Don Quixote gave this reverend person the hearing with great patience. But at last, seeing him silent, without minding his respect to the duke and duchess, up he started with indignation and fury in his looks, and said—— But his answer deserves a chapter by itself.

CHAPTER XXXII

DON QUIXOTE'S ANSWER TO HIS REPROVER, WITH OTHER GRAVE AND MERRY ACCIDENTS

Don Quixote being thus suddenly got up, shaking from head to foot for madness, as if he had quicksilver in his bones, cast an angry look on his indiscreet censor, and, with an eager delivery, sputtering and stammering with choler, "This place," cried he, "the presence of these noble persons, and the respect I have always had for your function, check my just resentment, and tie up my hands from taking the satisfaction of a gentleman. For these reasons, and since every one knows that you gown-men, as well as women, use no other weapons but your tongues, I will fairly engage you upon equal terms, and combat you at your own weapon. I should rather have expected sober admonitions from a man of your cloth, than infamous reproaches. Charitable and wholesome correction ought to be managed at another rate, and with more moderation. The least that can be said of this reproof which you

have given me here so bitterly, and in public, is, that it has exceeded the bounds of christian correction, and a gentle one had been much more becoming. Is it fit that, without any insight into the offence which you reprove, you should, without any more ado, call the offender fool, sot, and addle-pate? Pray, sir, what foolish action have you seen me do, that should provoke you to give me such ill language, and bid me so magisterially go home to look after my wife and children, before you know whether I have any? Don't you think those deserve as severe a censure, who screw themselves into other men's houses, and pretend to rule the master? A fine world it is truly, when a poor pedant, who has seen no more of it than lies within twenty or thirty leagues about him, shall take upon him to prescribe laws to knight-errantry, and judge of those who profess it! You, forsooth, esteem it an idle undertaking, and time lost, to wander through the world, though scorning its pleasures, and sharing the hardships and toils of it, by which the virtuous aspire to the high seat of immortality. If persons of honour, knights, lords, gentlemen, or men of any birth, should take me for a fool or a coxcomb, I should think it an irreparable affront. But for mere scholars, that

never trod the paths of chivalry, to think me mad, I despise and laugh at it. I am a knight, and a knight will I die, if so it please Omnipotence. Some choose the high road of haughty ambition; others the low ways of base servile flattery; a third sort take the crooked path of deceitful hypocrisy; and a few, very few, that of true religion. I, for my own part, guided by my stars, follow the narrow track of knight-errantry; and, for the exercise of it, I despise riches, but not honour. I have redressed grievances, and righted the injured, chastised the insolent, vanquished giants, and trod elves and hobgoblins under my feet. I am in love, but no more than the profession of knight-errantry obliges me to be; yet I am none of this age's vicious lovers, but a chaste Platonic. My intentions are all directed to virtuous ends, and to do no man wrong, but good to all the world. And now let your graces judge, most excellent duke and duchess, whether a person who makes it his only study to practice all this, deserves to be upbraided for a fool."

"Well said, i'faith!" quoth Sancho; "say no more for yourself, my good lord and master; stop when you are well; for there is not the least matter to be added more on your side,

either in word, thought, or deed. Besides, since Mr Parson has had the face to say, point-blank, as one may say, that there neither are, nor ever were, any knights-errant in the world, no marvel he does not know what he says."—"What!" said the clergyman, "I warrant you are that Sancho Panza, to whom they say your master has promised an island?" —"Ay, marry am I," answered Sancho; "and I am he that deserves it as well as another body; and I am one of those of whom they say, Keep with good men, and thou shalt be one of them; and of those of whom it is said again, Not with whom thou wert bred, but with whom thou hast fed; as also, Lean against a good tree, and it will shelter thee. I have leaned and stuck close to my good master, and kept him company this many a month; and now he and I are all one; and I must be as he is, and it be heaven's blessed will; and so he live, and I live, he will not want kingdoms to rule, nor shall I want islands to govern."

"That thou shalt not, honest Sancho," said the duke; "for I, on the great Don Quixote's account, will now give thee the government of an odd one of my own of no small consequence." —"Down, down on thy knees, Sancho," cried Don Quixote, "and kiss his grace's feet for

this favour." Sancho did accordingly; but when the clergyman saw it, he got up in a great heat. "By the habit which I wear," cried he, "I can scarce forbear telling your grace, that you are as mad as these sinful wretches. Well may they be mad, when such wise men as you humour and authorize their frenzy. You may keep them here, and stay with them yourself, if your grace pleases; but for my part, I will leave you and go home, to save myself the labour of reprehending what I can't mend." With that, leaving the rest of his dinner behind him, away he flung, the duke and the duchess not being able to pacify him; though, indeed, the duke could not say much to him, for laughing at his impertinent passion.

When he had done laughing, "Sir Knight of the Lions," he said, "you have answered so well for yourself and your profession, that you need no farther satisfaction of the angry clergyman; especially if you consider, that whatever he might say, it was not in his power to fix an affront on a person of your character, since women and churchmen cannot give an affront." —"Very true, my lord," said Don Quixote; "and the reason is, because he that cannot receive an affront, consequently can give none.

Women, children, and churchmen, as they cannot vindicate themselves when they are injured, so neither are they capable of receiving an affront; for there is this difference betwixt an affront and injury, as your grace very well knows, an affront must come from a person that is both able to give it, and maintain it when he has given it. An injury may be done by any sort of people whatsoever: for example, a man walking in the street about his business, is set upon by ten armed men, who cudgel him. He draws his sword to revenge the injury, but the assailants overpowering him, he cannot have the satisfaction he desired. This man is injured, but not affronted. But to confirm it by another instance: suppose a man comes behind another's back, hits him a box on the ear, and then runs away, the other follows him, but can't overtake him. He that has received the blow has received an injury, it is true, but not an affront; because to make it an affront, it should have been justified. But if he that gave it, though he did it basely, stands his ground, and faces his adversary, then he that received is both injured and affronted. Injured, because he was struck in a cowardly manner; affronted, because he that struck him stood his ground to maintain what he had done. There-

fore, according to the settled laws of duelling, I may be injured, but am not affronted. Children can have no resentment, and women can't fly, nor are they obliged to stand it out; and it is the same thing with the clergy, for they carry no arms, either offensive or defensive. Therefore, though they are naturally bound by the laws of self-preservation to defend themselves, yet are they not obliged to offend others. Upon second thoughts then, though I said just now I was injured, I think now I am not; for he that can receive no affront can give none. Therefore I ought not to have any resentment for what that good man said, neither, indeed, have I any. I only wish he would have staid a little longer, that I might have convinced him of his error in believing there were never any knights-errant in the world. Had Amadis, or any one of his innumerable race, but heard him say anything like this, I can assure his reverence it would have gone hard with him."

"I will be sworn it would," quoth Sancho; "they would have undone him as you would undo an oyster, and have cleft him from head to foot as one would slice a pomegranate, or a ripe musk-melon, take my word for it. They were a parcel of tough blades, and would not have swallowed such a pill. By the mackins I

verily believe, had Rinaldo of Montalban but heard the poor toad talk at this rate, he would have laid him on such a polt over the chaps with his shoulder-o'-mutton fist, as would have secured him from prating these three years. Ay, ay, if he had fallen into their clutches, see how he would have got out again!"

The duchess was ready to die with laughing at Sancho, whom she thought a more pleasant fool, and a greater madman than his master; and she was not the only person at that time of this opinion. In short, Don Quixote being pacified, they made an end of dinner, and then, while some of the servants were taking away, there came in four damsels, one carrying a silver basin, another an ewer of the same metal; a third two very fine towels over her arm, and the fourth, with her sleeves tucked above her elbows, held in her lily-white hand (for exceeding white it was) a large wash-ball of Naples soap. Presently she that held the basin, went very civilly, and clapped it under Don Quixote's chin, while he, wondering at this extraordinary ceremony, yet fancying it was the custom of the country to wash the face instead of the hands, thrust out his long chin, without speaking a word, and then the ewer began to rain on his face, and the damsel

that brought the wash-ball fell to work, and belathered his beard so effectually, that the suds, like huge flakes of snow, flew all over the passive knight's face; insomuch, that he was forced to shut his eyes.

The duke and duchess, who knew nothing of the matter, stood expecting where this extraordinary scouring would end. The female barber, having thus laid the knight's face a-soaking a handful high in suds, pretended she wanted water, and sent another with the ewer for more, telling her the gentleman would stay for it. She went and left him in one of the most odd ridiculous figures that can be imagined. There he sat exposed to all the company, with half a yard of neck stretched out, his bristly beard and chaps all in a white foam, which did not at all mend his walnut complexion; insomuch, that it is not a little strange how those, that had so comical a spectacle before them, could forbear laughing outright. The malicious damsels, who had a hand in the plot, did not dare to look up, nor let their eyes meet those of their master or mistress, who stood strangely divided between anger and mirth, not knowing what to do in the case, whether they should punish the girls for their boldness, or reward them for the diver-

sion they took in seeing the knight in that posture.

At last the maid came back with the water, and the other having rinsed off the soap, she that held the linen, gently wiped and dried the knight's beard and face; after which all four dropping a low curtsey, were going out of the room. But the duke, that Don Quixote might not smell the jest, called to the damsel that carried the basin, and ordered her to come and wash him too, but be sure she had water enough. The wench, being sharp and cunning, came and put the basin under the duke's chin, as she had done to Don Quixote, but with a quicker despatch; and then having dried him clean, they all made their honours, and went off. It was well they understood their master's meaning, in serving him as they did the knight; for as it was afterwards known, had they not done it, the duke was resolved to have made them pay dear for their frolic.

Sancho took great notice of all the ceremonies at this washing.—" 'Slife!" quoth he, "I would fain know whether 'tis not the custom of this country to scrub the squire's beard, as well as the knight's; for o' my conscience mine wants it not a little. Nay, if they would run it over with a razor too, so

much the better."—"What art thou talking to thyself, Sancho?" said the duchess.—"Why, an't like your grace's worship," quoth Sancho, "I am only saying, that I have been told how in other great houses, when the cloth is taken away, they use to give folks water to wash their hands, and not suds to scour their beards. I see now it is good to live and learn. There's a saying indeed, He that lives long suffers much. But I have a huge fancy, that to suffer one of these same scourings is rather a pleasure than a pain."—"Well, Sancho," said the duchess, "trouble thyself no farther, I will see that one of my maids shall wash thee, and if there be occasion, lay thee a bucking too."—"My beard is all I want to have scrubbed at present," quoth Sancho. "As for the rest we will think on it another time."—"Here, steward," said the duchess, "see that Sancho has what he has a mind to, and be sure do just as he would have you." The steward told her grace, that Signior Sancho should want for nothing; and so he took Sancho along with him to dinner.

Meanwhile Don Quixote staid with the duke and duchess, talking of several matters, but all relating to arms and knight-errantry. The duchess then took an opportunity to desire the

knight to give a particular description of the Lady Dulcinea del Toboso's beauty and accomplishments, not doubting but his good memory would enable him to do it well; adding withal, that according to the voice of fame, she must needs be the finest creature in the whole world, and consequently in all La Mancha.

With that, Don Quixote, fetching a deep sigh, "Madam," said he, "could I rip out my heart, and expose it to your grace's view in a dish on this table, I might save my tongue the labour of attempting that which it cannot express, and you can scarce believe; for there your grace would see her beauty depainted to the life. But why should I undertake to delineate, and copy one by one each several perfection of the peerless Dulcinea! That burden must be sustained by stronger shoulders than mine: That task were worthy of the pencils of Parrhasius, Timantes, and Apelles, or the graving-tools of Lysippus. The hands of the best painters and statuaries should indeed be employed to give in speaking paint, in marble and Corinthian brass, an exact copy of her beauties; while Ciceronian and Demosthenian eloquence laboured to reach the praise of her endowments."—"Pray, sir," asked the duchess, "what do you mean by that word

Demosthenian?"—"Demosthenian eloquence, madam," said Don Quixote, "is as much as to say, the eloquence of Demosthenes, and the Ciceronian that of Cicero, the two greatest orators that ever were in the world."—"It is true," said the duke; "and you but shewed your ignorance, my dear, in asking such a question. Yet the noble Don Quixote would highly oblige us, if he would but be pleased to attempt her picture now; for even in a rude draught of her lineaments, I question not but she will appear so charming, as to deserve the envy of the brightest of her sex."—"Ah! my lord," said Don Quixote, "it would be so indeed, if the misfortune which not long since befel her, had not in a manner razed her idea out of the seat of my memory; and as it is, I ought rather to bewail her change, than describe her person: For your grace must know that as I lately went to kiss her hands, and obtain her benediction and leave for my intended absence in quest of new adventures, I found her quite another creature than I expected. I found her enchanted, transformed from a princess to a country-wench, from beauty to ugliness, from courtliness to rusticity, from a reserved lady to a jumping Joan, from sweetness itself to the stench of a pole-cat, from light to darkness,