

the bright luminary of squire-like fidelity. Rise, my friend Sancho, and assure yourself, that for the recompense of your civilities, I will persuade my lord duke to put you in possession of the government he promised you as soon as he can."

After this, Don Quixote went to take his afternoon's sleep; but the duchess desired Sancho, if he were not very sleepy, he would pass the afternoon with her and her women in a cool room. Sancho told her grace, that indeed he did use to take a good sound nap, some four or five hours long, in a summer's afternoon; but to do her good honour a kindness, he would break an old custom for once, and do his best to hold up that day, and wait on her worship. The duke, on his side, gave fresh orders that Don Quixote should be entertained exactly like a knight-errant, without deviating the least step from the road of chivalry, such as is observable in books of that kind.

CHAPTER XXXIII

THE SAVOURY CONFERENCE WHICH THE DUCHESS
AND HER WOMEN HELD WITH SANCHO PANZA,
WORTH YOUR READING AND OBSERVATION

THE story afterwards informs us, that Sancho slept not a wink all that afternoon, but waited on the duchess as he had promised. Being mightily taken with his comical discourse, she ordered him to take a low chair, and sit by her; but Sancho, who knew better things, absolutely declined it, till she pressed him again to sit, as he was a governor, and speak as he was a squire; in both which capacities he deserved the very seat of Cid Ruy Diaz, the famous champion. Sancho shrugged up his shoulders, and obeyed, and all the duchess's women standing round about her to give her silent attention, she began the conference.

"Now that we are private," said she, "and nobody to overhear us, I would desire you, my lord governor, to resolve me of some doubts in the printed history of the great Don Quixote, which puzzle me very much. First, I find that

the good Sancho had never seen Dulcinea, the Lady Dulcinea del Toboso I should have said, nor carried her his master's letter, as having left the table-book behind him in Sierra Morena; how then durst he feign an answer, and pretend he found her winnowing wheat? A fiction and banter so injurious to the reputation of the peerless Dulcinea, and so great a blemish on the character of a faithful squire!" Here Sancho got up without speaking a word, laid his finger on his lips, and, with his body bent, crept cautiously round the room, lifting up the hangings, and peeping in every hole and corner. At last, finding the coast clear, he returned to his seat. "Now," quoth he, "Madam Duchess, since I find there is nobody here but ourselves, you shall e'en hear, without fear or favour, the truth of the story, and what else you will ask of me, but not a word of the pudding. First and foremost I must tell you, I look on my master, Don Quixote, to be no better than a downright madman, though sometimes he will stumble on a parcel of sayings so quaint, and so tightly put together, that the devil himself could not mend them; but in the main I can't beat it out of my noddle but that he is as mad as a March hare. Now, because I am pretty

confident of knowing his blind side, whatever crotchets come into my crown, though without either head or tail, yet can I make them pass upon him for gospel. Such was the answer to his letter, and another sham that I put upon him but the other day, and is not in print yet, touching my Lady Dulcinea's enchantment; for you must know, between you and I, she is no more enchanted than the man in the moon."

With that, at the duchess's request, he related the whole passage of the late pretended enchantment very faithfully, to the great diversion of the hearers. "But, sir," said the duchess, "I have another scruple in this affair no less unaccountable than the former; for I think I hear something whisper me in the ear, and say, If Don Quixote de la Mancha be such a shallow-brains, why does Sancho Panza, who knows him to be so, wait upon this madman, and rely thus upon his vain extravagant promises? I can only infer from this, that the man is more a fool than the master; and if so, will not Madam Duchess be thought as mad as either of them, to bestow the government of an island, or the command of others, on one who can't govern himself?"—"By our Lady," quoth Sancho, "your scruple comes in pudding-

time! But it need not whisper in your ear; it may e'en speak plain, and as loud as it will. I am a fool, that is certain; for if I had been wise, I had left my master many a fair day since; but it was my luck, and my vile errantry, and that is all can be said on't. I must follow him through thick and thin. We are both towns-born children;—I have eaten his bread—I love him well, and there is no love lost between us. He pays me very well, he has given me three colts, and I am so very true and trusty to him, that nothing but death can part us. And if your high and mightiness does not think fit to let me have this same government, why, so be it; with less was I born, and with less shall I die; it may be for the good of my conscience to go without it. I am a fool, it is true, but yet I understand the meaning of the saying, The pismire had wings to do her hurt; and Sancho the squire may sooner get to heaven than Sancho the governor. There is as good bread baked here as in France, and Joan is as good as my lady in the dark. In the night all cats are grey. Unhappy he is that wants his breakfast at two in the afternoon. It is always good fasting after a good breakfast. There is no man has a stomach a yard bigger than another; but let it be never

so big, there will be hay and straw enough to fill it. A bellyful is a bellyful. The sparrow speeds as well as the sparrow-hawk. Good serge is fine, but coarse cloth is warm; and four yards of the one are as long as four yards of the other. When the hour is come we must all be packed off: the prince and the prick-louse go the same way at last; the road is no fairer for the one than the other. The Pope's body takes up no more room than the sexton's, though one be taller; for when they come to the pit all are alike, or made so in spite of our teeth,* and so good-night, or good-morrow, which you please. And let me tell you again, if you don't think fit to give me an island because I am a fool, I will be so wise as not to care whether you do or no. It is an old saying, The devil lurks behind the cross. All is not gold that glisters. From the tail of the plough, Bamba was made king of Spain; and from his silks and riches, was Rodrigo cast to be devoured by the snakes, if the old ballads say true, and sure they are too old to tell a lie." —"That they are indeed," said Donna Rodriguez, the old waiting-woman, who listened among the rest, "for I remember one

* The common sort in Spain are buried without coffins, which is the reason Sancho is made to suppose, if the grave be not long enough, they bow the body, and cram it in.

of the ballads tells us, how Don Rodrigo was shut up alive in a tomb full of toads, snakes, and lizards; and how, after two days, he was heard to cry out of the tomb in a low and doleful voice, 'Now they eat me, now they gnaw me, in the part where I sinned most.' And according to this the gentleman is in the right in saying he had rather be a poor labourer than a king, to be gnawed to death by vermin."

Sancho's proverbial aphorisms, and the simple waiting-woman's comment upon the text, were no small diversion to the duchess. "You know," said she, "honest Sancho, that the promise of a gentleman or knight, must be as precious and sacred to him as his life; I make no question then but that my lord duke, who is also a knight, though not of your master's order, will infallibly keep his word with you in respect of your government. Take courage then, Sancho, for when you least dream on't, in spite of all the envy and malice of the world, you will suddenly see yourself in full possession of your government, and seated in your chair of state in your rich robes, with all your marks and ornaments of power about you. But be sure to administer true justice to your vassals, who, by their loyalty and discretion, will merit no less at your hands."

"As for the governing part," quoth Sancho, "let me alone: I was ever charitable and good to the poor, and scorn to take the bread out of another man's mouth. On the other side, by our Lady, they shall play me no foul play. I am an old cur at a crust, and can sleep dog-sleep when I list. I can look sharp as well as another, and let me alone to keep the cobwebs out of my eyes. I know where the shoe wrings me. I will know who and who is together. Honesty is the best policy: I will stick to that. The good shall have my hand and heart, but the bad neither foot nor fellowship. And in my mind, the main point in this point of governing, is to make a good beginning. I will lay my life, that as simple as Sancho sits here, in a fortnight's time he will manage ye this same island as rightly as a sheaf of barley."

"You say well, Sancho," said the duchess, "for time ripens all things. No man is born wise. Bishops are made of men, and not of stones. But to return once more to the Lady Dulcinea;—I am more than half persuaded that Sancho's design of putting the trick upon his master, was turned into a greater cheat upon himself. For I am well assured, that the creature whom you fancied to be a country wench, and took so much pains to persuade your

master that she was Dulcinea del Toboso, was really the same Dulcinea del Toboso, and really enchanted, as Don Quixote thought; and the magicians that persecute your master first invented that story, and put it into your head. For you must know, that we have our enchanters here, that have a kindness for us, and give us an account of what happens in the world faithfully and impartially, without any tricks or equivocations. And take my word for it, the jumping country wench was, and is still, Dulcinea del Toboso, who is as certainly enchanted as the mother that bore her; and when we least expect it, we shall see her again in her true shape, and in all her native lustre; and then Sancho will find it was he himself was bubbled."

"Troth, madam," quoth Sancho, "all this might well be: and now I am apt to believe what my master tells me of Montesinos' cave; where, as he says, he saw my Lady Dulcinea del Toboso in the self same garb, and as handsome as I told him I had seen her when it came into my noddle to tell him she was enchanted. Ay, my lady, it must be quite contrary to what I weened, as your worship's grace well observes; for, Lord bless us! who the devil can imagine that such a numskull as I should have

it in him to devise so cunning a trick of a sudden? Besides, who can think that my master's such a goose, as to believe so unlikely a matter upon the single vouching of such a dunder-head fellow as I? But for all that, my good lady, I hope you know better things than to think me a knave; alack-a-day, it can't be expected that such an ignoramus as I am, should be able to divine into the tricks and wiles of wicked magicians. I invented that flam only, because my master would never leave teasing me; but I had no mind to abuse him, not I; and if it fell out otherwise than I mean, who can help it? Heaven knows my heart."

"That is honestly said," answered the duchess; "but pray tell me, Sancho, what was it you were speaking of Montesinos's cave? I have a great mind to know the story." Thereupon Sancho having related the whole matter to the duchess; "Look you," said she, "this exactly makes out what I said to you just now; for since the great Don Quixote affirms he saw there the same country-wench that Sancho met coming from Toboso, it is past all doubt it was Dulcinea; and this shews the enchanters are a subtle sort of people, that will know every thing, and give a quick and sure information."

“Well,” quoth Sancho, “if my Lady Dulcinea del Toboso be enchanted, it is the worse for her: What have I to do to quarrel with all my master’s enemies? They can’t be few for aught I see, and they are plaguy fellows to deal withal. Thus much I dare say, she I saw was a country-wench; a country-wench I took her to be, and a country-wench I left her. Now if that same dowdy was Dulcinea in good earnest, how can I help it? I ought not to be called to an account for it. No, let the saddle be set upon the right horse, or we shall ne’er have done. Sancho told me this, cries one, Sancho told me that, cries t’other; Sancho o’ this side, Sancho o’ that side; Sancho did this, and Sancho did that; as if Sancho were I don’t know who, and not the same Sancho that goes already far and near through the world in books, as Samson Carasco tells me, and he is no less than a bachelor of arts at Salamanca varsity, and such folks as he can’t tell a lie, unless they be so disposed, or it stands them in good stead. So let nobody meddle or make, nor offer to pick a quarrel with me about the matter, since I am a man of reputation; and as my master says, a good name is better than riches. Clap me but into this same govern-

ment* once, and you shall see wonders. He that has been a good servant, will make a good master, a trusty squire will make a rare governor I will warrant you.”—“Sancho speaks like an oracle,” said the duchess; “every thing he says is a sentence like those of Cato, or at least the very marrow of Michael Verino:¹ *Florentibus occidit annis*; that is, he died in his spring: In short, to speak after his way, under a bad cloak look for a good drinker.”

“Faith and troth, Madam Duchess,” quoth Sancho, “I never drank out of malice in my born days; for thirst perhaps I may; for I have not a bit of hypocrisy in me. I drink when I have occasion, and sometimes when I have no occasion: I am no proud man, d’ye see, and when the liquor is offered me I whip it off, that they may not take me for a churl or a sneaksby, or think I don’t understand myself nor good manners; for when a friend or a good-fellow drinks and puts the glass to one, who can be so hard-hearted as to refuse to pledge him, when it costs nothing but to open one’s mouth? However, I commonly look before I leap, and take no more than needs must. And truly there’s no fear that we poor

* In the original *encaxen me esse gobierno*, i.e. case me but in this same government.

¹ See Appendix, Note 1, Chapter XXXIII.

squires to knights-errant should be great trespassers that way. Alack-a-day! mere element must be our daily beverage,—ditch-water, for want of better,—in woods and deserts, on rocks and mountains, without lighting on the blessing of one merciful drop of wine, though you would give one of your eyes for a single gulp.”

“I believe it, Sancho,” said the duchess; “but now it grows late, and therefore go and take some rest; after that we’ll have a longer conversation, and will take measures about *clapping* you suddenly into this same government, as you are pleased to word it.” Sancho kissed the duchess’s hand once more, and begged her worship’s grace that special care might be taken of his Dapple, for that he was the light of his eyes.—“What is that Dapple?” asked the duchess. “My beast, an’t like your honour,” answered Sancho; “my ass I would say, saving your presence; but because I won’t call him ass, which is so common a name among men, I call him Dapple. It is the very same beast I would have given charge of to that same gentlewoman when I came first to this castle; but her back was up presently, and she flew out as I had called her ugly face, old witch, and what not. However, I’ll be judged

by any one, whether such-like sober grave bodies as she and other duennas are, be not fitter to look after asses, than to sit with a prim countenance to grace a fine state-room? Passion of my heart! what a deadly grudge a certain gentleman of our town, that shall be nameless, had to these creatures! I mean these old waiting gentlewomen.”—“Some filthy clown I dare engage,” said Donna Rodriguez the duenna; “had he been a gentleman, or a person of good breeding, he would have praised them up to the skies.”—“Well,” said the duchess, “let us have no more of that; let Donna Rodriguez hold her tongue, and Signior Sancho Panza go to his repose, and leave me to take care of his Dapple’s good entertainment; for since I find him to be one of Sancho’s moveables, I will place him in my esteem above the apple of my eye.”—“Place him in the stable, my good lady,” replied Sancho, “that is as much as he deserves; neither he nor I are worthy of being placed a minute of an hour where you said. Odsbods! I’d sooner be stuck in the guts with a butcher’s knife, than you should be served so; I am better bred than that comes to; for though my lord and master has taught me, that in point of haviour one ought rather to over-do than under-do, yet

when the case lies about an ass and the ball of one's eye, it is best to think twice, and go warily about the matter."—"Well," said the duchess, "your ass may go with you to the government, and there you may feed him, and pamper him, and make as much of him as you please."—"Adad! my lady," quoth Sancho, "don't let your worship think this will be such a strange matter neither. I have seen more asses than one go to a government before now; and if mine goes too, it will be no new thing e'trow."

Sancho's words again set the duchess a-laughing; and so sending him to take his rest, she went to the duke, and gave him an account of the pleasant discourse between her and the squire. After this they resolved to have some notable contrivance to make sport with Don Quixote, and of such a romantic cast as should humour his knight-errantry. And so successful they were in their management of that interlude, that it may well be thought one of the best adventures in this famous history.

CHAPTER XXXIV

CONTAINING WAYS AND MEANS FOR DISENCHANTING THE PEERLESS DULCINEA DEL TOBOSO, BEING ONE OF THE MOST FAMOUS ADVENTURES IN THE WHOLE BOOK

THE duke and duchess were extremely diverted with the humours of their guests. Resolving, therefore, to improve their sport, by carrying on some pleasant design, that might bear the appearance of an adventure, they took the hint from Don Quixote's account of Montesinos' cave, as a subject from which they might raise an extraordinary entertainment; the rather, since, to the duchess's amazement, Sancho's simplicity was so great, as to believe that Dulcinea del Toboso was really enchanted, though he himself had been the first contriver of the story, and her only enchanter.

Accordingly, having given directions to their servants that nothing might be wanting, and proposed a day for hunting the wild boar, in five or six days they were ready to set out, with a train of huntsmen and other attendants