afflictions, be they ever so intense and difficult," said Don Quixote, "shall never deter me, most virtuous and high-born lady, from adventuring for your service, and enduring whatever I shall suffer in it: and therefore I again ratify the assurances I have given you, and swear that I will bear you company, though to the end of the world, in search of this implacable enemy of yours, till I shall