

news was confirmed¹ of his being slain in a battle betwixt Monsieur de Lautrec, and that great general, Gonzalo Fernandes de Cordona, in the kingdom of Naples.² This was the end of the offending and too late penitent friend; the news of which made Camilla immediately profess herself, and soon after, overwhelmed with grief and melancholy, pay for her transgression with the loss of her life. This was the unhappy end of them all, proceeding from so impertinent a beginning.

“I like this novel well enough,” said the curate; “yet, after all, I cannot persuade myself that there is anything of truth in it; and if it be purely invention, the author was in the wrong; for it is not to be imagined there could ever be a husband so foolish, as to venture on so dangerous an experiment. Had he made his husband and wife a gallant and a mistress, the fable had appeared more probable; but, as it is, it is next to impossible. However, I must confess, I have nothing to object against his manner of telling it.”

¹ See Appendix, Note 4, Chapter VIII., Book IV.

² *Ibid*, Note 5.

CHAPTER IX

CONTAINING AN ACCOUNT OF MANY SURPRISING
ACCIDENTS IN THE INN

At the same time the innkeeper, who stood at the door, seeing company coming, “More guests,” cried he; “a brave jolly troop, on my word. If they stop here, we may sing, O be joyful.”—“What are they?” said Cardenio.—“Four men,” said the host, “on horseback, *à la Gineta*,* with black masks† on their faces, and armed with lances and targets; a lady too all in white, that rides single and masked; and two running footmen.”—“Are they near?” said the curate.—“Just at the door,” replied the innkeeper.—Hearing this, Dorothea veiled herself, and Cardenio had just time enough to step into the next room, where Don Quixote lay, when the strangers came into the yard. The four horsemen, who made a very genteel

* A kind of riding with short stirrups, which the Spaniards took from the Arabians, and is still used by all the African and Eastern nations.

† *Antifaz*; a piece of thin black silk, which the Spaniards wear before their faces in travelling, not for disguise, but to keep off the dust and sun.

appearance, dismounted and went to help down the lady, whom one of them taking in his arms, carried into the house; where he seated her in a chair by the chamber-door, into which Cardenio had withdrawn. All this was done without discovering their faces, or speaking a word; only the lady, as she sat down in the chair, breathed out a deep sigh, and let her arms sink down, in a weak and fainting posture. The curate, marking their odd behaviour, which raised in him a curiosity to know who they were, went to their servants in the stable, and asked what their masters were? "Indeed,* sir," said one of them, "that is more than we can tell you; they seem of no mean quality, especially that gentleman who carried the lady into the house, for the rest pay him great respect, and his word is a law to them."—"Who is the lady?" said the curate.—"We know no more of her than the rest," answered the fellow, "for we could never see her face all the time, and it is impossible we should know her or them any otherwise. They picked us up on the road, my comrade and myself, and prevailed with us to wait on them to Andalusia, promising to pay us well for our trouble; so

* It is in the original *par diez* (i.e., by ten) instead of *par Dios* (i.e., by God), thinking to cheat the devil of an oath.

that, bating the two days travelling in their company, they are utter strangers to us."—"Could you not hear them name one another all this time?" asked the curate.—"No, truly, sir," answered the footman, "for we heard them not speak a syllable all the way; the poor lady, indeed, used to sigh and grieve so piteously, that we are persuaded she has no stomach to this journey: whatever may be the cause we know not; by her garb she seems to be a nun, but by her grief and melancholy, one might guess they are going to make her one, when perhaps the poor girl has not a bit of nun's flesh about her."—"Very likely," said the curate; and with that leaving them, he returned to the place where he left Dorothea, who, hearing the masked lady sigh so frequently, moved by the natural pity of the soft sex, could not forbear inquiring the cause of her sorrow.—"Pardon me, madam," said she, "if I beg to know your grief; and assure yourself, that my request does not proceed from mere curiosity, but an earnest inclination to serve and assist you, if your misfortune be any such as our sex is naturally subject to, and in the power of a woman to cure."—The melancholy lady made no return to her compliment, and Dorothea pressed her in vain with new reasons, when

the gentleman, whom the foot-boy signified to be the chief of the company, interposed: "Madam," said he, "do not trouble yourself to throw away any generous offer on that ungrateful woman, whose nature cannot return an obligation; neither expect any answer to your demands, for her tongue is a stranger to truth."—"Sir," said the disconsolate lady, "my truth and honour have made me thus miserable, and my sufferings are sufficient to prove you the falsest and most base of men."—Cardenio being only parted from the company by Don Quixote's chamber-door, overheard these last words very distinctly; and immediately cried out, "Good heaven, what do I hear! what voice struck my ear just now?" The lady, startled at his exclamation, sprung from the chair, and would have bolted into the chamber whence the voice came; but the gentleman perceiving it, laid hold on her, to prevent her, which so disordered the lady that her mask fell off, and discovered an incomparable face, beautiful as an angel's, though very pale, and strangely discomposed, her eyes eagerly rolling on every side, which made her appear distracted. Dorothea and the rest, not guessing what her eyes sought by their violent motion, beheld her with grief and wonder. She struggled so hard,

and the gentleman was so disordered by beholding her, that his mask dropped off too, and discovered to Dorothea, who was assisting to hold the lady, the face of her husband Don Ferdinand. Scarce had she known him, when, with a long and dismal oh! she fell in a swoon; and would have reached the floor with all her weight, had not the barber, by good fortune, stood behind and supported her. The curate ran presently to help her, and pulling off her veil to throw water in her face, Don Ferdinand presently knew her, and was struck almost as dead as she at the sight; nevertheless, he did not quit Lucinda, who was the lady that struggled so hard to get out of his hands. Cardenio hearing Dorothea's exclamation, and imagining it to be Lucinda's voice, flew into the chamber in great disorder, and the first object he met was Don Ferdinand holding Lucinda, who presently knew him. They were all struck dumb with amazement: Dorothea gazed on Don Ferdinand; Don Ferdinand on Cardenio; and Cardenio and Lucinda on one another.

At last Lucinda broke silence, and addressing Don Ferdinand, "Let me go," said she; "unloose your hold, my lord: by the generosity you should have, or by your inhumanity, since

it must be so, I conjure you, leave me, that I may cling like ivy to my old support; and from whom neither your threats, nor prayers, nor gifts, nor promises, could ever alienate my love. Contend not against heaven, whose power alone could bring me to my dear husband's sight, by such strange and unexpected means: you have a thousand instances to convince you, that nothing but death can make me ever forget him: let this, at least, turn your love into rage, which may prompt you to end my miseries with my life, here before my dear husband, where I shall be proud to lose it, since my death may convince him of my unshaken love and honour, till the last minute of my life." Dorothea by this time had recovered, and finding, by Lucinda's discourse who she was, and that Don Ferdinand would not unhand her, she made a virtue of necessity, and falling at his feet, "My lord," cried she, all bathed in tears, "if that beauty which you hold in your arms, has not altogether dazzled your eyes, you may behold at your feet the once happy, but now miserable Dorothea. I am the poor and humble villager, whom your generous bounty, I dare not say your love, did condescend to raise to the honour of calling you her own: I am she, who,

once confined to peaceful innocence, led a contented life, till your importunity, your shew of honour, and deluding words, charmed me from my retreat, and made me resign my freedom to your power. How I am recompensed may be guessed by my grief, and my being found here in this strange place, whither I was led, not through any dishonourable ends, but purely by despair and grief to be forsaken of you. It was at your desire I was bound to you by the strictest tie, and whatever you do, you can never cease to be mine. Consider, my dear lord, that my matchless love may balance the beauty and nobility of the person for whom you would forsake me; she cannot share your love, for it is only mine; and Cardenio's interest in her will not admit a partner. It is easier far, my lord, to recall your wandering desires, and fix them upon her that adores you, than to draw her to love who hates you. Remember how you did solicit my humble state, and conscious of my meanness, ye paid a veneration to my innocence, which, joined with the honourable condition of my yielding to your desires, pronounce me free from ill design or dishonour. Consider these undeniable truths: have some regard to your honour! remember you are a

Christian! Why should you then make her life end so miserably, whose beginning your favour made so happy? If I must not expect the usage and respect of a wife, let me but serve you as a slave; so I belong to you, though in the meanest rank, I never shall complain: let me not be exposed to the slandering reflections of the censorious world by so cruel a separation from my lord: afflict not the declining years of my poor parents, whose faithful services to you and yours have merited a more suitable return. If you imagine the current of your noble blood should be defiled by mixing with mine, consider how many noble houses have run in such a channel; besides, the woman's side is not essentially requisite to ennoble descent. But chiefly think on this, that virtue is the truest nobility, which, if you stain by basely wronging me, you bring a greater blot upon your family than marrying me could cause. In fine, my lord, you cannot, must not disown me for your wife: to attest which truth, I call your own words, which must be true, if you prize yourself for honour, and that nobility, whose want you so despise in me. Witness your oaths and vows, witness that Heaven which you so oft invoked to ratify your promises; and if all these should

fail, I make my last appeal to your own conscience, whose sting will always represent my wrongs fresh to your thoughts, and disturb your joys amidst your greatest pleasures."

These, with many such arguments, did the mournful Dorothea urge, appearing so lovely in her sorrow, that Don Ferdinand's friends, as well as all the rest, sympathized with her; Lucinda, particularly, as much admiring her wit and beauty, as moved by the tears, the piercing sighs and moans that followed her entreaties; and she would have gone nearer to have comforted her, had not Ferdinand's arms, that still held her, prevented it. He stood full of confusion, with his eyes fixed attentively on Dorothea a great while; at last, opening his arms, he quitted Lucinda, "Thou hast conquered," cried he, "charming Dorothea, thou hast conquered me; it is impossible to resist so many united truths and charms." Lucinda was still so disordered and weak, that she would have fallen when Ferdinand quitted her, had not Cardenio, without regard to his safety, leaped forward and caught her in his arms, and embracing her with eagerness and joy: "Thanks, gracious Heaven!" cried he aloud; "my dear, my faithful wife, thy sorrows are now ended; for where canst thou rest more

safe than in my arms, which now support thee, as once they did when my blessed fortune first made thee mine?" Lucinda then opening her eyes, and finding herself in the arms of her Cardenio, without regard to ceremony or decency, threw her arms about his neck, and, laying her face to his, "Yes," said she, "thou art he, thou art my lord indeed! It is even you yourself, the right owner of this poor, harassed captive. Now, fortune, act thy worst; nor fears nor threats shall ever part me from the sole support and comfort of my life."— This sight was very surprising to Don Ferdinand and the other spectators. Dorothea perceiving, by Don Ferdinand's change of countenance, and laying his hand to his sword, that he prepared to assault Cardenio, fell suddenly on her knees, and, with an endearing embrace, held Don Ferdinand's leg so fast, that he could not stir. "What means," cried she, all in tears, "the only refuge of my hope? See here thy own and dearest wife at thy feet, and her you would enjoy in her true husband's arms. Think then, my lord, how unjust is your attempt to dissolve that knot which Heaven has tied so fast. Can you ever think or hope success in your design on her, who, contemning all dangers, and confirmed in strictest constancy

and honour, before your face lies bathed in tears of joy and passion in her true lover's bosom? For Heaven's sake I entreat you, by your own words I conjure you, to mitigate your anger, and permit that faithful pair to consummate their joys, and spend their remaining days in peace. Thus may you make it appear that you are generous and truly noble, giving the world so strong a proof that you have your reason at command, and your passion in subjection." All this while Cardenio, though he still held Lucinda in his arms, had a watchful eye on Don Ferdinand; resolving, if he had made the least offer to his prejudice, to make him repent it and all his party, if possible, though at the expense of his life. But Don Ferdinand's friend the curate, the barber, and all the company (not forgetting honest Sancho Panza), got together about Don Ferdinand, and entreated him to pity the beautiful Dorothea's tears; that, considering what she had said, the truth of which was apparent, it would be the highest injustice to frustrate her lawful hopes; that their strange and wonderful meeting could not be attributed to chance, but the peculiar and directing providence of Heaven; that nothing (as Mr Curate very well urged) but death could part Cardenio

from Lucinda; and that though the edge of his sword might separate them, he would make them happier by death, than he could hope to be by surviving; that, in irrecoverable accidents, a submission to fate, and a resignation of our wills, showed not only the greatest prudence, but also the highest courage and generosity; that he should not envy those happy lovers what the bounty of Heaven had conferred on them, but that he should turn his eyes on Dorothea's grief, view her incomparable beauty, which, with her true and unfeigned love, made large amends for the meanness of her parentage; but principally it lay upon him, if he gloried in the titles of nobility and Christianity, to keep his promise unviolated; that the more reasonable part of mankind could not otherwise be satisfied, or have any esteem for him. Also, that it was the special prerogative of beauty, if heightened by virtue, and adorned with modesty, to lay claim to any dignity, without disparagement or scandal to the person that raises it; and that the strong dictates of delight having been once indulged, we are not to be blamed for following them afterwards, provided they be not unlawful. In short, to these reasons they added so many enforcing arguments, that Don Ferdinand, who

was truly a gentleman, could no longer resist reason, but stooped down, and, embracing Dorothea, "Rise, madam," said he, "it is not proper that she should lie prostrate at my feet, who triumphs over my soul. If I have not hitherto paid you all the respect I ought, it was perhaps so ordered by Heaven, that, having by this a stronger conviction of your constancy and goodness, I may henceforth set the greater value on your merit. Let the future respects and services I shall pay you, plead a pardon for my past transgressions; and let the violent passions of my love, that first made me yours, be an excuse for that which caused me to forsake you. View the now happy Lucinda's eyes, and there read a thousand farther excuses; but I promise henceforth never to disturb her quiet; and may she live long and contented with her dear Cardenio, as I hope to do with my dearest Dorothea."—Thus concluding, he embraced her again so lovingly, that it was with no small difficulty that he kept in his tears, which he endeavoured to conceal, being ashamed to discover so effeminate a proof of his remorse.

Cardenio, Lucinda, and the greatest part of the company, could not so well command their passions, but all wept for joy: even

Sancho Panza himself shed tears, though, as he afterwards confessed, it was not for downright grief, but because he found not Dorothea to be the Queen of Micomicona, as he supposed, and of whom he expected so many favours and preferments. Cardenio and Lucinda fell at Don Ferdinand's feet, giving him thanks, with the strongest expressions which gratitude could suggest; he raised them up, and received their acknowledgments with much modesty; then begged to be informed by Dorothea, how she came to that place. She related to him all she had told Cardenio, but with such a grace, that what were misfortunes to her, proved an inexpressible pleasure to those that heard her relation. When she had done, Don Ferdinand told all that had befallen him in the city, after he found the paper in Lucinda's bosom, which declared Cardenio to be her husband; how he would have killed her, had not her parents prevented him; how afterwards, mad with shame and anger, he left the city, to wait a more commodious opportunity of revenge; how, in a short time, he learned that Lucinda was fled to a nunnery, resolving to end her days there, if she could not spend them with Cardenio; that, having desired those three gentlemen to go with him, they went to the

nunnery, and, waiting till they found the gate open, he left two of the gentlemen to secure the door, while he, with the other, entered the house, where they found Lucinda talking with a nun in the cloister. They forcibly brought her thence to a village, where they disguised themselves for their more convenient flight, which they more easily brought about, the nunnery being situate in the fields, distant a good way from any town. He likewise added, how Lucinda, finding herself in his power, fell into a swoon; and that after she came to herself, she continually wept and sighed, but would not speak a syllable; and that, accompanied with silence only and tears, they had travelled till they came to that inn, which proved to him as his arrival at heaven, having put a happy conclusion to all his earthly misfortunes.