

Don Quixote, "Hark ye, you Sir Knight-errant," cried he, "if ever you meet me again in your travels, which I hope you never shall, though I were torn to pieces, do not trouble me with your plaguy help, but mind your own business; and so fare you well, with a curse upon you and all the knights-errant that ever were born." The knight thought to chastise him, but the lad was too nimble for any there, and his heels carried him off, leaving Don Quixote highly incensed at his story, which moved the company to hold their laughter, lest they should raise his anger to a dangerous height.

## CHAPTER V

WHAT BEFEL DON QUIXOTE AND HIS COMPANY AT  
THE INN

WHEN they had eaten plentifully, they left that place, and travelled all that day and the next, without meeting any thing worth notice, till they came to the inn, which was so frightful a sight to poor Sancho, that he would willingly not have gone in, but could by no means avoid it. The inn-keeper, the hostess, her daughter, and Maritornes, met Don Quixote and his squire with a very hearty welcome. The knight received them with a face of gravity and approbation, bidding them prepare him a better bed than their last entertainment afforded him. "Sir," said the hostess, "pay us better than you did then, and you shall have a bed for a prince." And upon the knight's promise that he would, she promised him a tolerable bed, in the large room where he lay before. He presently undressed, and being heartily crazed in body as well as in mind, he went to bed. He was scarcely got to his chamber, when the hostess flew suddenly

at the barber, and, catching him by the beard, "On my life," said she, "you shall use my tail no longer for a beard: Pray, sir, give me my tail; my husband wants it to stick his thing into—his comb I mean, and my tail will I have, sir." The barber held tug with her till the curate advised him to return it, telling him, that he might now undisguise himself, and tell Don Quixote, that after the galley-slaves had pillaged him, he fled to that inn; and if he should ask for the princess's squire, he should pretend that he was despatched to her kingdom before her, to give her subjects an account of her arrival, and of the power she brought to free them all from slavery. The barber, thus schooled, gave the hostess her tail, with the other trinkets which he had borrowed, to decoy Don Quixote out of the desert. Dorothea's beauty, and Cardenio's handsome shape, surprised every body. The curate bespoke supper, and the host, being pretty secure of his reckoning, soon got them a tolerable entertainment. They would not disturb the knight, who slept very soundly, for his distemper wanted rest more than meat; but they diverted themselves with the hostess's account of his encounter with the carriers, and of Sancho's being tossed in a blanket. Don

Quixote's unaccountable madness was the principal subject of their discourse; upon which the curate insisting, and arguing it to proceed from his reading romances, the inn-keeper took him up.

"Sir," said he, "you cannot make me of your opinion; for, in my mind, it is the pleasantest reading that ever was. I have now in the house two or three books of that kind, and some other pieces, that really have kept me, and many others, alive. In harvest time, a great many of the reapers come to drink here in the heat of the day, and he that can read best among us takes up one of these books, and all the rest of us, sometimes thirty or more, sit round about him, and listen with such pleasure, that we think neither of sorrow nor care. As for my own part, when I hear the mighty blows and dreadful battles of those knights-errant, I have half a mind to be one myself, and am raised to such a life and briskness, that I could frighten away old age. I could sit and hear them from morning till night."—"I wish you would, husband," said the hostess; "for then we should have some rest; for at all other times you are so out of humour, and so snappish, that we lead a hellish life with you."—"That is true enough," said

Maritornes; "and for my part, I think there are mighty pretty stories in those books, especially that one about the young lady who is hugged so sweetly by her knight under the orange-tree, when the damsel watches lest somebody comes, and stands with her mouth watering all the while; and a thousand such stories, which I would often forego my dinner and supper to hear."—"And what think you of this matter, young miss?" said the curate to the inn-keeper's daughter.—"Alack-a-day, sir," said she, "I do not understand those things, and yet I love to hear them: but I do not like that frightful ugly fighting, that so pleases my father. Indeed, the sad lamentations of the poor knights, for the loss of their mistresses, sometimes makes me cry like anything."—"I suppose, then, young gentleman," said Dorothea, "you will be tender-hearted, and will never let a lover die for you."—"I do not know what may happen as to that," said the girl; "but this I know, that I will never give any body reason to call me tigress and lioness, and I do not know how many other ugly names, as those ladies are often called; and I think they deserve yet worse, so they do; for they can never have soul nor conscience, to let such fine gentlemen

die or run mad for a sight of them. What signifies all their fiddling and coyness? If they are civil women, why do not they marry them; for that is all their knights would be at?"—"Hold your prating, mistress," said the hostess, "how came you to know all this? It is not for such as you to talk of these matters."—"The gentleman only asked me a question," said she, "and it would be uncivil not to answer him."—"Well," said the curate, "do me the favour, good landlord, to bring out these books, that I may have a sight of them."

"With all my heart," said the inn-keeper; and with that, stepping to his chamber, he opened a little portmantle that shut with a chain, and took out three large volumes, with a parcel of manuscripts, in a fair legible letter. The title of the first was Don Cirongilio of Thrace;<sup>1</sup> the second, Felixmarte of Hircania; and the third was the History of the great Captain Gonçalo Hernandez de Corduba, and the Life of Diego Garcia de Paredes,<sup>2</sup> bound together.\* The curate, reading the title, turned to the barber, and told him, they wanted

\* There were such famous leaders as the Great Captain, who conquered Naples for King Ferdinand of Spain, and Diego Garcia before him. But romantic authors have added monstrous fables to their true actions.

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix, Note 1, Book IV., Chapter V.

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix, Note 2, Book IV., Chapter V.

now Don Quixote's house-keeper and his niece. "I shall do as well with the books," said the barber, "for I can find the way to the backyard, or to the chimney; there is a good fire that will do their business."—"Business!" said the inn-keeper, "I hope you would not burn my books?"—"Only two of them," said the curate; "this same Don Cirongilio, and his friend Felixmarte."—"I hope, sir," said the host, "they are neither heretics nor phlegmatics."—"Schismatics, you mean," said the barber.—"I mean so," said the inn-keeper; "and if you must burn any, let it be this of Gonçalo Hernandez, and Diego Garcia; for you should sooner burn one of my children than the others."—"These books, honest friend," said the curate, "that you appear so concerned for, are senseless rhapsodies of falsehood and folly; and this which you so despise is a true history, and contains a true account of two celebrated men. The first, by his bravery and courage, purchased immortal fame, and the name of the Great General, by the universal consent of mankind; the other, Diego Garcia de Paredes, was of noble extraction, and born in Truxillo, a town of Estremadura, and was a man of singular courage, and of such mighty strength, that with one of his hands he could stop a

mill-wheel in its most rapid motion; and with his single force defended the passage of a bridge against a great army. Several other great actions are related in the memoirs of his life, but all with so much modesty and unbiassed truth, that they easily pronounce him his own historiographer; and had they been written by any one else, with freedom and impartiality, they might have eclipsed your Hectors, Achilleuses, and Orlandos, with all their heroic exploits."—"That's a fine jest, faith," said the inn-keeper; "my father could have told you another tale, sir. Holding a mill-wheel! why, is that such a mighty matter? Odds fish, do but turn over a leaf of Felixmarte there; you will find how with one single back-stroke he cut five swinging giants off by the middle, as if they had been so many bean-cods, of which the children make little puppet-friars;\* and read how, at another time, he charged a most mighty and powerful army of above a million and six hundred thousand fighting men, all armed cap-a-pie, and routed them all like so many sheep. And what can you say of the worthy Cirongilio of Thrace?

\* Children, in Spain, make puppets, resembling friars, out of bean-cods, by breaking as much of the upper end as to discover part of the first bean, which is to represent the bald head, and letting the broken cod hang back like a cowl.

who, as you may read there, going by water one day, was assaulted by a fiery serpent in the middle of the river; he presently leaped nimbly upon her back, and, hanging by her scaly neck, grasped her throat fast with both his arms, so that the serpent, finding herself almost strangled, was forced to dive into the water to save herself, and carried the knight, who would not quit his hold, to the very bottom, where he found a stately palace, and such pleasant gardens, that it was a wonder; and straight the serpent turned into a very old man, and told him such things as were never heard nor spoken. Now, a fig for your Great Captain, and your Diego Garcia." Dorothea, hearing this, said softly to Cardenio, that the host was capable of making a second part to Don Quixote. "I think so too," cried Cardenio, "for it is plain he believes every tittle contained in those books; nor can all the Carthusian friars in the world persuade him otherwise."—"I tell thee, friend," said the curate, "there were never any such persons as your books of chivalry mention, upon the face of the earth; your Felixmarte of Hircania, and your Cirongilio of Thrace, are all but chimeras, and fictions of idle and luxuriant wits, who wrote them for the same reason that you read

them, because they had nothing else to do."—"Sir," said the inn-keeper, "you must angle with another bait, or you will catch no fish;\* I know what's what, as well as another; I can tell where my own shoe pinches me; and you must not think, sir, to catch old birds with chaff. A pleasant jest, faith, that you should pretend to persuade me now that these notable books are lies and stories! why, sir, are they not in print? Are they not published according to order? licensed by authority from the privy council? And do you think that they would permit so many untruths to be printed, and such a number of battles and enchantments, to set us all a-madding?"—"I have told you already, friend," replied the curate, "that this is licensed for our amusement in our idle hours; for the same reason that tennis, billiards, chess, and other recreations are tolerated, that men may find a pastime for those hours they cannot find employment for. Neither could the government foresee this inconvenience from such books, that you urge, because they could not reasonably suppose any rational person would believe their absurdities. And were this a proper time, I could say a great

\* In the original, *A otro perro con esse hueso, &c.*, i.e., To another dog with this bone.

deal in favour of such writings; and how, with some regulations, they might be made both instructive and diverting. But I design, upon the first opportunity, to communicate my thoughts on this head to some that may redress it. In the mean time, honest landlord, you may put up your books, and believe them true if you please, and much good may they do you. And I wish you may never halt of the same foot as your guest, Don Quixote.”—“There’s no fear of that,” said the inn-keeper, “for I never design to turn knight-errant; because I find the customs that supported the noble order are quite out of doors.”

About the middle of their discourse entered Sancho, who was very uneasy at hearing that knights-errant were out of fashion, and books of chivalry full of nothing but folly and fiction; he resolved, however, in spite of all their contempt of chivalry, still to stick by his master; and if his intended expedition failed of success, then to return to his family and plough. As the inn-keeper was carrying away the books, the curate desired his leave to look over those manuscripts which appeared in so fair a character; he reached them to him, to the number of eight sheets, on one of which there was written in a large hand, *The Novel of the Curious*

*Impertinent.* “The title,” said the curate, “promises something, perhaps it may be worth reading through.”—“Your reverence,” said the inn-keeper, “may be worse employed; for that novel has received the approbation of several ingenious guests of mine who have read it, and who would have begged it of me; but I would by no means part with it, till I deliver it to the owner of this portmantle, who left it here with these books and papers; I may perhaps see him again, and restore them honestly; for I am as much a Christian as my neighbours, though I am an inn-keeper.”—“But I hope,” said the curate, “if it pleases me you will not deny me a copy of it.”—“Nay, as to that matter,” said the host, “we shall not fall out.”

Cardenio having by this perused it a little, recommended it to the curate, and entreated him to read it for the entertainment of the company. The curate would have excused himself, by urging the unseasonable time of night, and that sleep was then more proper, especially for the lady. “A pleasant story,” said Dorothea, “will prove the best repose for some hours to me; for my spirits are not composed enough to allow me to rest, though I want it, Master Nicholas;” and Sancho joined

in the request.—“To please ye then, and satisfy my own curiosity,” said the curate, “I will begin, if you will but give your attention.”

## CHAPTER VI

## THE NOVEL OF THE CURIOUS IMPERTINENT

ANSELMO and Lothario, considerable gentlemen of Florence, the capital city of Tuscany in Italy, were so eminent for their friendship, that they were called nothing but the Two Friends. They were both young and unmarried, of the same age and humour, which did not a little concur to the continuance of their mutual affection, though, of the two, Anselmo was the most amorously inclined, and Lothario the greater lover of hunting; yet they loved one another above all other considerations; and mutually quitted their own pleasure for their friend's; and their very wills, like the different motions of a well regulated watch, were always subservient to their unity, and still kept time with one another. Anselmo, at last, fell desperately in love with a beautiful lady of the same city; so eminent for her fortune and family, that he resolved by the consent of his friend, (for he did nothing without his advice), to demand her in marriage. Lothario was the person employed in this affair, which he man-