

her absence; and to his lute, which he touches to admiration, he joins his voice in verses of his own composing, which declare the greatness of his genius. For my part I take another course, I think a better, I am sure an easier, which is to say all the ill things I can of women's levity, inconstancy, their broken vows and vain deceitful promises, their fondness of show and disregard of merit. This, gentlemen, was the occasion of those words, which, at my coming hither, I addressed to this goat; for being a she, I hate her, though she is the best of my herd. This is the story which I promised to tell you; if you have thought it too long, I shall endeavour to requite your patience in anything I can serve you. Hard by is my cottage, where I have some good fresh milk and excellent cheese, with several sorts of fruits, which I hope you will find agreeable both to the sight and taste.

CHAPTER XXV.

OF THE COMBAT BETWEEN DON QUIXOTE AND THE GOAT-HERD; WITH THE RARE ADVENTURE OF THE PENITENTS, WHICH THE KNIGHT HAPPILY ACCOMPLISHED WITH THE SWEAT OF HIS BROWS

THE goat-herd's story was mightily liked by the whole company, especially by the canon, who particularly minded the manner of his relating it, that had more of a scholar and gentleman, than of a rude goat-herd; which made him conclude the curate had reason to say, that even the mountains bred scholars and men of sense. They all made large proffers of their friendship and service to Eugenio, but Don Quixote exceeded them all; and, addressing himself to him, "Were I," said he, "at this time in a capacity of undertaking any adventure, I would certainly begin from this very moment to serve you; I would soon release Leandra out of this nunnery, where undoubtedly she is detained against her will; and in spite of all the opposition could be made by the lady abbess and all her adherents, I would return her to your hands,

that you might have the sole disposal of her, so far, I mean, as is consistent with the laws of knighthood, which expressly forbid that any man should offer the least violence to a damsel; yet (I trust in heaven) that the power of a friendly magician will prevail against the force of a malicious enchanter; and whenever this shall happen, you may assure yourself of my favour and assistance, to which I am obliged by my profession, that enjoins me to relieve the oppressed."

The goat-herd, who till then had not taken the least notice of Don Quixote in particular, now looking earnestly on him, and finding his dismal countenance and wretched habit were no great encouragement for him to expect a performance of such mighty matters, whispered the barber, who sat next him: "Pray, sir," said he, "who is this man that talks so extravagantly? For I protest I never saw so strange a figure in all my life."—"Whom can you imagine it should be," replied the barber, "but the famous Don Quixote de la Mancha, the establisher of justice, the avenger of injuries, the protector of damsels, the terror of giants, and the invincible gainer of battles?"—"The account you give of this person," returned the goat-herd, "is much like what we read in

romances and books of chivalry of those doughty Dons, who, for their mighty prowess and achievements, were called knights-errant; and therefore I dare say you do but jest, and that this gentleman's brains have deserted their quarters."

"Thou art an impudent insolent varlet," cried Don Quixote, "it is thy paper-skull is full of empty rooms; I have more brains than the prostitute thy mother had about her when she carried thy lump of nonsense in her womb."—With that, snatching up a loaf that was near him, he struck the goat-herd so furious a blow with it, that he almost levelled his nose with his face. The other, not accustomed to such salutations, no sooner perceived how scurvily he was treated, but without any respect to the table-cloth, napkins, or to those who were eating, he leaped furiously on Don Quixote, and grasping him by the throat with both his hands, had certainly strangled him, had not Sancho Panza come in that very nick of time, and gripping him fast behind, pulled him backwards on the table, bruising dishes, breaking glasses, spilling and overturning all that lay upon it. Don Quixote seeing himself freed, fell violently again upon the goat-herd, who, all besmeared with blood, and trampled to pieces under

Sancho's feet, groped here and there for some knife or fork to take a fatal revenge; but the canon and curate took care to prevent his purpose, and in the meanwhile, by the barber's contrivance, the goat-herd got Don Quixote under him, on whom he let fall such a tempest of blows, as caused as great a shower of blood to pour from the poor knight's face as had streamed from his own. The canon and curate were ready to burst with laughing, the officers danced and jumped at the sport, every one cried halloo! as men used to do when two dogs are snarling or fighting; Sancho Panza alone was vexed, fretted himself to death, and raved like a madman because he could not get from one of the canon's serving men, who kept him from assisting his master. In short, all were exceedingly merry, except the bloody combatants, who had mauled one another most miserably, when on a sudden they heard the sound of a trumpet so doleful, that it made them turn to listen towards that part from whence it seemed to come: but he who was most troubled at this dismal alarm, was Don Quixote; therefore, though he lay under the goat-herd, full sore against his will, and was most lamentably bruised and battered, "Friend devil," cried he to him, "for sure nothing less could have so much valour

and strength as to subdue my forces, let us have a cessation of arms but for a single hour; for the dolorous sound of that trumpet strikes my soul with more horror than thy hard fists do my ears with pain, and methinks excite me to some new adventure."—With that the goat-herd, who was as weary of beating as of being beaten, immediately gave him a truce; and the knight once more getting on his feet, directed his then not hasty steps to the place whence the mournful sound seemed to come, and presently saw a number of men all in white, like penitents, descending from a rising ground. The real matter was this: the people had wanted rain for a whole year together, wherefore they appointed rogations, processions, and disciplines throughout all that country, to implore heaven to open its treasury, and shower down plenty upon them; and to this end, the inhabitants of a village near that place came in procession to a devout hermitage built on one of the hills which surrounded that valley.

Don Quixote, taking notice of the strange habits of the penitents, and never reminding himself that he had often seen the like before, fancied immediately it was some new adventure, and he alone was to engage in it, as he was obliged by the laws of knight-errantry; and

that which the more increased his frenzy, was his mistaking an image which they carried (all covered with black) for some great lady, whom these miscreant and discourteous knights, he thought, were carrying away against her will. As soon as this whimsy took him in the head, he moved with what expedition he could towards Rozinante, who was feeding up and down upon the plains, and, whipping off his bridle from the pommel, and his target which hung hard by, he bridled him in an instant; then, taking his sword from Sancho, he got in a trice on Rozinante's back, where, bracing his target, and addressing himself aloud to all there present, "O valorous company," cried he, "you shall now perceive of how great importance it is to mankind, that such illustrious persons as those who profess the order of knight-errantry should exist in the world; now, I say, you shall see, by my freeing that noble lady, who is there basely and barbarously carried away captive, that knight-adventurers ought to be held in the highest and greatest estimation."

So saying, he pushed Rozinante with his heels for want of spurs; and, forcing him to a hand gallop (for it was never read in any part of this true history that Rozinante did ever run full speed), he posted to encounter the peni-

tents, in spite of all the curate, canon, and barber could do to hinder him; much less could Sancho Panza's outcries detain him.

"Master! Sir! Don Quixote!" bawled out the poor squire, "whither are you posting? are you bewitched? does the devil drive and set you on, thus to run against the Church? ah, wretch that I am! See, sir! that is a procession of penitents, and the lady they carry is the image of the immaculate Virgin, our blessed Lady. Take heed what you do, for at this time it may be certainly said you are out of your wits!" But Sancho might as well have kept his breath for another use, for the knight was urged with so vehement a desire to encounter the white men, and release the mourning lady, that he heard not a syllable he said, or if he had, he would not have turned back, even at the king's express command. At last, being come near the procession, and stopping Rozinante, that already had a great desire to rest a little, in a dismal tone, and with a hoarse voice, "Ho!" cried he, "you there, who cover your faces, perhaps because you are ashamed of yourselves, and of the crime you are now committing, give heed and attention to what I have to say."

The first who stopped at this alarm were

those who carried the image; when one of the four priests, that sung the litanies, seeing the strange figure that Don Quixote made, and the leanness of Rozinante, with other circumstances which he observed in the knight sufficient to have forced laughter, presently made him this answer, "Good sir, if you have anything to say to us speak it quickly, for these poor men whom you see are very much tired; therefore we neither can, nor is it reasonable we should, stand thus in pain, to hear anything that cannot be delivered in two words."—"I will say it in one," replied Don Quixote, "which is this; I charge you immediately to release that beautiful lady, whose tears and looks full of sorrow evidently show you carry her away by violence, and have done her some unheard-of injury: this do, or I, who was born to punish such outrages, will not suffer you to advance one step with her, till she is entirely possessed of that liberty she so earnestly desires, and so justly deserves." This last speech made them all conclude that the knight was certainly distracted, and caused a general laughter; but this proved like oil to fire, and so inflamed Don Quixote, that, laying his hand on his sword, without more words, he presently assaulted those who carried the image. At the same

time one of them quitting his post, came to encounter our hero with a wooden fork, on which he supported the bier whenever they made a stand, and warding with it a weighty blow which Don Quixote designed and aimed at him, the fork was cut in two; but the other, who had the remaining piece in his hand, returned the knight such a thwack on his left shoulder, that, his target not being able to resist such rustic force, the poor unfortunate Don Quixote was struck to the ground, and miserably bruised.

Sancho Panza, who had followed him as fast as his breath and legs would permit, seeing him fall, cried out to his adversary to forbear striking him, urging that he was a poor enchanted knight, and one who in his whole life had never done any man harm. But it was not Sancho's arguments that held the country fellow's hands; the only motive was, that he feared he had killed him, since he could not perceive he stirred either hand or foot; wherefore, tucking his coat up to his girdle, with all possible expedition, he scoured over the fields like a greyhound. Meanwhile Don Quixote's companions hastened to the place where he lay, when those of the procession seeing them come running towards them, attended by the

officers of the holy brotherhood with their cross-bows along with them, began to have apprehensions of some disaster from the approaching party; wherefore, drawing up in a body about the image, the disciplinants lifting up their hoods, and grasping fast their whips, as the priests did their tapers, they expected the assault with the greatest bravery, resolving to defend themselves, and offend their enemy as long and as much as possible. But providence had ordered the matter much better than they could hope; for while Sancho, who had thrown himself on his master's body, was lamenting his loss, and the supposed death of so noble and generous a lord, in the most ridiculous manner that ever was heard, the curate of the knight's party was come up with the other who came in the procession, and was immediately known by him, so that their acquaintance put an end to the fears which both sides were in of an engagement. Don Quixote's curate, in a few words, acquainted the other with the knight's circumstances; whereupon he, and the whole squadron of penitents, went over to see whether the unfortunate knight were living or dead, and heard Sancho Panza, with tears in his eyes, bewailing over his master; "O flower of knighthood," cried

he, "that with one single perilous knock art come to an untimely end! Thou honour of thy family, and glory of all La Mancha! nay, and of all the varsal world beside, which, now it has lost thee, will be over-run by miscreants and outlaws, who will no longer be afraid to be mauled for their misdeeds. O bountiful above all the Alexanders in the world! thou who hast rewarded me but for poor eight months' service with the best island that is washed by salt water! Thou who wert humble to the proud, and haughty to the humble! Thou who didst undertake perils, and patiently endure affronts! Thou who wert in love, nobody knows why! True patron of good men, and scourge of the wicked, sworn foe to all reprobates! and to say all at once that man can say, thou knight-errant!"

The woeful accents of the squire's voice at last recalled Don Quixote to himself; when, after a deep sigh, the first thing he thought of was his absent Dulcinea. "O charming Dulcinea," cried he, "the wretch that lingers banished from thy sight, endures far greater miseries than this!" And then looking on his faithful squire, "Good Sancho," said he, "help me once more into the enchanted car; for I am not in a condition to press the back of