

to the pin, Count Pierres's pin which you spoke of, and which you say stands by Babieca's saddle, I own my ignorance, and confess I was so short-sighted, that though I saw the saddle, yet I did not perceive the pin, which is somewhat strange, if it be so large as you describe it."—"It is there without doubt," replied Don Quixote; "by the same token, they say it is kept in a leathern case to keep it from rusting"—"That may very well be," said the canon; "but upon the word of a priest, I do not remember I ever saw it: yet grant it were there, that does not enforce the belief of so many Amadis, nor of such a multitude of knights-errant as the world talks of; nor is there any reason so worthy a person, so judicious, and so well qualified as you are, should imagine there is any truth in the wild extravagancies contained in all the fabulous nonsensical books of knight errantry."

CHAPTER XXIII

THE NOTABLE DISPUTE BETWEEN THE CANON AND
DON QUIXOTE; WITH OTHER MATTERS

"VERY well," cried Don Quixote, "then all those books must be fabulous, though licensed by kings, approved by the examiners, read with general satisfaction, and applauded by the better sort and the meaner, rich and poor, learned and unlearned, gentry and commonalty; and, in short, by all sorts of persons of what state and condition soever, and though they carry such an appearance of truth, setting down the father, mother, country, kindred, age, place and actions to a tittle, and day by day, of the knight and knights of whom they treat? For shame, sir," continued he, "forbear uttering such blasphemies; and believe me, in this I advise you to behave yourself as becomes a man of sense, or else read them and see what satisfaction you will receive. As for instance, pray tell me, can there be any thing more delightful, than to read a lively description, which, as it were, brings before your eyes

the following adventure? A vast lake of boiling pitch, in which an infinite multitude of serpents, snakes, crocodiles, and other sorts of fierce and terrible creatures, are swimming and traversing backwards and forwards, appears to a knight-errant's sight. Then from the midst of the lake a most doleful voice is heard to say these words: 'O knight, whoever thou art, who gazest on this dreadful lake, if thou wilt purchase the bliss concealed under these dismal waters, make known thy valour, by casting thyself into the midst of these black burning surges; for unless thou dost so, thou are not worthy to behold the mighty wonders enclosed in the seven castles of the seven fairies, that are seated under these gloomy waves.'—And no sooner have the last accents of the voice reached the knight's ear, but he, without making any further reflection, or considering the danger to which he exposes himself, and even without laying aside his ponderous armour, only recommending himself to heaven and to his lady, plunges headlong into the middle of the burning lake; and when least he imagines it, or can guess where he shall stop, he finds himself on a sudden in the midst of verdant fields, to which the Elysian bear no comparison. There the sky appears to him

more transparent, and the sun seems to shine with a redoubled brightness. Next he discovers a most delightful grove made up of beautiful shady trees, whose verdure and variety regale his sight, while his ears are ravished with the wild and yet melodious notes of an infinite number of pretty painted birds, that hop and bill and sport themselves on the twining boughs. Here he spies a pleasant rivulet, which, through its flowery banks, glides along over the brightest sand, and remurmurs over the whitest pebbles that bedimple its smooth surface, while that other, through its liquid crystal, feasts the eye with a prospect of gold and orient pearl. There he perceives an artificial fountain, formed of party-coloured jasper and polished marble; and hard by another, contrived in grotesque, where the small cockle-shells, placed in orderly confusion among the white and yellow shells, and mixed with pieces of bright crystal and counterfeit emeralds, yield a delectable sight; so that art imitating nature, seems here to out-do her. At a distance, on a sudden, he casts his eyes upon a strong castle, or stately palace, whose walls are of massy gold, the battlements of diamonds, and the gates of hyacinths; in short, its structure is so wonderful, that though

all the materials are no other than diamonds, carbuncles, rubies, pearls, gold, and emeralds, yet the workmanship exceeds them in value. But having seen all this, can anything be so charming as to behold a numerous train of beautiful damsels come out of the castle in such glorious and costly apparel, as would be endless for me to describe, were I to relate these things as they are to be found in history? Then to see the beauty that seems the chief of all the damsels, take the bold knight, who cast himself into the burning lake, by the hand, and without speaking one word, lead him into a sumptuous palace, where he is caused to strip as naked as he was born, then put into a delicious bath; and perfumed with precious essences and odoriferous oils; after which he puts on a fine shirt, deliciously scented; and this done another damsel throws over his shoulders a magnificent robe, worth at least a whole city, if not more. What a sight is it, when in the next place they lead him into another room of state, where he finds the tables so orderly covered, that he is surprised and astonished? There they pour over his hands, water distilled from amber and odoriferous flowers: he is seated in an ivory chair; and while all the

damsels that attend him observe a profound silence, such variety of dainties is served up, and all so incomparably dressed, that his appetite is at a stand, doubting on which to satisfy its desire; at the same time his ears are sweetly entertained with variety of excellent music, none perceiving who makes it, or from whence it comes. But above all, what shall we say to see, after the dinner is ended, and tables taken away, the knight left leaning back in his chair, perhaps picking his teeth, as is usual; and then another damsel, much more beautiful than any of the former, comes unexpectedly into the room, and sitting down by the knight, begins to inform him what castle that is, and how she is enchanted in it; with many other particulars, which surprise the knight, and astonish those that read his history. I will enlarge no more upon this matter, since, from what has been said, it may sufficiently be inferred, that the reading of any passage in any history of knight-errantry, must be very delightful and surprising to the reader. And do you, good sir, believe me as I said to you before, read these books, which you may find will banish all melancholy, if you are troubled with it, and sweeten your disposition, if it be harsh. This I can say for myself, that since

my being a knight-errant, I am brave, courteous, bountiful, well-bred, generous, civil, bold, affable, patient, a sufferer of hardships, imprisonment, and enchantment. And though I have so lately been shut up in a cage, like a madman, I expect, through the valour of my arm, heaven favouring, and fortune not opposing my designs, to be a king of some kingdom in a very few days, that so I may give proofs of my innate gratitude and liberality. For on my word, sir, a poor man is incapable of exerting his liberality, though he be naturally never so well inclined. Now that gratitude which only consists in wishes, may be said to be dead, as faith without good works is dead. Therefore it is, I wish fortune would soon offer some opportunity for me to become an emperor, that I might give proofs of my generosity, by advancing my friends, but especially this poor Sancho Panza, my squire, who is the harmlessest fellow in the world; and I would willingly give him an earldom, which I have long since promised him, but that I fear he has not sense and judgment enough to manage it."

Sancho, hearing his master's last words, "Well, well, sir," said he, "never do you trouble your head about that matter; all you

have to do is to get me this same earldom, and let me alone to manage it: I can do as my betters have done before me; I can put in a deputy or a servant, that shall take all trouble off my hands, while I, as a great man should, loll at my ease, receive my rents, mind no business, live merrily, and so let the world rub for Sancho."—"As to the management of your revenue," said the canon, "a deputy or steward may do well, friend: but the lord himself is obliged to stir in the administration of justice, to which there is not only an honest sincere intention required, but a judicious head also, to distinguish nicely, conclude justly, and choose wisely; for if this be wanting in the principal, all will be wrong in the medium, and"—"I do not understand your philosophy," quoth Sancho; "all I said, and I will say it again, is, that I wish I had as good an earldom as I could govern; for I have as great a soul as another man, and as great a body as most men: And the first thing I would do in my government, I would have nobody to control me, I would be absolute; and who but I: now, he that is absolute, can do what he likes; he that can do what he likes, can take his pleasure; he that can take his pleasure, can be content; and he that can be content, has

no more to desire; so the matter's over, and come what will come, I am satisfied; if an island, welcome; if no island, fare it well; we shall see ourselves in no worse a condition, as one blind man said to another."—"This is no ill reasoning of yours, friend," said the canon, "though there is much more to be said on this topic of earldoms, than you imagine."—"Undoubtedly," said Don Quixote; "but I suit my actions to the example of Amadis de Gaul, who made his squire Gandalin earl of the Firm-island; which is a fair precedent for preferring Sancho to the same dignity to which his merit also lays an unquestionable claim." The canon stood amazed at Don Quixote's methodical and orderly madness, in describing the adventure of the Knight of the Lake, and the impression made on him by the fabulous conceits of the books he had read; as likewise at Sancho's simplicity in so eagerly contending for his earldom, which made the whole company very good sport.

By this time the canon's servants had brought the provision, and spreading a carpet on the grass under the shady trees, they sat down to dinner; when presently they heard the tinkling of a little bell among the copses close by them, and immediately afterwards they saw bolt out

of the thicket a very pretty she-goat, speckled all over with black, white, and brown spots, and a goatherd running after it; who, in his familiar dialect, called to it to stay and return to the fold; but the fugitive ran towards the company, frightened and panting, and stopt close by them, as if it had begged their protection. The goatherd overtaking it, caught it by the horns, and in a chiding way, as if the goat understood his resentments, "You little wanton nanny," said he, "you spotted elf, what has made you trip it so much of late? what wolf has scared you thus, hussy? tell me, little fool, what is the matter? But the cause is plain; thou art a female, and therefore never can'st be quiet: curse on thy freakish humours, and all theirs whom thou so much resemblest! Turn back, my love, turn back, and though thou can'st not be content with thy fold, yet there thou mayest be safe among the rest of thy fellows; for if thou, that shouldst guide and direct the flock, lovest wandering thus, what must they do, what will become of them?"

The goatherd's talk to his goat was entertaining enough to the company, especially to the canon, who calling to him, "Prythee, honest fellow," said he, "have a little patience

and let your goat take its liberty a while; for since it is a female, as you say, she will follow her natural inclination the more for your striving to confine it; come then, and take a bit, and a glass of wine with us, you may be better humoured after that." He then reached him the leg of a cold rabbit, and, ordering him a glass of wine, the goatherd drank it off, and returning thanks, was pacified. "Gentlemen," said he, "I would not have you think me a fool, because I talk so seriously to this senseless animal, for my words bear a mysterious meaning. I am indeed, as you see, rustical and unpolished, though not so ignorant, but that I converse with men as well as brutes."—"That is no miracle," said the curate, "for I have known the woods breed learned men, and simple sheepcots contain philosophers."—"At least," said the goatherd, "they harbour men that have some knowledge of the world: and to make good this truth, if I thought not the offer impertinent, or my company troublesome, you should hear an accident which but too well confirms what you have said."—"For my part," answered Don Quixote, "I will hear you attentively, because, methinks, your coming has something in it that looks like an adventure of knight-errantry; and I dare

answer, the whole company will not so much bring their parts in question, as to refuse to hear a story so pleasing, surprising, and amusing, as I fancy yours will prove. Then prythee friend begin, for we will all give you our attention."—"You must excuse me for one," said Sancho, "I must have a word or two in private with this same pasty at yon little brook; for I design to fill my belly for to-morrow and next day; having often heard my master Don Quixote say, that whenever a knight-errant's squire finds good belly-timber, he must fall to and feed till his sides are ready to burst, because they may happen to be bewildered in a thick wood for five or six days together; so that if a man has not his belly full beforehand, or his wallet well provided, he may chance to be crows-meat himself, as many times it falls out."—"You are in the right, Sancho," said the knight; "but I have, for my part, satisfied my bodily appetite, and now want only refreshment for my mind, which I hope this honest fellow's story will afford me." All the company agreed with Don Quixote: the goatherd then stroking his pretty goat once or twice; "Lie down, thou speckled fool," said he, "lie by me here; for we shall have time enough to return home." The creature seemed to under-

stand him, for as soon as her master sat down, she stretched herself quietly by his side, and looked up in his face as if she would let him know that she minded what he said; and then he began thus.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE GOATHERD'S TALE

ABOUT three leagues from this valley, there is a village, which, though small, yet is one of the richest hereabouts. In it there lived a farmer in very great esteem; and, though it is common for the rich to be respected, yet was this person more considered for his virtue, than for the wealth he possessed. But what he accounted himself happiest in, was a daughter of such extraordinary beauty, prudence, wit, and virtue, that all who knew or beheld her, could not but admire to see how heaven and nature had done their utmost to embellish her. When she was but little she was handsome, till at the age of sixteen she was most completely beautiful. The fame of her beauty began to extend to the neighbouring villages;—but why say I neighbouring villages? it extended to the remotest cities, and entered the palaces of kings, and the ears of all manner of persons, who from all parts flocked to see her, as something rare, or as a sort of prodigy.