

## CHAPTER XXXIX

WHERE TRIFALDI CONTINUES HER STUPENDOUS AND  
MEMORABLE STORY

IF every word that Sancho spoke gave the duchess new pleasure, every thing he said put Don Quixote to as much pain: so that he commanded him silence, and gave the matron opportunity to go on. "In short," said she, "the business was debated a good while; and, after many questions and answers, the princess firmly persisting in her first declaration, judgment was given in favour of Don Clavijo, which Queen Maguntia, her mother, took so to heart, that we buried her about three days after."—"Then, without doubt, she died," quoth Sancho.—"That is a clear case," replied Trifaldin; "for, in Candaya, they do not use to bury the living, but the dead."—"But, with your good leave, Mr Squire," answered Sancho, "people that were in a swoon have been buried alive before now; and methinks Queen Maguntia should only have swooned away, and not have been in such haste to

have died in good earnest; for, while there is life there is hope, and there is a remedy for all things but death. I do not find the young lady was so much out of the way neither, that the mother should lay it so grievously to heart. Indeed, had she married a footman, or some other servant in the family, as I am told many others have done, it had been a very bad business, and past curing; but, for the queen to make such a heavy outcry, when her daughter married such a fine-bred young knight, faith and troth, I think the business had better been made up. It was a slip, but not such a heinous one as one would think; for, as my master here says, and he will not let me tell a lie, as of scholars they make bishops, so of your knights (chiefly if they be errant) one may easily make kings and emperors."

"That is most certain," said Don Quixote: "Turn a knight-errant loose into the wide world, with twopenny-worth of good fortune, and he is *in potentia propinqua* (*proxima* I would say) the greatest emperor in the world. But, let the lady proceed, for hitherto her story has been very pleasant, and I doubt the most bitter part of it is still untold."—"The most bitter, truly, sir," answered she; "and

so bitter, that wormwood, and every bitter herb, compared to it, are as sweet as honey.

“The queen being really dead,” continued she, “and not in a trance, we buried her; and, scarce had we done her the last offices, and taken our last leave, when (*quis talia fando temperet a lachrymis?* who can relate such woes, and not be drowned in tears?) the giant Malambruno, cousin-german to the deceased queen, who, besides his native cruelty, was also a magician, appeared upon her grave, mounted on a wooden horse, and, by his dreadful, angry looks, shewed he came thither to revenge the death of his relation, by punishing Don Clavijo for his presumption, and Antonomasia for her oversight. Accordingly, he immediately enchanted them both upon the very tomb; transforming her into a brazen female monkey, and the young knight into a hideous crocodile, of an unknown metal; and, between them both, he set an inscription, in the Syriac tongue, which we have got since translated into the Candayan, and then into Spanish, to this effect:

“These two presumptuous lovers shall never recover their natural shapes, till the valorous Knight of La Mancha enter into a single combat with me; for, by the irrevocable decrees of

fate, this unheard-of adventure is reserved for his unheard-of courage.’

“This done, he drew a broad scimitar of a monstrous size, and, catching me fast by the hair, made an offer to cut my throat, or to whip off my head. I was frightened almost to death, my hair stood on end, and my tongue cleaved to the roof of my mouth. However, recovering myself as well as I could, trembling and weeping, I begged mercy in such a moving accent, and in such tender, melting words, that, at last, my entreaties prevailed on him to stop the cruel execution. In short, he ordered all the waiting-women at court to be brought before him, the same that you see here at present; and, after he had aggravated our breach of trust, and railed against the deceitful practices, mercenary procuring, and what else he could urge in scandal of our profession, and its very being, reviling us for the fact of which I alone stood guilty; ‘I will not punish you with instant death,’ said he, ‘but inflict a punishment which shall be a lasting and eternal mortification.’ Now, in the very instant of his denouncing our sentence, we felt the pores of our faces to open, and all about them perceived an itching pain, like the pricking of pins and needles. Thereupon

clapping our hands to our faces, we found them as you shall see them immediately." Saying this, the disconsolate matron, and her attendants, throwing off their veils, exposed their faces, all rough with bristly beards, some red, some black, some white, and others motley. The duke and duchess admired, Don Quixote and Sancho were astonished, and the standers by were thunder-struck. "Thus," said the countess proceeding, "has that murdering and bloody-minded Malambruno served us, and planted these rough and horrid bristles on our faces, otherwise most delicately smooth. Oh! that he had chopped off our heads with his monstrous scimitar, rather than to have disgraced our faces with these brushes upon them! For, gentlemen, if you rightly consider it, and truly, what I have to say should be attended with a flood of tears; but, such rivers and oceans have fallen from me already upon this doleful subject, that my eyes are as dry as chaff; and, therefore, pray let me speak without tears at this time. Where, alas! shall a waiting-woman dare to shew her head with such a furze-bush upon her chin? What charitable person will entertain her? What relations will own her? At the best, we can scarcely make our faces passable,

though we torture them with a thousand slops and washes; and, even thus, we have much ado to get the men to care for us. What will become of her, then, that wears a thicket upon her face? Oh ladies, and companions of my misery! in an ill hour were we begotten, and in a worse came we into the world!" With these words the Disconsolate Matron seemed to faint away.