

battle wherein he freed those ungracious galley-slaves, who, by the same token, would have knocked out his brains with a shower of stones, had not this same honest basin-helmet saved his skull."

CHAPTER XVIII

THE CONTROVERSY ABOUT MAMBRINO'S HELMET AND THE PACK-SADDLE, DISPUTED AND DECIDED; WITH OTHER ACCIDENTS, NOT MORE STRANGE THAN TRUE

"PRAY, good gentlemen," said the barber, "let us have your opinion in this matter; I suppose you will grant this same helmet to be a basin."—"He that dares grant any such thing," said Don Quixote, "must know that he lies plainly, if a knight; but if a squire, he lies abominably."—Our barber, who was privy to the whole matter, to humour the jest, and carry the diversion a little higher, took up the other shaver.—"Master Barber,—you must pardon me, sir, if I do not give you your titles,—I must let you understand," said he, "that I have served an apprenticeship to your trade, and have been a freeman in the company these thirty years,¹ and therefore am not to learn what belongs to shaving. You must likewise know that I have been a soldier too in my younger days, and consequently understand the differ-

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

ences between a helmet, a morion, and a close-helmet,¹ with all other accoutrements belonging to a man-of-arms. Yet I say, with submission still to better judgment, that this piece, here in dispute before us, is as far from being a basin, as light is from darkness. Withal I affirm, on the other hand, that although it be a helmet, it is not a complete one."—"Right," said the Don, "for the lower part and the beaver are wanting."—"A clear case, a clear case," said the curate, Cardenio, Don Ferdinand and his companions; and the judge himself, had not Lewis's concern made him thoughtful, would have humoured the matter.—"Lord have mercy upon us now!" said the poor barber, half distracted, "is it possible that so many honourable gentlemen should know a basin or a helmet no better than this comes to? Gadzookers, I defy the wisest university in all Spain, with their scholarships, to show me the like. Well, if it must be a helmet, it must be a helmet, that is all. And by the same rule my pack-saddle must troop, too, as this gentleman says."—"I must confess," said Don Quixote, "as to outward appearance it is a pack-saddle; but, as I have already said, I will not pretend to determine the dispute as to that point."—"Nay," said the curate, "if Don Quixote speak not, the

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

matter will never come to a decision; because in all affairs of chivalry, we must all give him the preference."—"I swear, worthy gentlemen," said Don Quixote, "that the adventures I have encountered in this castle are so strange and supernatural, that I must infallibly conclude them the effects of pure magic and enchantment. The first time I ever entered its gates, I was strangely embarrassed by an enchanted Moor that inhabited it, and Sancho himself had no better entertainment from his attendants; and last night I hung suspended almost two hours by this arm, without the power of helping myself, or of assigning any reasonable cause of my misfortune; so that for me to meddle or give my opinion in such confused and intricate events, would appear presumption. I have already given my final determination as to the helmet in controversy, but dare pronounce no definite sentence on the pack-saddle, but shall remit it to the discerning judgment of the company; perhaps the power of enchantment may not prevail on you that are not dubbed knights, so that your understandings may be free, and your judicial faculties more piercing to enter into the true nature of these events, and not conclude upon them from their appearances."—"Undoubtedly," answered Don Ferdinand,

“the decision of this process depends upon our sentiments, according to Don Quixote’s opinion; that the matter, therefore, may be fairly discussed, and that we may proceed upon solid and firm grounds, we will put it to the vote. Let every one give me his suffrage in my ear, and I will oblige myself to report them faithfully to the board.”

To those that knew Don Quixote, this proved excellent sport; but to others unacquainted with his humour, as Don Lewis and his four servants, it appeared the most ridiculous stuff in nature; three other travellers too that happened to call in by the way, and were found to be officers of the holy brotherhood, or pursuivants, thought the people were all bewitched in good earnest. But the barber was quite at his wit’s end, to think that his basin, then and there present before his eyes, was become the helmet of Mambrino; and that his pack-saddle was likewise going to be changed into rich horse-furniture. Every body laughed very heartily to see Don Ferdinand whispering each particular person very gravely, to have his vote upon the important contention of the pack-saddle. When he had gone the rounds among his own faction, that were all privy to the jest, “Honest fellow,” said he

very loudly, “I grow weary of asking so many impertinent questions; every man has his answer at his tongue’s end, that it is mere madness to call this a pack-saddle, and that it is positively, *nemine contradicente*, right horse-furniture, and great horse-furniture, too; besides, friends, your allegations and proofs are of no force; therefore, in spite of your ass and you too, we give it for the defendant, that this is, and will continue the furniture of a horse, nay, and of a great horse, too.”—“Now the devil take me,” said the barber,* “if you be not all damnably deceived; and may I be hanged if my conscience does not plainly tell me it is a downright pack-saddle; but I have lost it according to law, and so fare it well. But I am neither mad nor drunk sure, for I am fresh and fasting this morning from every thing but sin.”

The barber’s raving was no less diverting than Don Quixote’s clamours. “Sentence is passed,” cried he; “and let every man take possession of his goods and chattels, and heaven give him joy.”—“This is a jest, a mere jest,” said one of the four servants; “certainly, gentlemen, you cannot be in earnest, you are

* In the original it is *el sobrebarbero*, i.e., the supernumerary or additional barber, in contradistinction to the other barber who appears first in the history.

too wise to talk at this rate; for my part, I say and will maintain it, for there is no reason the barber should be wronged, that this is a basin, and that the pack-saddle of a he-ass."—"May not it be a she-ass's pack-saddle, friend?" said the curate.—"That is all one, sir," said the fellow; "the question is not whether it be a he or she-ass's pack-saddle, but whether it be a pack-saddle or not, that is the matter, sir."—One of the officers of the holy brotherhood, who had heard the whole controversy, very angry to hear such an error maintained, "Gentlemen," said he, "this is no more a horse's saddle than it is my father, and he that says the contrary is drunk or mad."—"You lie like an unmannerly rascal," said the knight; and at the same time with his lance, which he had always ready for such occasions, he offered such a blow at the officer's head, that had not the fellow leaped aside it would have laid him flat. The lance flew into pieces, and the rest of the officers, seeing their comrade so abused, cried out for help, charging every one to aid and assist the holy brotherhood.* The innkeeper being one of the fraternity, ran for his sword and rod, and then joined his fellows.

* All these troops of the *holy brotherhood* carry wands or rods as a mark of their office.

Don Lewis's servants got round their master to defend him from harm, and secure him lest he should make his escape in the scuffle. The barber seeing the whole house turned topsyturvy, laid hold again on his pack-saddle; but Sancho, who watched his motions, was as ready as he, and secured the other end of it.

Don Quixote drew and assaulted the officers pell-mell. Don Lewis called to his servants to join Don Quixote and the gentlemen that sided with him; for Cardenio, Don Ferdinand, and his other friends had engaged on his side. The curate cried out, the landlady shrieked, her daughter wept, Maritornes howled, Dorothea was distracted with fear, Lucinda could not tell what to do, and Donna Clara was strangely frightened; the barber pommelled Sancho, and Sancho belaboured the barber. One of Don Lewis's servants went to hold him, but he gave him such a rebuke on his jaws, that his teeth had like to have forsook their station; and then the judge took him into his protection. Don Ferdinand had got one of the officers down, and laid on him back and side. The innkeeper still cried out, "Help the holy brotherhood!" so that the whole house was a medley of wailings, cries, shrieks, confusions, fears, terrors, disasters,

slashes, buffets, blows, kicks, cuffs, battery, and bloodshed.

In the greatest heat of this hurly-burly it came into Don Quixote's head, that he was certainly involved in the disorder and confusion of King Agramant's camp; and calling out with a voice that shook the whole house; "Hold, valorous knights," said he, "all hold your furious hands, sheath all your swords, let none presume to strike on pain of death, but hear me speak." The loud and monstrous voice surprised everybody into obedience, and the Don proceeded: "I told you before, gentlemen, that this castle was enchanted, and that some legion of devils did inhabit it: now let your own eyes confirm my words: do not you behold the strange and horrid confusion of King Agramant's army¹ removed hither, and put in execution among us? See, see how they fight for the sword, and yonder for the horse; behold how some contend for the helmet, and here others battle it for the standard; and all fight we do not know how, nor can tell why. Let therefore my Lord Judge, and his reverence Master Curate, represent, one, King Agramant, and the other King Sobrino, and by their wisdom and conduct

¹ See Appendix, Note 3, Chapter XVIII., Book IV.

appease this tumult; for, by the powers divine, it were a wrong to honour, and a blot on chivalry, to let so many worthies, as are here met, kill one another for such trifles."

Don Quixote's words were Hebrew to the officers, who having been roughly handled by Cardenio, Ferdinand, and his friends, would not give it over so. But the barber was content; for Sancho had demolished his beard and pack-saddle both in the scuffle; the squire dutifully retreated at the first sound of his master's voice; Don Lewis's servants were calm, finding it their best way to be quiet; but the innkeeper was refractory. He swore that madman ought to be punished for his ill-behaviour, and that every hour he was making some disturbance or another in his house. But at last, the matter was made up, the pack-saddle was agreed to be horse-furniture, the basin a helmet, and the inn a castle, till the day of judgment, if Don Quixote would have it so. Don Lewis's business came next in play. The judge, in concert with Don Ferdinand, Cardenio, and the Curate, resolved that Don Ferdinand should interpose his authority on Don Lewis's behalf, and let his servants know, that he would carry him to Andalusia, where he should be entertained according to his

quality by his brother the marquis; and they should not oppose this design, seeing Don Lewis was positively resolved not to be forced to go back to his father yet. Don Ferdinand's quality, and Don Lewis's resolution, prevailed on the fellows to order matters so, that three of them might return to acquaint their old master, and the fourth wait on Don Lewis. Thus this monstrous heap of confusion and disorder was digested into form, by the authority of Agramant, and wisdom of King Sobrino.

But the enemy of peace, finding his project of setting them all by the ears so eluded, resolved once again to have another trial of skill, and play the devil with them all the second bout: for though the officers, understanding the quality of their adversaries, were willing to desist, yet one of them, whom Don Ferdinand had kicked most unmercifully, remembering that among other warrants, he had one to apprehend Don Quixote, for setting free the galley-slaves, which Sancho was sadly afraid would come about, he resolved to examine if the marks and tokens given of Don Quixote agreed with this person; then drawing out a parchment, and opening his warrant, he made a shift to read it, and every other word looking cunningly on Don Quixote's face; whereupon

having folded up the parchment, and taking his warrant in his left hand, he clapt his right hand fast in the knight's collar, crying, "You are the king's prisoner!—Gentlemen, I am an officer, here's my warrant. I charge you all to aid and assist the holy brotherhood." Don Quixote, finding himself used so rudely, by one whom he took to be a pitiful scoundrel, kindled up into such a rage that he shook with indignation, and catching the fellow by the neck with both his hands, squeezed him so violently, that if his companions had not presently freed him, the knight would certainly have throttled him before he had quitted his hold.

The innkeeper being obliged to assist his brother officer, presently joined him: the hostess seeing her husband engaging a second time, raised a new outcry, her daughter and Martines bore the burden of the song, sometimes praying, sometimes crying, sometimes scolding: Sancho, seeing what passed, "By the lord," said he, "my master is in the right; this place is haunted, that is certain; there is no living quietly an hour together." At last Don Ferdinand parted Don Quixote and the officer, who were both pretty well pleased to quit their bargain. However, the officers still demanded their prisoner, and to have him delivered bound

into their hands, commanding all the company a second time to help and assist them in securing that public robber upon the king's high road.

Don Quixote smiled at the supposed simplicity of the fellows; at last, with solemn gravity, "Come hither," said he, "you offspring of filth, and extraction of dunghills! dare you call loosing the fettered, freeing the captive, helping the miserable, raising the fallen, and supplying the indigent, dare you, I say, base-spirited rascals, call these actions robbery? Your thoughts, indeed, are too grovelling and servile to understand, or reach the pitch of chivalry, otherwise you had understood that even the shadow of a knight-errant had claim to your adoration. You a band of officers! you are a pack of rogues indeed, and robbers on the highway by authority. What blockhead of a magistrate durst issue out a warrant to apprehend a knight-errant like me? Could not his ignorance find out that we are exempt from all courts of judicature? That our valour is the bench, our will the common law, and our sword the executioner of justice? Could not his dullness inform him that no rank of nobility or peerage enjoys more immunities and privileges?

Has he any precedent that a knight-errant ever paid taxes, subsidy, poll-money, or so much as fare or ferry? What tailor ever had money for his clothes, or what constable ever made him a reckoning for lodging in his castle? What kings are not proud of his company; and what damsels of his love? And lastly, did you ever read of any knight-errant that ever was, is, or shall be, that could not, with his single force, cudgel four hundred such rogues as you to pieces, if they have the impudence to oppose him?"