

CHAPTER XV

GIVING AN ACCOUNT WHO THE KNIGHT OF THE
MIRRORS AND HIS SQUIRE WERE

DON QUIXOTE went on extremely pleased and joyful, priding himself and glorying in the victory he had got over so valiant a knight as the Knight of the Mirrors, and relying on his parole of honour, which he could not violate, without forfeiting his title to chivalry, that he would return to give him an account of his reception, by which means he expected to hear whether his mistress continued under the bonds of enchantment. But Don Quixote dreamed of one thing, and the Knight of the Mirrors thought of another. His only care for the present was how to get cured of his bruises.

Here the history relates, that when the bachelor Carrasco advised Don Quixote to proceed in his former profession of knight-errantry; it was the result of a conference which he had with the curate and the barber, about the best means to prevail with Don Quixote to stay quietly at home, and desist from rambling after

his unlucky adventures. For Carrasco thought, and so did the rest, that it was in vain to pretend to hinder him from going abroad again, and therefore the best way would be to let him go, and that he should meet him by the way, equipped like a knight-errant, and should take an opportunity to fight, and overcome him, which he might easily do; first making an agreement with him, that the vanquished should submit to the victor's discretion: so that after the bachelor had vanquished him, he should command him to return to his house and village, and not offer to depart thence in two years, without permission; which it was not doubted but Don Quixote would religiously observe, for fear of infringing the laws of chivalry; and in this time they hoped he might be weaned of his frantic imaginations, or they might find some means to cure him of his madness. Carrasco undertook this task, and Thomas Cecial, a brisk, pleasant fellow, Sancho's neighbour and gossip, proffered to be his squire. Samson equipped himself, as you have heard, and Thomas Cecial fitted a huge paste-board nose to his own, that his gossip Sancho might not know him when they met. Then they followed Don Quixote so close, that they had like to have overtaken him in the

midst of his adventure with the Chariot of Death; and at last, they found him in the wood, that happened to be the scene of their encounter, which might have proved more fatal to the bachelor, and had spoiled him for ever from taking another degree, had not Don Quixote been so obstinate, in not believing him to be the same man.

And now Thomas Cecial, seeing the ill success of their journey,—“By my troth,” said he, “Master Carrasco, we have been served well enough. It is easy to begin a business, but a hard matter to go through. Don Quixote is mad, and we think ourselves wise; yet he is gone away sound, and laughing in his sleeve; and your worship is left here well banged, and in the dumps: now pray who is the greatest madman, he that is so because he cannot help it, or he that is so for his pleasure?”—“The difference is,” answered the bachelor, “that he that cannot help being mad, will always be so; but he that only plays the fool for his fancy, may give over when he pleases.”—“Well then,” quoth Cecial, “I, who was pleased to play the fool in going a squire-erranting with your worship, for the self-same reason will give it over now, and even make the best of my way home again.”—“Do as you will,” replied

Carrasco, “but it is a folly to think I ever will go home, till I have swingeingly paid that unaccountable madman. It is not that he may recover his wits neither: no, it is pure revenge now, for the pain in my bones won’t give me leave to have any manner of charity for him.” Thus they went on discoursing, till at last they got to a town, where, by good fortune, they met with a bone-setter, who gave the bruised bachelor some ease. Thomas Cecial left him, and went home, while the other staid to meditate revenge. In due time the history will speak of him again, but must not now forget to entertain you with Don Quixote’s joy.