

## CHAPTER XXXI

WHICH TREATS OF MANY AND GREAT MATTERS

SANCHO was overjoyed to find himself so much in the duchess's favour, flattering himself that he should fare no worse at her castle, than he had done at Don Diego's and Basil's houses; for he was ever a cordial friend to a plentiful way of living, and therefore never failed to take such opportunities by the foretop wherever he met them. Now the history tells us, that before they got to the castle, the duke rode away from them, to instruct his servants how to behave themselves toward Don Quixote; so that no sooner did the knight come near the gates, but he was met by two of the duke's lacquies or grooms in long vests, like night-gowns, of fine crimson satin. These suddenly took him in their arms, and, lifting him from his horse without any further ceremony, "Go, great and mighty sir," said they, "and help my Lady Duchess down." Thereupon Don Quixote went and offered to do it; and many compliments, and much ceremony passed on both sides: but in conclusion, the duchess's

earnestness prevailed; for she would not alight from her palfrey but in the arms of her husband, excusing herself from incommoding so great a knight with so insignificant a burden. With that the duke took her down.

And now, being entered into a large courtyard, there came two beautiful damsels, who threw a long mantle of fine scarlet over Don Quixote's shoulders. In an instant, all the galleries about the court-yard were crowded with men and women, the domestics of the duke, who cried out, "Welcome, welcome, the flower and cream of knight-errantry!" Then most, if not all of them, sprinkled whole bottles of sweet water upon Don Quixote,<sup>1</sup> the duke, and the duchess: All which agreeably surprised the Don, and this was indeed the first day he knew and firmly believed himself to be a real knight-errant, and that his knight-hood was more than fancy; finding himself treated just as he had read the brothers of the order were entertained in former ages.

Sancho was so transported, that he even forsook his beloved Dapple, to keep close to the duchess, and entered the castle with the company: But his conscience flying in his face for leaving that dear companion of his alone, he

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

went to a reverend old waiting-woman, who was one of the duchess's retinue, and whispering her in the ear, "Mrs Gonsalez, or Mrs— pray forsooth may I crave your name?"—"Donna Rodriguez de Grijalva is my name," said the old duenna; "what is your business with me, friend?"—"Pray now, mistress," quoth Sancho, "do so much as go out at the castle gate, where you will find a dapple ass of mine; see him put into the stable, or else put him in yourself; for poor thing, it is main fearful and timorsome, and cannot abide to be alone in a strange place."—"If the master," said she pettishly, "has no more manners than the man, we shall have a fine time on't. Get you gone, you saucy jack! the devil take thee and him that brought you hither to affront me. Go seek somewhere else for ladies to look to your ass, you lolpoop! I would have you to know, that gentlewomen like me are not used to such drudgeries."—"Don't take pepper in your nose at it," replied Sancho; "you need not be so frumpish, mistress. As good as you have done it. I have heard my master say (and he knows all the histories in the world), that when Sir Lancelot came out of Britain, damsels looked after him, and waiting-women after his horse. Now, by my troth, whether

you believe it or no, I would not swop my ass for Sir Lancelot's horse, I'll tell you that."—"I think the fool rides the fellow," quoth the waiting-woman: "hark you, friend, if you be a buffoon, keep your stuff for those chapmen that will bid you fairer. I would not give a fig for all the jests in your budget."—"Well enough yet," quoth Sancho, "and a fig for you too, an' you go to that: Adad! should I take thee for a fig, I might be sure of a ripe one! your fig is rotten ripe, forsooth; say no more: if sixty is the game, you are a peep out."—"You rascally son of a whore," cried the waiting-woman, in a pelting chafe, "whether I am old or no, heaven best knows; I shall not stand to give an account to such a raggamuffin as thou, thou garlic eating stinkard."

She spoke this so loud that the duchess overheard her, and, seeing the woman so altered, and as red as fire, asked what was the matter. "Why, madam," said the waiting-woman, "here is a fellow would have me put his ass in the stable, telling me an idle story of ladies that looked after one Lancelot, and waiting-women after his horse; and because I won't be his hostler, the rake-shame very civilly calls me old."—"Old!" said the duchess, "that is an affront no woman can well bear. You are

mistaken, honest Sancho, Rodriguez is very young; and the long veil she wears is more for authority and fashion-sake than upon account of her years."—"May there be never a good one in all those I have to live," quoth Sancho, "if I meant her any harm; only I have such a natural love for my ass, an't like your worship, that I thought I could not recommend the poor tit to a more charitable body than this same Madam Rodriguez."—"Sancho," said Don Quixote, with a sour look, "does this talk befit this place? Do you know where you are?"—"Sir," quoth Sancho, "every man must tell his wants, be he where he will. Here I bethought myself of Dapple, and here I spoke of him. Had I called him to mind in the stable, I would have spoken of him there."

"Sancho has reason on his side," said the duke, "and nobody ought to chide him for it. But let him take no further care; Dapple shall have as much provender as he will eat, and be used as well as Sancho himself."

These small jars being over, which yielded diversion to all the company except Don Quixote, he was led up a stately staircase, and then into a noble hall, sumptuously hung with rich gold brocade. There his armour was taken

off by six young damsels, that served him instead of pages, all of them fully instructed by the duke and duchess how to behave themselves so towards Don Quixote, that he might look on his entertainment as conformable to those which the famous knights-errant received of old.

When he was unarmed he appeared in his close breeches and chamois doublet, raw-boned and meagre, tall and lank, with a pair of lantern jaws, that met in the middle of his mouth; in short, he made so very odd a figure, that, notwithstanding the strict injunction the duke had laid on the young females who waited on him to stifle their laughter, they were hardly able to contain. They desired he would give them leave to take off his clothes, and put him on a clean shirt; but he would by no means permit it, giving them to understand that modesty was as commendable a virtue in a knight as valour; and therefore he desired them to leave the shirt with Sancho; and then, retiring to an adjacent chamber, where there was a rich bed, he locked himself up with his squire, pulled off his clothes, shifted himself, and then, while they were alone, he began to take him to task.

"Now," said he, "modern buffoon and jolter-

head of old, what canst thou say for thyself? Where learned you to abuse such a venerable ancient gentlewoman, one so worthy of respect, as Donna Rodriguez? Was that a proper time to think of your Dapple? or can you think persons of quality, who nobly entertain the masters, forget to provide for their beasts? For heaven's sake, Sancho, mend thy behaviour, and do not betray thy home-spun breeding, lest thou be thought a scandal to thy master. Dost not thou know, saucy rustic, that the world often makes an estimate of the master's discretion by that of his servant, and that one of the most considerable advantages the great have over their inferiors, is to have servants as good as themselves? Art thou not sensible, pitiful fellow as thou art, the more unhappy I, that if they find thee a gross clown, or a mad buffoon, they will take me for some hedge-knight, or a paltry shifting rook? Pr'ythee, therefore, dear Sancho, shun these inconveniences; for he that aims too much at jests and drolling, is apt to trip and tumble, and is at last despised as an insipid ridiculous buffoon. Then curb thy tongue, think well, and ponder thy words before they get loose; and take notice, we are come to a place, whence, by the assistance of heaven, and the force of this puis-

sant arm, we may depart better five to one in fortune and reputation." Sancho promised to behave himself better for the future, and to sew up his mouth, or bite out his tongue, rather than speak one word which was not duly considered, and to the purpose; so that his master need not fear any one should find out what they were.

Don Quixote then dressed himself, put on his belt and sword, threw his scarlet cloak over his shoulders, and clapt on a monter cap of green velvet,<sup>1</sup> which had been left him by the damsels. Thus accoutred he entered the state-room, where he found the damsels ranged in two rows, attending with water, and all necessaries to wash him in state; and, having done him that office, with many humble courtesies, and solemn ceremonies, immediately twelve pages, with the gentleman-sewer at the head of them, came to conduct him to supper,<sup>2</sup> letting him know that the duke and duchess expected him. Accordingly they led them in great pomp, some walking before and some behind, into another room, where a table was magnificently set out for four people.

As soon as he approached, the duke and the

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix, Note 2, Chapter XXXI.

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix, Note 3, Chapter XXXI.