

CHAPTER VIII

DON QUIXOTE'S SUCCESS IN HIS JOURNEY TO VISIT
THE LADY DULCINEA DEL TOBOSO

BLESSED be the mighty Alla,* says Hamet Benengeli, at the beginning of his eighth chapter; blessed be Alla! which ejaculation he thrice repeated, in consideration of the blessing that Don Quixote and Sancho had once more taken the field again; and that from this period, the readers of their delightful history may date the knight's achievements, and the squire's pleasantries; and he entreats them to forget the former heroical transactions of the wonderful knight, and fix their eyes upon his future exploits, which take birth from his setting out for Toboso, as the former began in the fields of Montiel. Nor can so small a request be thought unreasonable, considering what he promises, which begins in this manner.

Don Quixote and his squire were no sooner

* The Moors call God Alla.

parted from the bachelor, but Rozinante began to neigh, and Dapple to bray; which both the knight and the squire interpreted as good omens, and most fortunate presages of their success; though the truth of the story is, that as Dapple's braying exceeded Rozinante's neighing, Sancho concluded that his fortune should out-rival and eclipse his master's; which inference I will not say he drew from some principles in judicial astrology, in which he was undoubtedly well grounded, though the history is silent in that particular; however, it is recorded of him, that oftentimes upon the falling or stumbling of his ass, he wished he had not gone abroad that day, and from such accidents prognosticated nothing but dislocation of joints, and breaking of ribs; and notwithstanding his foolish character, this was no bad observation. "Friend Sancho," said Don Quixote to him, "I find the approaching night will overtake us, ere we can reach Toboso, where, before I enter upon my expedition, I am resolved to pay my vows, receive my benediction, and take my leave of the peerless Dulcinea; being assured after that of happy events, in the most dangerous adventures; for nothing in this world inspires a knight-errant with so much valour, as the

smiles and favourable aspects of his mistress.” —“I am of your mind,” quoth Sancho; “but I am afraid, sir, you will hardly come at her, to speak with her, at least not to meet her in a place where she may give you her blessing, unless she throw it over the mud-wall of the yard, where I first saw her, when I carried her the news of your mad pranks in the midst of Sierra Morena.” —“Mud-wall, dost thou say!” cried Don Quixote: “mistaken fool, that wall could have no existence but in thy muddy understanding: it is a mere creature of thy dirty fancy: for that never-duly-celebrated paragon of beauty and gentility, was then undoubtedly in some court, in some stately gallery, or walk, or as it is properly called, in some sumptuous and royal palace.” —“It may be so,” said Sancho, “though, so far as I can remember, it seemed to me neither better nor worse than a mud-wall.” —“It is no matter,” replied the knight, “let us go thither; I will visit my dear Dulcinea; let me but see her, though it be over a mud-wall, through a chink of a cottage, or the pales of a garden, at a lattice, or any where; which way soever the least beam from her bright eyes reaches mine, it will so enlighten my mind, so fortify my heart, and invigorate every faculty

of my being, that no mortal will be able to rival me in prudence and valour.” —“Troth! sir,” quoth Sancho, “when I beheld that same sun of a lady, methought it did not shine so bright, as to cast forth any beams at all; but mayhaps the reason was, that the dust of the grain she was winnowing raised a cloud about her face, and made her look somewhat dull.” —“I tell thee again, fool,” said Don Quixote, “thy imagination is dusty and foul; will it never be beaten out of thy stupid brain, that my lady Dulcinea was winnowing? Are such exercises used by persons of her quality, whose recreations are always noble, and such as display an air of greatness suitable to their birth and dignity? Can’st thou not remember the verses of our poet, when he recounts the employments of the four nymphs at their crystal mansions, when they advanced their heads above the streams of the lovely Tagus, and sat upon the grass, working those rich embroideries, where silk and gold, and pearl embossed, were so curiously interwoven, and which that ingenious bard so artfully describes? So was my princess employed when she blessed thee with her sight; but the envious malice of some base necromancer fascinated thy sight, as it represents whatever is most grateful to me in

different and displeasing shapes. And this makes me fear, that if the history of my achievements, which they tell me is in print, has been written by some magician who is no well-wisher to my glory, he has undoubtedly delivered many things with partiality, misrepresented my life, inserting a hundred falsehoods for one truth, and diverting himself with the relation of idle stories, foreign to the purpose, and unsuitable to the continuation of a true history. O envy! envy! thou gnawing worm of virtue, and spring of infinite mischiefs! there is no other vice, my Sancho, but pleads some pleasure in its excuse; but envy is always attended by disgust, rancour, and distracting rage."—"I am much of your mind," said Sancho, "and I think, in the same book which neighbour Carraseo told us he had read of our lives, the story makes bold with my credit, and has handled it at a strange rate, and has dragged it about the kennels, as a body may say. Well, now as I am an honest man, I never spoke an ill word of a magician in my born days; and I think they need not envy my condition so much. The truth is, I am somewhat malicious; I have my roguish tricks now and then; but I was ever counted more fool than knave for all that, and so indeed I was bred

and born; and if there were nothing else in me but my religion, for I firmly believe whatever our holy Roman Catholic Church believes, and I hate the Jews mortally, these same historians should take pity on me, and spare me a little in their books. But let them say on to the end of the chapter; naked I came into the world, and naked must go out. It is all a case to Sancho, I can neither win nor lose by the bargain: and so my name be in print, and handed about, I care not a fig for the worst they can say of me."—"What thou sayest, Sancho," answered Don Quixote, "puts me in mind of a story. A celebrated poet of our time wrote a very scurrilous and abusive lampoon upon all the intriguing ladies of the court, forbearing to name one, as not being sure whether she deserved to be put in the catalogue or no; but the lady not finding herself there, was not a little affronted at the omission, and made a great complaint to the poet, asking him what he had seen in her, that he should leave her out of his list; desiring him at the same time to enlarge his satire, and put her in, or expect to hear farther from her. The author obeyed her commands, and gave her a character with a vengeance, and, to her great satisfaction, made her as famous for infamy as any woman about

the town. Such another story is that of Diana's temple, one of the seven wonders of the world, burnt by an obscure fellow merely to eternize his name; which, in spite of an edict that enjoined all people never to mention it, either by word of mouth, or in writing, yet is still known to have been Erostratus. The story of the great Emperor Charles the Fifth, and a Roman Knight, upon a certain occasion, is much the same. The emperor had a great desire to see the famous temple once called the Pantheon, but now more happily the church of All Saints. It is the only entire edifice remaining of heathen Rome, and that which best gives an idea of the glory and magnificence of its great founders. It is built in the shape of a half orange, of a vast extent, and very lightsome, though it admits no light, but at one window, or, to speak more properly, at a round aperture on the top of the roof. The emperor being got up thither, and looking down from the brink upon the fabric, with a Roman knight by him, who shewed all the beauties of that vast edifice: after they were gone from the place, says the knight, addressing the emperor, 'It came into my head a thousand times, sacred sir, to embrace your majesty, and cast myself with you, from the top of the church to the bottom,

that I might thus purchase an immortal name.' —'I thank you,' said the emperor, 'for not doing it; and for the future, I will give you no opportunity to put your loyalty to such a test. Therefore I banish you my presence for ever;' which done, he bestowed some considerable favour on him. I tell thee, Sancho, this desire of honour is a strange bewitching thing. What dost thou think made Horatius, armed at all points, plunge headlong from the bridge into the rapid Tyber? What prompted Curtius to leap into the profound flaming gulph? What made Mutius burn his hand? What forced Cæsar over the Rubicon, spite of all the omens that dissuaded his passage? And to instance a more modern example, what made the undaunted Spaniards sink their ships, when under the most courteous Cortez, but that scorning the stale honour of this so often conquered world, they sought a maiden glory in a new scene of victory? These and a multiplicity of other great actions, are owing to the immediate thirst and desire of fame, which mortals expect as the proper price and immortal recompense of their great actions. But we that are Christian catholic knights-errant must fix our hopes upon a higher reward, placed in the eternal and celestial regions,

where we may expect a permanent honour and complete happiness; not like the vanity of fame, which at best is but the shadow of great actions, and must necessarily vanish, when destructive time has eat away the substance which it followed. So, my Sancho, since we expect a christian reward, we must suit our actions to the rules of Christianity. In giants we must kill pride and arrogance: but our greatest foes, and whom we must chiefly combat, are within. Envy we must overcome by generosity and nobleness of soul; anger, by a reposed and easy mind; riot and drowsiness, by vigilance and temperance; lasciviousness, by our inviolable fidelity to those who are mistresses of our thoughts; and sloth, by our indefatigable peregrinations through the universe, to seek occasions of military, as well as Christians honours. This, Sancho, is the road to lasting fame, and a good and honourable renown."—"I understand passing well every title you have said," answered Sancho, "but pray now, sir, will you dissolve me of one doubt, that is just come into my head—" "Resolve thou would'st say, Sancho," replied Don Quixote: "well, speak, and I will endeavour to satisfy thee."—"Why then," quoth Sancho, "pray tell me these same Julys, and

these Augusts, and all the rest of the famous knights you talk of that are dead, where are they now?"—"Without doubt," answered Don Quixote, "the heathens are in hell. The Christians, if their lives were answerable to their profession, are either in purgatory, or in heaven."—"So far so good," said Sancho, "but pray tell me, the tombs of these lordlings, have they any silver lamps still burning before them, and are their chapel-walls hung about with crutches, winding sheets, old periwigs, legs and wax-eyes, or with what are they hung?"—"The monuments of the dead heathens," said Don Quixote, "were for the most part sumptuous pieces of architecture. The ashes of Julius Cæsar were deposited on the top of an obelisk, all of one stone of a prodigious bigness, which is now called *Aguglia di San Pietro*, St Peter's Needle. The emperor Adrian's sepulchre was a vast structure as big as an ordinary village, and called *Moles Adriana*, and now the castle of St Angelo in Rome. Queen Artemisia buried her husband Mausolus in so curious and magnificent a pile, that his monument was reputed one of the seven wonders of the world. But none of these, nor any other of the heathen sepulchres, were adorned with any winding-sheets, or

other offering that might imply the persons interred were saints."—"Thus far we are right," quoth Sancho; "now, sir, pray tell me, which is the greatest wonder, to raise a dead man, or kill a giant?"—"The answer is obvious," said Don Quixote, "to raise a dead man certainly."—"Then, master, I have nicked you," said Sancho; "for he that raises the dead, makes the blind see, the lame walk, and the sick healthy, who has lamps burning night and day before his sepulchre, and whose chapel is full of pilgrims, who adore his relics, on their knees; that man, I say, has more fame in this world and in the next, than any of your heathenish emperors or knights-errant ever had, or will ever have."—"I grant it," said Don Quixote.—"Very good," quoth Sancho, "I will be with you anon. This fame, these gifts, these rights, privileges, and what do you call them, the bodies and relics of these saints have; so that by the consent and good-liking of our holy mother the church, they have their lamps, their lights, their winding-sheets, their crutches, their pictures, their heads of hair, their legs, their eyes, and the Lord knows what, by which they stir up people's devotion, and spread their Christian fame. Kings will vouchsafe to carry the

bodies of saints¹ or their relics on their shoulders, they will kiss you the pieces of their bones, and spare no cost to set off and deck their shrines and chapels."—"And what of all this?" said Don Quixote; "what is your inference?"—"Why, truly, sir," quoth Sancho, "that we turn saints as fast as we can, and that is the readiest and cheapest way to get this same honour you talk of. It was but yesterday or the other day, or I cannot tell when, I am sure it was not long since, that two poor barefooted friars were sainted; and you cannot think what a crowd of people there is to kiss the iron chains they wore about their waists instead of girdles, to humble the flesh. I dare say, they are more revered than Orlando's sword,² that hangs in the armoury of our sovereign lord the king, whom heaven grant long to reign! So that for aught I see, better it is to be a friar, though but of a beggarly order, than a valiant errant-knight; and a dozen or two of sound lashes, well meant, and as well laid on, will obtain more of heaven than two thousand thrusts with a lance, though they be given to giants, dragons, or hobgoblins."—"All this is very true," replied

¹ See Appendix, Note 1, Chapter VIII.

² See Appendix, Note 2, Chapter VIII.

Don Quixote, "but all men cannot be friars; we have different parts allotted us, to mount to the high seat of eternal felicity. Chivalry is a religious order,¹ and there are knights in the fraternity of saints in heaven."—"However," quoth Sancho, "I have heard say, there are more friars there than knights-errant."—"That is," said Don Quixote, "because there is a greater number of friars than of knights."—"But are there not a great many knights-errant too?" said Sancho.—"There are many indeed," answered Don Quixote, "but very few that deserve the name."

In such discourses as these the knight and squire passed the night, and the whole succeeding day, without encountering any occasion to signalize themselves; at which Don Quixote was very much concerned. At last, towards evening the next day, they discovered the goodly city of Toboso, which revived the knight's spirits wonderfully, but had a quite contrary effect on the squire, because he did not know the house where Dulcinea lived, no more than his master. So that the one was mad till he saw her, and the other very melancholic and disturbed in mind, because he had never seen her; nor did he know what to do,

¹ See Appendix, Note 3, Chapter VIII.

should his master send him to Toboso. However, as Don Quixote would not make his entry in the day-time, they spent the evening among some oaks not far distant from the place, till the prefixed moment came; then they entered the city, where they met with adventures indeed.