

## CHAPTER XI

OF THE STUPENDOUS ADVENTURE THAT BEFEL THE  
VALOROUS DON QUIXOTE, WITH THE CHARIOT OR  
CART OF THE COURT OR PARLIAMENT OF DEATH

DON QUIXOTE rode on very melancholic; the malice of the magicians, in transforming his Lady Dulcinea, perplexed him strangely, and set his thoughts upon the rack, how to dissolve the enchantment, and restore her to her former beauty. In this disconsolate condition, he went on abandoned to distraction, carelessly giving Rozinante the reins: And the horse finding himself at liberty, and tempted by the goodness of the grass, took the opportunity to feed very heartily; which Sancho perceiving, "Sir," said he, rousing him from his waking dream, "sorrow was never designed for beasts, but men; but yet let me tell you, if men give way to it too much, they make beasts of themselves. Come, sir, awake, awake by any means; pull up the reins, and ride like a man; cheer up, and shew yourself a knight-errant. What the devil ails you? Was ever a man so moped? Are

we here, or are we in France, as the saying is? Let all the Dulcineas in the world be doomed to the pit of hell, rather than one single knight-errant be cast down at this rate."—"Hold, Sancho," cried Don Quixote, with more spirit than one would have expected; "hold, I say; not a blasphemous word against that beautiful enchanted lady; for all her misfortunes are chargeable on the unhappy Don Quixote, and flow from the envy which those necromancers bear to me."—"So say I, sir," replied the squire; "for would it not vex any one that had seen her before, to see her now as you saw her?"—"Ah, Sancho," said the knight, "thy eyes were blessed with a view of her perfections in their entire lustre, thou hast reason to say so. Against me, against my eyes only is the malice of her transformation directed. But now I think on it, Sancho, thy description of her beauty was a little absurd in that particular, of comparing her eyes to pearls; sure such eyes are more like those of a whiting or a sea-bream, than those of a fair lady; and in my opinion Dulcinea's eyes are rather like two verdant emeralds, railed in with two celestial arches, which signify her eye-brows. Therefore, Sancho, you must take your pearls from her eyes, and apply them to her teeth, for



I verily believe you mistook the one for the other."—"Troth! sir, it might be so," replied Sancho; "for her beauty confounded me, as much as her ugliness did you. But let us leave all to heaven, that knows all things that befall us in this vale of misery, this wicked troublesome world, where we can be sure of nothing without some spice of knavery or imposture. In the mean time, there is a thing comes into my head that puzzles me plaguily. Pray, sir, when you get the better of any giant or knight, and send them to pay homage to the beauty of your lady and mistress, how the devil will the poor knight or giant be able to find this same Dulcinea? I cannot but think how they will be to seek, how they will saunter about, gaping and staring all over Toboso town, and if they should meet her full butt in the middle of the king's highway, yet they will know her no more than they knew the father that begot me."—"Perhaps, Sancho," answered Don Quixote, "the force of her enchantment does not extend so far as to debar vanquished knights and giants from the privilege of seeing her in her unclouded beauties. I will try the experiment on the first I conquer, and will command them to return immediately to me, to inform me of their success."—"I like what

you say main well," quoth Sancho; "we may chance to find out the truth by this means; and if so be my lady is only hid from your worship, she has not so much reason to complain as you may have; but when all comes to all, so our mistress be safe and sound, let us make the best of a bad market, and even go seek adventures. The rest we will leave to time, which is the best doctor in such cases, nay, in worse diseases."

Don Quixote was going to return an answer, but was interrupted by a cart that was crossing the road. He that drove it was a hideous devil, and the cart being open, without either tilt or boughs, exposed a parcel of the most surprising and different shapes imaginable.<sup>1</sup> The first figure that appeared to Don Quixote, was no less than Death itself, though with a human countenance; on the one side of Death stood an Angel, with large wings of different colours; on the other side was placed an Emperor, with a crown that seemed to be of gold; at the feet of death lay Cupid, with his bow, quiver, and arrows, but not blind-fold. Next to these a knight appeared, completely armed except his head, on which, instead of a helmet he wore a hat; whereon was mounted

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix, Note 1, Chapter XI.



a large plume of partly-coloured feathers. There were also several other persons in strange and various dresses. This strange appearance at first somewhat surprised Don Quixote, and frightened the poor squire out of his wits; but presently the knight cleared up on second thoughts, imagining it some rare and hazardous adventure that called on his courage. Pleased with his conceit, and armed with a resolution able to confront any danger, he placed himself in the middle of the road, and with a loud and menacing voice, "You carter, coachman, or devil," cried he, "or whatever you be, let me know immediately whence you come, and whither you go, and what strange figures are those which load that carriage, which by the freight rather seems to be Charon's boat, than any terrestrial vehicle."—"Sir," answered the devil very civilly, stopping his cart, "we are strolling players, that belong to Angulo's company, and it being Corpus-Christi-Tide, we have this morning acted a tragedy, called The Parliament of Death, in a town yonder behind the mountain, and this afternoon we are to play it again in the town you see before us, which being so near, we travel to it in the same clothes we act in, to save the trouble of new dressing our-

selves. That young man plays Death; that other an angel: This woman, sir, our poet's bed-fellow, plays the queen; there is one acts a soldier; he next to him an emperor; and I myself play the Devil; and you must know, the devil is the best part in the play. If you desire to be satisfied in any thing else, do but ask and I will resolve you, for the devil knows every thing."—"Now, by the faith of my function," said Don Quixote, "I find we ought not to give credit to appearances before we have made the experiment of feeling them; for at the discovery of such a scene, I would have sworn some strange adventure had been approaching. I wish you well, good people; drive on to act your play, and if I can be serviceable to you in any particular, believe me ready to assist you with all my heart; for in my very childhood I loved shows, and have been a great admirer of dramatic representations from my youthful days."

During this friendly conversation, it unluckily fell out, that one of the company, anticly dressed, being the fool of the play, came up frisking with his morrice bells, and three full blown cow's bladders fastened to the end of a stick. In this odd appearance he began to flourish his stick in the air, and



bounce his bladders against the ground just at Rozinante's nose. The jingling of the bells, and the rattling noise of the bladders so startled and affrighted the quiet creature, that Don Quixote could not hold him in; and having got the curb betwixt his teeth, away the horse hurried his unwilling rider up and down the plain, with more swiftness than his feeble bones seemed to promise. Sancho, considering the danger of his master's being thrown, presently alighted, and ran as fast as he could to his assistance; but before he could come up to him, Rozinante had made a false step, and laid his master and himself on the ground; which was indeed the common end of Rozinante's mad tricks and presumptuous racing. On the other side, the fool no sooner saw Sancho slide off to help his master, but he leaped upon poor Dapple, and rattling his bladders over the terrified animal's head, made him fly through the fields towards the town where they were to play.

Sancho beheld his master's fall and his ass's flight at the same time, and stood strangely divided in himself, not knowing which to assist first, his master or his beast. At length the duty of a good servant and a faithful squire prevailing, he ran to his master, though every

obstreperous bounce with the bladders upon Dapple's hind-quarters struck him to the very soul, and he could have wished every blow upon his own eye-balls, rather than on the least hair of his ass's tail. In this agony of spirits, he came to Don Quixote, whom he found in far worse circumstances than the poor knight could have wished; and helping him to remount, "O! sir," cried he, "the devil is run away with Dapple."—"What devil?" asked Don Quixote.—"The devil with the bladders," answered Sancho.—"No matter," said Don Quixote, "I will force the traitor to restore him, though he were to lock him up in the most profound and gloomy caverns of hell. Follow me, Sancho; we may easily overtake the waggon, and the mules shall atone for the loss of the ass."—"You need not be in such haste now," quoth Sancho, "for I perceive the devil has left Dapple already, and is gone his ways."

What Sancho said was true, for both ass and devil tumbled for company, in imitation of Don Quixote and Rozinante; and Dapple having left his new rider to walk on foot to the town, now came himself running back to his master. "All this," said Don Quixote, "shall not hinder me from revenging the affront put upon us by that unmannerly devil, at the expense of some



of his companions, though it were the emperor himself."—"O, good your worship," cried Sancho, "never mind it; I beseech you take my counsel, sir; never meddle with players, there is never any thing to be got by it; they are a sort of people that always find a many friends. I have known one of them taken up for two murders, yet escape the gallows. You must know, that as they are a parcel of merry wags, and make sport wherever they come, everybody is fond of them, and is ready to stand their friend, especially if they be the king's players, or some of the noted gangs, who go at such a tearing rate, that one might mistake some of them for gentlemen or lords."—"I care not," said Don Quixote; "though all mankind unite to assist them, that buffooning devil shall never escape unpunished, to make his boast that he has affronted me." Whereupon, riding up to the waggon, which was now got pretty near the town, "Hold, hold," he cried: "stay, my pretty sparks; I will teach you to be civil to the beasts that are entrusted with the honourable burden of a squire to a knight-errant."

This loud salutation having reached the ears of the strolling company, though at a good distance, they presently understood what it

imported; and resolving to be ready to entertain him, Death presently leaped out of the cart; the emperor, the devil-driver, and the angel immediately followed; and even the queen, and the god Cupid, as well as the rest, having taken up their share of flints, stood ranged in battle-array, ready to receive their enemy as soon as he should come within stone-cast. Don Quixote seeing them drawn up in such excellent order, with their arms lifted up, and ready to let fly at him a furious volley of shot, made a halt to consider in what quarter he might attack this dreadful battalion with least danger to his person.

Thus pausing, Sancho overtook him, and seeing him ready to charge, "For goodness sake, sir," cried he, "what d'ye mean? Are you mad, sir? There is no fence against the beggar's bullets, unless you could fight with a brazen bell over you. Is it not rather rashness than true courage, think you, for one man to offer to set upon a whole army? where Death is too, and where emperors fight in person; nay, and where good and bad angels are against you? But if all this weighs nothing with you, consider, I beseech you, that though they seem to be kings, princes, and emperors, yet there is not so much as one knight-errant among them



all."—"Now thou hast hit upon the only point," said Don Quixote, "that could stop the fury of my arm; for, indeed, as I have often told thee, Sancho, I am bound up from drawing my sword against any below the order of knighthood. It is thy business to fight in this cause, if thou hast a just resentment of the indignities offered to thy ass; and I from this post will encourage and assist thee with salutary orders and instructions."—"No, I thank you, sir," quoth Sancho, "I hate revenge; a true Christian must forgive and forget; and as for Dapple, I don't doubt but to find him willing to leave the matter to me, and stand to my verdict in the case, which is to live peaceably and quietly as long as heaven is pleased to let me."—"Nay then," said Don Quixote, "if that be thy resolution, good Sancho, prudent Sancho, Christian Sancho, downright Sancho, let us leave these idle apparitions, and proceed in search of more substantial and honourable adventures, of which, in all probability, this part of the world will afford us a wonderful variety." So saying he wheeled off, and Sancho followed him. On the other side, Death with all his flying squadron returned to their cart, and went on their journey.

Thus ended the most dreadful adventure of

the chariot of Death, much more happily than could have been expected, thanks to the laudable counsels which Sancho Panza gave his master; who the day following had another adventure no less remarkable, with one that was a knight-errant and a lover too.