

imps about our ears, to clap us up in the devil's pond\* presently."

Now, both being hoodwinked, and Don Quixote perceiving everything ready for their setting out, began to turn the pin; and, no sooner had he set his hand to it, than the waiting-women, and all the company, set up their throats, calling out, "Speed you, speed you well, valorous knight; Heaven be your guide, undaunted squire! Now, now, you fly aloft! See how they cut the air more swiftly than an arrow! Now they mount, and tower, and soar, while the gazing world wonders at their course. Sit fast, sit fast, courageous Sancho! you do not sit steady; have a care of falling; for, should you now drop from that amazing height, your fall would be greater than the aspiring youth's that misguided the chariot of the Sun, his father." All this Sancho heard, and, girding his arms fast about his master's waist, "Sir," quoth he, "why do they say we are so high, since we can hear their voices? Truly I hear them so plainly, that one would think they were close by us."—"Never mind

\* In the original it is, to carry us to Peralvillo, *i.e.* to hang us first, and try us afterwards, as Jarvis translates it. Stevens's Dictionary says, Peralvillo is a village near Ciudad-Real, in Castile, where the holy brotherhood, or officers for apprehending highwaymen, despatch those they take in the fact, without bringing them to trial; like what we call, hanging a man first, and trying him afterwards.

that," answered Don Quixote; "for, in these extraordinary kinds of flight, we must suppose our hearing and seeing will be extraordinary also. But do not hold me so hard, for you will make me tumble off. What makes thee tremble so? I am sure I never rode easier in all my life; our horse goes as if he did not move at all. Come, then, take courage; we make swinging way, and have a fair and merry gale."—"I think so too," quoth Sancho; "for I feel the wind puff as briskly upon me here, as if I do not know how many pairs of bellows were blowing wind in my tail." Sancho was not altogether in the wrong; for two or three pair of bellows were indeed levelled at him then, which gave air very plentifully; so well had the plot of this adventure been laid by the duke, the duchess, and their steward, that nothing was wanting to further the diversion.

Don Quixote at last feeling the wind, "Sure," said he, "we must be risen to the middle region of the air, where the winds, hail, snow, thunder, lightning, and other meteors are produced; so that, if we mount at this rate, we shall be in the region of fire presently; and what is worse, I do not know how to manage this pin, so as to avoid being scorched and roasted alive." At the same time some flax,

with other combustible matter, which had been got ready, was clapped at the end of a long stick, and set on fire at a small distance from their noses; and the heat and smoke affecting the knight and the squire, "May I be hanged," quoth Sancho, "if we be not come to this fire-place you talk of, or very near it, for the half of my beard is singed already. I have a huge mind to peep out, and see whereabouts we are."—"By no means," answered Don Quixote. "I remember the strange but true story of Doctor Torralva, whom the devil carried to Rome hoodwinked, and, bestriding a reed, in twelve hours time setting him down in the tower of Nona, in one of the streets of that city. There he saw the dreadful tumult, assault, and death of the Constable of Bourbon;<sup>1</sup> and, the next morning, he found himself at Madrid, where he related the whole story. Among other things, he said, as he went through the air, the devil bid him open his eyes, which he did, and then he found himself so near the moon, that he could touch him with his finger; but durst not look towards the earth, lest the distance should make his brains turn round. So, Sancho, we must not unveil our eyes, but rather wholly trust

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

to the care and providence of him that has charge of us, and fear nothing, for we only mount high, to come souse down, like a hawk, upon the kingdom of Candaya, which we shall reach presently; for, though it appears to us not half an hour since we left the garden, we have, nevertheless, travelled over a vast tract of air."—"I know nothing of the matter," replied Sancho; "but of this I am very certain, that, if your Madam Magulane, or Magalona, (what do you call her?) could sit this damned wooden crupper without a good cushion under her tail, she must have a harder pair of buttocks than mine."

This dialogue was certainly very pleasant all this while to the duke and duchess, and the rest of the company; and now, at last, resolving to put an end to this extraordinary adventure, which had so long entertained them successfully, they ordered one of their servants to give fire to Clavileno's tail; and, the horse being stuffed full of squibs, crackers, and other fire-works, burst presently into pieces, with a mighty noise, throwing the knight one way, and the squire another, both sufficiently singed. By this time the Disconsolate Matron, and bearded regiment, were vanished out of the garden, and all the rest, counterfeiting a

trance, lay flat upon the ground. Don Quixote and Sancho, sorely bruised, made shift to get up, and, looking about, were amazed to find themselves in the same garden whence they took horse, and see such a number of people lie dead, as they thought, on the ground. But their wonder was diverted, by the appearance of a large lance stuck in the ground, and a scroll of white parchment fastened to it by two green silken strings, with the following inscription upon it, in golden characters:—

“The renowned knight, Don Quixote de la Mancha, achieved the adventure of the Countess Trifaldi, otherwise called the Disconsolate Matron, and her companions in distress, by barely attempting it. Malambruno is fully satisfied. The waiting gentlewomen have lost their beards. King Clavijo and Queen Antonasia have resumed their pristine shapes; and, when the squire’s penance shall be finished, the white dove shall escape the pounces of the pernicious hawks that pursue her, and her pining lover shall lull in her arms. This is pre-ordained by the Sage Merlin, proto-enchanter of enchanters.”

Don Quixote having read this oracle, and construing it to refer to Dulcinea’s disenchantment, rendered thanks to heaven for so great

a deliverance; and approaching the duke and duchess, who seemed as yet in a swoon, he took the duke by the hand: “Courage, courage, noble sir,” cried he, “there is no danger; the adventure is finished without bloodshed, as you may read it registered in that record.”

The duke, yawning and stretching as if he had been waked out of a sound sleep, recovered himself by degrees, as did the duchess and the rest of the company; all of them acting the surprise so naturally that the jest could not be discovered. The duke, rubbing his eyes, made a shift to read the scroll; then, embracing Don Quixote, he extolled his valour to the skies, assuring him, he was the bravest knight the earth had ever possessed. As for Sancho, he was looking up and down the garden for the Disconsolate Matron, to see what sort of a face she had got, now her furze-bush was off. But he was informed, that as Clavileno came down flaming in the air, the Countess, with her women, vanished immediately, but not one of them chinbristled, nor so much as a hair upon their faces.

Then the duchess asked Sancho how he had fared in his long voyage? “Why truly, madam,” answered he, “I have seen wonders;

for you must know, that though my master would not suffer me to pull the cloth from my eyes, yet as I have a kind of itch to know every thing, and a spice of the spirit of contradiction, still hankering after what is forbidden me; so when, as my master told me, we were flying through the region of fire, I shoved my handkerchief a little above my nose, and looked down, and what do you think I saw? I spied the earth a hugeous way afar off below me (Heaven bless us!) no bigger than a mustard seed; and the men walking to and fro upon it, not much larger than hazle-nuts. Judge now if we were not got up woundy high!"—"Have a care what you say, my friend," said the duchess; "for if the men were bigger than hazle-nuts, and the earth no bigger than a mustard-seed, one man must be bigger than the whole earth, and cover it so that you could not see it."—"Like enough," answered Sancho; "but for all that, do you see, I saw it with a kind of a side-look upon one part of it, or so."—"Look you, Sancho," replied the duchess, "that will not bear; for nothing can be wholly seen by any part of it."—"Well, well, madam," quoth Sancho, "I do not understand your parts and wholes; I saw it, and there is an end of the story. Only you must think, that

as we flew by enchantment, so we saw by enchantment; and thus I might see the earth, and all the men, which way soever I looked. I will warrant, you will not believe me neither, when I tell you, that when I thrust up the kerchief above my brows, I saw myself so near heaven, that between the top of my cap and the main sky, there was not a span and a half. And heaven bless us! forsooth, what a hugeous great place it is! and we happened to travel that road where the seven\* she-goat stars were; and faith and troth I had such a mind to play with them (having been once a goat-herd myself), that I fancy I would have cried myself to death, had I not done it. So soon as I spied them, what does me, but sneaks down very soberly from behind my master, without telling any living soul, and played and leaped about for three quarters of an hour, by the clock, with the pretty nanny-goats, who are as sweet and fine as so many marigolds or gilly-flowers; and honest Wooden Peg stirred not one step all the while."—"And while Sancho employed himself with the goats," asked the duke, "how was Don Quixote employed?"—"Truly," answered the knight, "I am sensible all things were

\* The *Pleiades*, vulgarly called in Spanish, the Seven Young She-goats.

altered from their natural course; therefore what Sancho says seems the less strange to me. But, for my own part, I neither saw heaven nor hell, sea nor shore. I perceived, indeed, we passed through the middle region of the air, and were pretty near that of fire, but that we came so near heaven as Sancho says, is altogether incredible; because we then must have passed quite through the fiery region, which lies between the sphere of the moon and the upper region of the air. Now it was impossible for us to reach that part, where are the Pleiades, or the seven Goats, as Sancho calls them, without being consumed in the elemental fire; and therefore, since we escaped those flames, certainly we did not soar so high, and Sancho either lies or dreams.”

—“I neither lie nor dream,” replied Sancho. “Uds precious! I can tell you the marks and colour of every goat among them: If you do not believe me, do but ask and try me. You will easily see whether I speak truth or no.”

“Well,” said the duchess, “pr’ythee tell me, Sancho.”—“Look you,” answered Sancho, “there were two of them green, two carnation, two blue, and one party-coloured.”—“Truly,” said the duke, “that is a new kind of goats you have found out, Sancho; we have none

of those colours upon earth.”—“Sure, sir,” replied Sancho, “you will make some sort of difference between heavenly she-goats and the goats of this world?”—“But Sancho,” said the duke, “among these she-goats, did you never see a he? Not one horned beast of the masculine gender?”—“Not one, sir, I saw no other horned thing but the moon; and I have been told that neither he-goats, nor any other cornuted tups are suffered to lift their horns beyond those of the moon.”

They did not think fit to ask Sancho any more questions about his airy voyage; for, in the humour he was in, they judged he would not stick to ramble all over the heavens, and tell them news of whatever was doing there, though he had not stirred out of the garden all the while.

Thus ended, in short, the adventure of the Disconsolate Matron, which afforded sufficient sport to the duke and duchess, not only for the present, but for the rest of their lives; and might have supplied Sancho with matter of talk from generation to generation, for many ages, could he have lived so long. “Sancho,” said Don Quixote, whispering him in the ear, “since thou wouldst have us believe what thou hast seen in heaven, I desire thee to believe what I saw in Montesinos’s cave. Not a word more.”

\* *Cabron*: A jest on the double meaning of that word, which signifies both a he-goat and a cuckold.